



## **INKPEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 11th APRIL 2019**

Thank you all for coming to our Annual Parish Meeting - The format of the meeting will be the same as in previous years and Volunteers from each village organization or group will give a short report on activities over the past year.

The current Parish Council, is in a period of ‘purdah’ in the lead up to the Parish Council election on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 when you will be voting for 7 new Councillors to serve for a period of four years.

This has been another challenging year for Inkpen Parish Council.

1. *The pressure of the numerous planning applications* and changes in Planning Policy as well as government legislation, administered by ever decreasing staff at West Berkshire Council.

2. *Numerous consultations* from West Berkshires Council, who are attempting to redress the shortfall in their budget covering essential services, and the wholly unfortunate decisions in relation to cuts in the public services, the future of our library network and mobile library that serves Inkpen. Parish Councils are required to pay for some of the public services previously funded by the Local Authority, which is easier for those Parishes with substantial reserves but not so easy for smaller Parishes without money set aside to meet such requests.

3. *The Annual Precept* for funding the essential work in the Parish was increased this year, to cover rising costs, demands by the Local Authority and the unexpected requirement for ditch clearance along Post Office Rd. when the Parish Council was required to use ‘approved’ contractors with a Highway Licence – this cost was not anticipated and removed any small reserve of funding held by the Parish Council. The overall cost increase in raising the Precept for a Band D property is £2 per month. Anyone experiencing difficulty with the increase should make the Parish Council aware.

4. *The District Councillors* have been very supportive –and sadly we say ‘goodbye’ to Anthony Stansfeld who has stood up for Inkpen on numerous occasions, our very best wishes for the future and our heartfelt thanks for all he has done for Inkpen. The Parish Council has been fortunate in having a close relationship with our 2 Kintbury Ward members – James Cole and Anthony Stansfeld – but due to boundary changes there will be three elected Hungerford Ward Members covering a much larger area in future.

5. *Thanks also go to Bernard and Mary Harris* who have very kindly agreed to continue to support the Lower Green triangle so that the wild flowers can grow and become established.

6. *Mendip Forestry*, who own the land adjacent to Post Office Rd. have recently returned to restore the land following the felling of many woodland trees and will begin the replanting which

is a conditional requirement of the Felling Licence. The Parish Council is working with West Berkshire Council to identify those unofficial unmarked footpaths across the Great Plantation. Progress is slow due to the complexity of the legal paperwork and lengthy consultation required before these can be established.

7. *The installation of the Defibrillator* at the Playing Field was facilitated by a Grant from West Berkshire Council. Awareness sessions were organized in the Parish for some 30 residents – anyone wishing to learn more about the operation should contact the Parish Clerk who is maintaining a list of those interested. It is hoped that the defibrillator will not be needed but is centrally placed for all to access if required. Telephone 999 and the ambulance service will provide the code to open up the equipment.

8. *The Parish Council has endorsed the renovation of the Sports Pavilion* –and fund raising is currently being undertaken- this is one of the two great legacies to Inkpen – the other being the Village Hall – both are valued by residents and are complementary in holding village events. The playing field serves just Inkpen to promote ‘physical activity and recreation’ whereas the village hall has a much wider area to serve.

9. A big thank all those who have contributed to keeping Inkpen alive and vibrant during this last year and to the many volunteers who have stepped up to take on various jobs in the Parish. Our Parish Clerk, who is independent of the Parish Council, continues to provide a steer and advice on current legislation and to ensure the Councillors work within the framework of the Local Government Act and are accountable to our Auditors.

Annual Parish Meeting  
11<sup>th</sup> April 2019