

## WAKES COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

### Chairwoman's Report

It was very agreeable to begin our first meeting in 2022 with a happy task: to present Mandy Sexton with the Wakes Colne Award for 2021 for her services to our community, especially as a long-standing editor of this magazine, *The Village Reporter*, and as a previous chair of the Village Hall Committee. Mandy is also known to many in her professional capacity as an architect, so she has also had an influence on the appearance of our villages!



It is also pleasing to report that in mid-February WCPC took delivery of nine portable flood barrier modules and a connection unit which, when deployed from the edge of the PO and shop corner to the curtilage of the pavement, should offer an adequate defence against rising flood waters. These were funded by the Borough Councillor's Locality Budget and are being supplied to the shop/PO for as long as it remains a community asset. They were trialled out by Cllr Chillingworth, Cllr Mead of WCPC, and Cllr Neubauer of CPC on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February (see photo). The trial party considered the task was fairly simple, and only took about 20 minutes, but really needs three people to help move the barriers, use the key handle to connect the panels, and fill alternate panels with water from a nearby hose to give stability until flood water fills the remainder. A volunteer group, preferably, for practical reasons, of residents living north of the river, needs to be set up so that they can be called upon when flooding is likely. Please contact the Parish Clerk [parishclerk@wakescolne.org](mailto:parishclerk@wakescolne.org) if you would be willing to volunteer and some training can be arranged.



In another part of the village, near our telephone book bank at the corner of Lane Road and Lower Green we have had the greensward which was mangled by a tractor before Christmas levelled and re-seeded.



This winter has not been so consistently cold so far, but as it is surely not yet over, may I remind you of the availability of salt should you need it for areas of local roads near (but not on) your property which have not been salted. The bags of salt are located in the two bins marked WCPC Salt just on Station Approach very near the junction with Station Road. You can easily park next to the bins but take care as the bags are heavy.

Some rail users or pedestrians visiting the area may have noticed that about 14 solar lights are no longer functioning in Station Approach. These are scheduled to be replaced in early March.

An important date for your diaries: there is to be a public meeting on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 7pm at the Village Hall to discuss how long-awaited and much-needed safety improvements might be made on Station Rd, along the A1124 and at the crossroads. As many of you, especially long-term residents of Station Rd will know, there have been many attempts over 20 or more years to get traffic calming measures in Station Rd, but unfortunately these have not been progressed by Essex Highways. WCPC, the Borough Councillor and County Councillor, Lewis Barber have been working together to find an integrated solution to improving road and pedestrian safety along Station Road, the A1124 and at the crossroads. We wish to invite you to a public meeting to discuss ideas and to gauge feedback on how we can progress these important issues. Please come and let us have your views, or if you are unable to attend, please send comments to the Clerk. We have to keep trying as the situation will not improve without our efforts!

I am aware of local residents who kindly undertake litter picks on a regular basis, and there is an opportunity to participate in the Great Britain Spring Clean in Wakes Colne. Our spring litter pick week will correspond with the GBSCW, 25 March -10 April. Unfortunately for safety reasons we are not able to pick litter along the A1124 (it has been reported to Colchester Borough Council) but there is litter along footpaths, in ditches and other roadsides in the village. If you are willing to help and need litter pickers, please contact the Clerk.

As some are aware, plans are under discussion for local community celebration of the Queen's 70<sup>th</sup> Jubilee in June. As a special acknowledgement of this remarkable achievement WCPC have applied for a licence for four planters, two to be located near each bus shelter. We hope to get these installed in May. By then we shall also be re-opening the Plant and Seed Swap in the Bus Shelter on the PO side. So, gardeners, please sow some extra seeds this year for the plant swap or to help us fill the planters. Also, if anyone is willing to help keep these watered over the summer months (there is a water butt on hand) please let the Clerk know so we can set up a rota.