

Aston le Walls ‘ Open ‘ meeting.

Chairman’s report April 13th 2023.

Welcome to Alison Eastwood and attendees.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support during a difficult year.

Our Clerk and Councillor Julie Challenor left the village for new beginnings in Norfolk and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her help especially with Finance and the conversion of all our Streetlights to LED, which has led to big savings in cost.

Debra Kirton became our new Clerk in July and has very quickly gained the knowledge of Clerkship and is already streamlining the processes and will be a great asset going forwards.

With the resignation of Julie Challenor we needed a new Councillor replacement. The position was advertised by WNC Electoral dept. unfortunately no one came forward.

We therefore were very grateful that Rhiannon Harris put herself forward for co option and Rhiannon duly joined the Council in February this year.

The village celebrated the Queens Platinum Jubilee in June on the School playing field and the Parish Council together with the Village Hall committee provided the funding.

Regretfully our Queen Elizabeth 11 died in September, your Council had been provided with a Protocol to follow for such circumstances.

A book of Condolence was made available in St Leonards and the Village Hall for those who wished to write words.

The Proclamation of the new King Charles 111 was read at the appointed hour in the churchyard of St.Leonards by the Chairman of the Parish Council Charles Lees.

The Parish Council would like to thank all those who attended the Proclamation.

The Book of Condolence has been retained for the Village for future generations, it is in the safe keeping of the Village Hall committee.

With lifting of the Covid restrictions the Parish Council has reverted to the 10 meetings a year format, with no meeting in August or December.

Chicanes were installed in May to help with lessening the speed of traffic on the Welsh Road, new street lighting, new signage and the new VAS units.

It became apparent there were flaws in the design, lack of kerbing to Butlers Close and drainage issues. Although these were rectified by mid summer, the VAS units were not delivered until November and due to an oversight by WNC Highways were only connected to power this month April 2023, as I write this still not lighting up. Your Parish Council have written many emails to those at WNC and Highways and responses are patchy at best.

The Contractors removed our street light No. 22 and place a new one for the chicanes in the same hole. We have been fighting to get No.22 removed from our contract with National Power and a refund of charges. All new street lights for the chicanes are the responsibility of Highways.

Also delivered as part of the HS2 Road Safety funding were the dropped kerbs, new bus stop, zigzags outside the school and the extension of the pavement from the village to link up with the footpath AA1, which many have commented as now a safe and necessary pavement.

Do the chicanes work ?

Many say they do not, but the figures tell a different story.

A reading taken in May 2017 to 18 showed 54.7% of vehicles were over the limit and the 85th percentile at 39.1 mph.

A reading taken between March 20th and April 1st this year shows

19.6% over the limit and the 85th percentile at 30.8mph.

Giving a drop of 35.1% over the limit.

There will always be drivers who speed, the interesting point is those speeding in most cases are in the lower over speed brackets now.

The difference between no chicanes and chicanes is available on the sheets provided on the table at the back of the hall.

HS2.

We continue to monitor all things HS2, attend Liaison meetings and have dialogue with the Simon Davis our local Engagements Manager.

The issues this year have been, A361 signage, use of the Welsh Road by Tarmac HGV's, new contractors speeding, abuse of the right of way on the chicanes, note not only HS2.

The delay in implementing the Site Access Road (SAR)

They have a limit of 500 vehicle movements per day on the SAR, currently the number is 400, we will monitor what happens when they reach 500!

Hedge cutting on the concrete track.

Poor communication Appletree Lane over the new electrics and access.

They have asked again this year to extend their working hours to 7 days a week, we have again expressed our views on the matter to WNC.

We fought the road closure on the A361 in January and Won !

Reminder we have organised an HS2 meeting here in the Village Hall between 5.00 and 7.00pm on Thursday April 27th for those who wish information for the year ahead locally, there will a slide presentation.

Earlier this year I deposited 20 crates of historical records with

the Northamptonshire Records Office at Wootton Hall, these are being sorted by them into, they Keep, they Shred, they Return.

The first book had a written copy of the first Parish meeting held in 1894.

Finally many of you will know I intend to stand down as Chairman and as a Councillor at the May AGM after 15 years on the Council. I would hope someone will come forward to serve and help carry the Parish Council forwards.

Thank you.