

2021 PARISH MEETING

This report covers two years, 2019 and 2020 as we were locked down and unable to have a Parish Meeting at this time in 2020.

In May 2019 eight new councillors were elected to join just one remaining member of the Council.

At the beginning it was a steep learning curve for us all, as none of the eight had been councillors before but we were introduced to DALC which provides training courses designed to help new councillors. The courses were very useful and in the early days, gave us some good insight into procedures, which allowed our confidence to build with experience.

We also discovered how much we depended on a good Clerk and Penny was and is a key part of the Council's operations and is guiding us (firmly) through the legal, financial and procedural functions of council business. Penny has just gained a BA Honours Degree in Community Governance, for which she is warmly congratulated.

For someone thinking of becoming a Parish Councillor don't be daunted, it's a great way to be involved in the community and I can reassure them that there is excellent support to ease them into the role.

We were fortunate to inherit from the previous council the playground project at the recreation field. This has been driven and achieved by the energy, enthusiasm and expertise of the "Dads". They are a group of Dads who decided to take the initiative and use their various skills to put together a playground project, which they did with remarkable results including securing substantial funding from Viridor. A magnificent play area, which fits in so well with the Motte & Bailey, has been constructed, it opened in September 2020 and is now in regular use. Sadly a grand opening ceremony was not possible, owing to the restrictions but knowing the "Dads" I'm sure there's a post opening party in the pipeline some time soon.

An unusual event supported by the council was the contact between Bampton School and the International Space Station. It was organised by amateur radio volunteers who put up a huge mast and antennas, coached the children with their questions and gave a dramatic and informative presentation about space and our galaxy. The moment when the space station came over the horizon and could be heard on the radio, was spine tingling. It was a rare opportunity for children to put questions live to an astronaut in orbit, a memorable experience for all.

In autumn 2019 Council adopted the actual White Horse which was re-installed at the White Horse pub after a long absence and in time for Bampton Fair at the end of October. The Fair in 2019 was affected by very wet weather on the preceding day which resulted in a drop in both footfall and trader attendance. The Fair committee planned changes and improvements for the next year but sadly a 2020 Fair was not possible under coronavirus restrictions and the occasion could only be marked by a presentation of the annual fee to the Lord of the Manor, who very kindly donated it back again towards the 2021 Fair. The Fair Committee has continued to meet (virtually) and plans are in hand for a Bampton Fair in 2021 (with fingers crossed)

A constant theme for many years has been the question of a replacement hall for Bampton and previous councils have addressed and discussed the issue at length. This council had

the opportunity to take the idea of a new hall further after an offer from the diocese for the Council to purchase land behind the Community Hall. Many discussions, much research and a community survey have now enabled us to settle on developing a plan to build a new Bampton Hall at the end of the Station Road car park. A committee has been formed and tasked to take the project forward.

Obviously the coronavirus pandemic affected every aspect of life in Bampton. Local shops adapted rapidly with hand sanitisers, screens and distancing. The council organised a group of volunteer wardens to make sure that food and prescriptions could be delivered and to ensure that contact was maintained with those considered vulnerable. A minor but important decision was to keep the public toilets open and unlocked, which was appreciated by many, particularly bus and delivery drivers.

Council meetings could not be face to face and we have had to switch to virtual meetings. Even the wreath laying ceremony at the War Memorial had to be limited and distanced. Thankfully the situation seems to be improving and we look forward to normal council meetings in the future

During the past two years the Council has planted 1000 snowdrops at the Millenium Green, trees and hedging are ready to be added to the play park at the recreation field, a new roundabout was installed at the Station Road play area, a second defibrillator for the town has been placed outside the Community Hall, the perennial dog poo problem will hopefully improve following the installation of poo bag dispensers at the Millenium Green and Recreation field and we have supported Plastic Free Bampton, marking the success of the campaign with presentations of plaques and certificates to compliant businesses.

Bampton in Bloom have been keeping the town looking very decorative, the Heritage Centre has been attracting visitors interested in our history and our parish paths have been patrolled and maintained by the P3 Footpath volunteers, all supported by grants from the Council

I have not given credit to individual councillors when listing these events and achievements because they have all played a part to one degree or another.

They are:

Cllr Lucy Bull Cllr Nick Bull Cllr Barney Hopkinson Cllr Bill McHenry Cllr Bill Weston Cllr Rupert White Cllr David Whiteway Cllr Tim Williams

The year ahead looks more hopeful, as a result of the vaccination programme and the easing of restrictions. Council meetings and council business have kept going throughout the lockdowns and we are anticipating face to face meetings again very soon, not just for the Council but with the community of Bampton.

Thank you

Cllr Simon Fouracres
Chairman
Bampton Town Council