

WAKES COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

A new year means reviewing the previous year and planning for the coming year. 2020 was dominated by the impact of Coronavirus on our lives and winter 2021 will initially be even more challenging. We must live in hope that, with a vaccine, we may gradually learn to live more safely with the virus.

Wakes Colne Parish Council ended 2020 in a better position than for a year or two with a full complement of seven councilors, as two councilors, Sam Latarche and Francis Mears, joined the team. We span a range of ages, have varied professional backgrounds, and, most importantly, a commitment to the village. Please see our website <https://e-voice.org.uk/wakescolne/> for more information. It's a bonus to get to know and work with six new people as we try both to maintain and improve our village facilities during the current situation. We hope you may have been momentarily cheered by the lights on the small oak tree and the Merry Xmas banner at Chappel Corner, put up by Cllr James Parrish and his wife.

In addition to the councilors, who undertake practical tasks as well as make decisions at monthly online meetings, there are many others who quietly help, such as those who have volunteered to assist people during the pandemic. Among others, Cllr June Fisher and her husband, together with the parish clerk, Diane Jacobs, planted bulbs on Chappel Corner [see photo]; Kathy and Mike Brown planted bulbs in Lane Rd and maintain the telephone box book bank there, as do Cllr Helen Wasteney and Cllr Tatiana Stotz at Chappel Corner; Michael White and his wife regularly do litter picks north of Station Rd along Bures Road. In November the clerk and I presented the Wakes Colne Award for 2020 [see photos], which was shared by Marion Cordingley for her long involvements with the guides, church Sunday school and WI, and to Jim Taylor, a previous chairman of the WCPC, the village hall, and of Bures Road Footpath Scheme Ltd, which eventually brought about the safe footpath between Station Approach and Spring Gardens Rd. Our gratitude and congratulations to each of them.

Many of the long-term, ongoing issues we face concern ECC Highways. In order to increase public safety, there is a need for a zebra crossing over the A1124, and for traffic calming in Station Rd. The clerk and I recently compiled a list of nearly 20 outstanding issues of safety, signage, footway and highway maintenance for County Cllr Anne Brown and Ward Cllr Peter Chillingworth

when they toured the village in mid-December. We can only hope that further consideration and some action will result, as we shall not cease our vigilance and requests because we know from the daily experience of living here just what is urgently needed. Often it feels as if, being rural and on the boundary of the county, we miss out on attention to safety and repairs which would not be permitted or tolerated in urban areas. In addition, we have numerous issues of signage and access along our footpaths, which, for health and safety reasons, have to await Highways' attention. As our footpaths are being used more and more as we are being encouraged to exercise during social isolation, we sincerely trust there will be improvements by the spring, since we intend to produce a new leaflet and hope to organize some walks in our lovely countryside during 2021.

Going forward we have several ideas which we hope to transform into plans: a seed and plant swap; a welcome pack for new residents; and, when we can meet again, for a village oral history project. If you would like to participate or have ideas for improving our community and wellbeing please let us have your suggestions via the parish clerk or attend our online meetings. Let us sincerely hope for a more uplifting 2021 by the time spring comes.

Dr Monica Taylor, Chairwoman, WCPC