

## **2025 Chairman's Report**

As I always do at this stage of the year's programme, I would like firstly to express a huge thank you to all my fellow Councillors and Clerk; without their amazing commitment and efforts, the village of Iwerne Minster would not be the same. However, on a sad note, we lost Hazel Marsh when she moved from the village early in the year but her help in planning matters was a tremendous benefit in what is always the hardest part of our responsibilities. Another parting of the ways was when Anne Thomas' decided to move to Salisbury; Anne and her husband Richard had spent many happy years in the village, most of Anne's time was as our GP at the Child Okeford Surgery; her help with anything medical, especially through the COVID years, will be sadly missed.

Top of the list for thanks must also go to Dorset Unitary Council's representative, Cllr Jane Somper, who does a wonderful job on our behalf; also there is Geoff Peters and his team of stalwarts as our Community Speed Watch.

This year has seen many improvements which I will cover later. As previously reported our mix of Open and Zoom Meetings seems to be going well with no objections from our residents. A small team of Councillors and volunteers have progressed with the village's Emergency Plan which, together with our Resilience Guide, has taken a great deal of time over the year. Both of these get regular updates and can be found on the Parish Website; these will be adopted later at the 2025 AGM.

There has been a couple of changes to our Areas of Responsibilities; these were the introduction of a new responsibility entitled "Village Features", this has replaced "Village and District Liaison". This responsibility has been taken up by Heather Overton, who is working hard on it and other projects. Another change has been because Dorset Council are no longer referring Tree Applications to Parish and Town Councils, so we circulate Planning Applications via Next Door, which the village is endorsing and is using. Other specific Areas of Responsibility are:

- As mentioned above, we lost Hazel Marsh last summer but Keith Skinner has stepped up and taken over Planning and Development. Although this is early days, he is showing that this area will be well looked after. Keith also continues with Footpaths & Rights of Way for which we are happy that someone is filling Anne Thomas' shoes so willingly. Keith will also be the Parish Council's representative on the Abingdon Hall Management Committee this coming year.
- Not mentioned so far, is that Susan Trim is leaving the village so will be standing down early in this new Parish Council year. She will be a hard act to follow as she has been involved in the "Finance sub-group", "Governance, IT & Social Media", "Emergency & Contingency Planning", "Website" and "Trees" and "Neighbourhood Watch". This means that there will have to be a lot of changes in the year to come.
- John Goodliffe carries on without any complaints; he still looks after "Highways & Drainage" and is our mainstay on "Community Resilience & Environmental Protection". His work with the Resilience Guide has been exceptional.
- John, with thanks to Anne Thomas before she left the village, should also be thanked for the new bench on Preston Hill. The work to set this up was a lengthy project because we first needed to acquire use of the land from the Ranston Estate. This bench gives a fantastic view of the village, as will the replacement bench on Tower Hill when completed.
- Last but not least is Kerry O'Connor who continues with Recreation and most importantly the modernisation of the Play Area and its equipment. This Project might appear to be taking a very long time but it has to be right for so many reasons. The acquisition of funding will prove to be a problem but Kerry, with the help of Heather Overton, is dealing with this.

As we go into the new year we are carrying one vacancy and, with Susan Trim's forthcoming move, this will become two. We cannot maintain the services that the village requires without new applicants from the many residents who have moved to the village over recent years. We will continue to advertise and hope that someone new will come forward. If anyone else wants to be part of the team, please let either our Clerk or me know of your interest.

Finally, there are various volunteers who should be mentioned, as always there are many but I will pick out a couple who go above and beyond; they are:

- Monique Goodliffe and her helpers with the village Newsletter;
- Dougal Wilson-Croome who continues to maintain the village defibrillators;
- Jeff Overton for his help on the Emergency Planning Team; and
- As mentioned above, Geoff Peters and his Team on the village Speed Watch.

Many thanks to everyone else that I haven't mentioned as there are so many who make Iwerne what it is.

**Cllr Paul Le Prevost** [Chairman]

Iwerne Minster Parish Council

12<sup>th</sup> May 2025