



Welcome to
**Tormarton
Parish Council**

Chairmans Annual Report 2022

As we end what has been another challenging year for us all, it now looks like we finally can see a light at the end of the tunnel, with normality rapidly returning to our day to day lives.

Although on paper Tormarton Parish Council (PC) currently has a full set of members, we are in fact in need of identifying potential new members as a matter of urgency to replace an upcoming departure. As a small parish council remaining quorate throughout the year is always a challenge and, although we have reached out to the community several times this year to find a candidate, there has been a distinct lack of interest. This does sadly make me question the long-term viability of the PC, and what the solution is short of dissolving it and leaving all local matters for South Gloucestershire Council to decide.

Whilst operating with four members rather than the full complement of five is possible, it does mean that sickness and holiday periods leave us vulnerable to failed meetings, and therefore the inability to fulfil our statutory requirements. What the answer to the current lack of interest is, I personally don't know, but what I do know is that without a viable PC the future of the village, both from a planning perspective and a financial one will be left to those who live outside it.

What I will say is that if you are reading this and you understand the implications of giving these powers back to us district council and don't like the thought of it then maybe you are exactly the type of person this community needs as a Parish Councillor.

Financially the Parish continues to be in an encouraging position, with a healthy, albeit modest, set of reserves, both earmarked and general, and the members were happy to be able to continue with a balanced budget into the 2022/2023 financial year. As always, our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer will make a full report of the accounts in due course.

Thankfully our local community groups, including The Village Hall Committee, The Playing Fields Committee, and The Pond Committee have come through the lockdown unscathed and are in excellent financial health. With each able to fund various improvements to the facilities they provide for our local community. Please remember that each of these are community assets, so please use them, and help these groups keep them viable.

On the subject of community assets, it would be remiss of me not to mention the sad closure of 'The Major's Retreat' public house. As you will all know, the pub had been previously registered as a formal 'Community Asset' with South Gloucestershire Council (SGC), and as such any community groups in the Parish had a right to bid to purchase it.

The Parish Council itself conducted a referendum to investigate whether residents would be in favour of the council putting together a community bid and it was found that there was no appetite for this, and the matter was closed. Although Rupert and Penny Mon yard and their team at the Compass Inn have done a fantastic job filling the social amenity gap that has been left with the pub's closure; it does seem like some of the soul from the village is now missing. I for one will be keeping a close eye on future plans for the site, and hope that there will still be a place for a revival of the pub, certainly in the medium term.

With the referendum came the opportunity to invite SGC's planning department to show us their proposed vision for the future of our area, both its immediate and wider environs. Although no-one from SGC's planning department was able to attend on the day, they did however provide the PC with plenty of material relating to the local plan, including maps and a presentation. I am pleased to say that our 'Local Plan' pop-up meeting held at the village hall was a huge success, with 51 residents attending the event, representing around 20% of the parish's electorate along with the helpful attendance and support of both our SGC Ward representatives. Although keen to discuss many

aspects of the SGC's Local Plan consultation, a majority of the residents were extremely keen to discuss the implications for the local areas that had been identified as 'potential' sites for wind farms in the Local Plan. Councillors Steve Reade and Ben Stokes from SGC did a fabulous job of engaging with the residents on this and other matter, and the rolling presentation was well watched.

To finish I would like to thank our SGC Council representatives, Stephen Reade and Ben Stokes for their work supporting us as a Parish Council, and of course our team of Parish Councillors, Katy Pool, Janet Wells, Nick Davis, and Sue Giles, for giving their time freely to help make the Parish a better place, and our Parish Clerk Jack Turner for keeping the wheels turning and making sure we that don't end up on YouTube.

Cllr Simon Stevens

Chairman

Tormarton Parish Council