

# **Chairman's Report**

## **The Community Cafe**

In the last year Takeley Parish Council have continued to support the community cafe which runs at the Old School Community Centre on Thursdays and Fridays each week. The cafe is going from strength to strength and provides a meeting place for local groups and individuals where they can get a range of food and drink at extremely reasonable prices. Thanks go to Working group and the volunteers without them this would simply not be possible.

Please come along and give it a try for yourself.

On Thursday mornings the Touchpoint Team operate a food share in advance of the cafe opening. This is not part of the poverty projects with the criteria being a Takeley resident only and is open to all.

## **Planning**

Our Clerk and Planning Committee work hard reviewing all planning applications, large and small, in an effort to ensure that any developments agreed by Uttlesford District Council and the Planning Inspectorate contribute to the facilities in the village.

Over the last year an enormous amount of work has been put in to ensure that the new proposed local plan, which will mean around 1500 new houses as well as employment development within the village, is not as large as originally planned and will provide open spaces and other infrastructure for Takeley providing amenities for our community. The work is ongoing will be public consultations which will be held this year at the parish council offices will be seeking the best possible outcomes for the village.

## **Village Amenities**

Over the last year new waste bins have been installed at the recreation ground and sports field. Sadly, one of these has already been damaged by arson. There have been a number of incidents of arson and other vandalism at the recreation ground during the year and although the bulk of the cost is covered by insurance any excess and increases in premiums comes from your local precept. Let's all spread the word that vandalism costs us, the residents, our hard earned money.

A new dog waste bin has been installed by the bus stop and we have facilitated increased regularity with Uttlesford District Council waste team in the of emptying the dog waste bins to avoid them overflowing.

A grant was obtained to undertake improvements to the sports field and these will include a height barrier at the entrance, improved parking and security, upgrades to the changing rooms, new goal posts and other works. We hope that further grants will be available to help us make this a much better facility for the village. It would be great if we could hold village events and open air entertainment events at the Sports Field.

## **How we spend your taxes**

This is my first year as chair of your parish council and I have spoken to many people around the village about their concerns and aspirations for the village.

Many people do not want to see large scale development, or if we do have to take new houses they wish to see the necessary infrastructure to support them.

Quite a large chunk of time and money is spent either fighting development or ensuring that we get the best possible outcome within the current planning framework.

A number of people have expressed concern over the general appearance of the village and the state of things such as, grass cutting and hedge trimming. Wherever we are able to we are hoping to make improvements, however, in some cases we are not the responsible body so we can only bring pressure to bear on those responsible.

I think I possibly speak for many in the village when I say how confusing it is trying to work out the responsibilities of the various levels of council, parish, district or county. On our website <https://www.takeley-pc.gov.uk/> on the homepage there is an article "Local Councils: Who Does What?". Here you can see an overview of which Councils are responsible for which services. Over the next two years the plans for devolution should make this simpler by reducing the number of levels from three to two.

Hopefully that will make it easier for all of us when trying to deal with issues such as potholes and airport parking.

To reflect the size of the village we have increased our office staffing which will allow us to offer a better service to the village as a whole.

## **V E Day Celebrations**

The Community Café will be open from 3pm until 5pm serving tea and cakes, sharing on the big screen original VE day footage, with music, decorations and themed refreshments – everyone welcome. Then at 9.30pm we will be lighting the beacon on the green at Four Ashes crossroads.

## **Finally**

As the Easter Weekend is just a few days away I wish you all a Happy Easter.