

GLAPTHORN PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH MEETING – 16 May 2013

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR YEAR 2012/13

Ladies and Gentlemen

The past year has been dominated by the sudden and immediate retirement of Cyril Jones in early July 2012, for reasons of ill health. Cyril had held the position of parish clerk for some sixteen years and his departure left a huge gap. Cyril's health deteriorated rapidly and he passed away in February 2013. Councillor Dick Smith and I represented the village at his funeral in St Mary's Church Benefield .

The Parish Council set up a committee of three councillors (Kerr/Gent/Davidson) to appoint a new parish clerk. A leaflet drop in the village and advertising on the NALC website and in their newsletter produced six applicants, of whom three were invited to interview. The sub-committee was unanimous in recommending Mrs Sue Morrison be offered the position and she took up her appointment on 1 November 2012.

Due to work commitments, Councillor Roy Kerr found he was unable to devote sufficient time to carry out his duties as Chairman and resigned in March 2013. He has agreed to stand for the post of Vice Chairman for the year 2013/14. There were no other retirements during the year and the Council is fully represented.

The perennial traffic problems continue to cause concern, in particular along Benefield Road and past the school where, in spite of calming measures, many vehicles including HGV's continue to ignore the speed limits. It happens that the closure of Cotterstock bridge to lorries weighing over 18 tonnes has reduced their use of Benefield Road, which should reduce the chances of a serious accident. However the proliferation of weight restrictions in the Oundle area has made life difficult and more expensive for local businesses (in particular the farming community) to transport their goods and services. The police, the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Watch team have had some success in setting up speed checks but often find their ability to act compromised by rules and regulations imposed by higher authority and beyond their control. The situation is very unsatisfactory with no easy solutions. The Parish Council finds itself frustrated and largely powerless.

The heavy rains of the summer and then the snows of winter seriously tested the new land drainage schemes, which with a few exceptions performed their functions well. Some weaknesses in the system north of the Brook were identified, and solutions agreed with the co-operation of the local farmers, to whom the Parish Council is most grateful. These should not incur any significant costs. However a solution to the persistent flooding of Main Street at the Brook will require the installation of a larger culvert which will cost money. There is a contingency fund which can be used for this. However there are also problems of ownership rights in the area which are proving difficult to resolve. The Parish Council will continue its efforts to help find a solution.

It remains for me to thank all of you, particularly those who have volunteered your services to the village, including neighbourhood watch, litter patrol, web site upkeep, tree wardenship or traffic watch, and also my colleagues, for the support you have given the Parish Council over the past year.

Ian Davidson