

# Chairman's annual report

## Annual Report 2022/2023

When I wrote last year's report we were just coming out of the pandemic, and I was writing about seeing light at the end of the tunnel after a difficult year. That seems like an eternity ago! Thankfully the pandemic has been kept well under control over the last year and, although we have had plenty of 'new' challenges to deal with, there's been plenty to be positive and grateful for.

Tormarton Parish Council finishes 2022/2023 year as it started, with a full complement of Councillors. Although there has been one change, with Nick Davis stepping down to make way for Rebecca Derry-Evans to join as a second representative for West Littleton village. Although all the places on our small Parish Council are currently filled, I am still keen to find the prospective Parish Councillors of the future. Our two villages are set to face some tough challenges over the next few years, both financially and in practical matters such as managed development and conservation. To make sure we are equal to those challenges we are going to need the next generation of prospective councillors playing a role supporting the Parish Council both reactively and proactively as these challenges arise. An example of a proactive way that residents can get involved in preparing for these future challenges is by joining the group that will be investigating the proposed adoption of a 'Neighbourhood Plan' for the Parish. With Tormarton completely surround by land that has been put forward in South Gloucestershire Councils most recent 'Call for Sites', there has never been a better time for our Parish to understand what development is needed and to create a roadmap to manage our own future growth. If you are interested in being involved in this or other Parish Council projects, please do contact us.

Although as a Parish we are in a healthy financial position relative to our size, as a parish of only 174 homes we do suffer from a lack of being able to employ 'economies of scale' to any projects we undertake. In 2023/24 we will receive £56.36 per home in precept taxes (per 'Band D' equivalent) to support all our activities and costs in Tormarton and West Littleton. This includes projects such as the two defibrillators and new 'Digital Road Traffic Sign', the latter of which has been busy collecting valuable data to support our campaign to reduce speeding through the village. In addition to a balanced budget for the 2023/24 financial year, we also have healthy reserve account which includes funds earmarked to support local community groups and causes. For example, did you know that any resident of the Parish can apply to the Parish Council for a financial contribution to support for new or existing community-based projects that they are running. So, if you have a great idea that you believe would have a positive impact on our local community but need a few hundred pounds to get your idea off the ground, then please let our Clerk know and he will let you know how to apply. As always, a full report of the Parish Councils finances will be made available online for public inspection.

Our local community groups, including The Village Hall Committee, The Playing Fields Committee, and The Pond Committee have had another busy year working hard as custodians and managers of these valuable community assets. These 'gems' of our

Parish are run outside of the responsibilities of the Parish Council, with small groups of volunteers giving up many hours of their personal time to ensure that they are sustainable and available for the community to use. On the subject of Community Assets, you will know from my report this time last year, following the result of a Parish referendum, the Parish Council relinquished its option to bid, or support a bid, for 'The Major's Retreats' public house. While this was sad at the time, I am now happy to say that the pub was purchased, and the new owners have said that they have every intention of reopening the pub in some shape or form in the future. However, please understand that these things take time, as I am sure you have seen, the building requires extensive work and, along with the considerable logistical and legal considerations, it is not going to happen overnight. In the meantime, thankfully the wonderful owners of The Compass continue to fill the gap and have given tipplers and non-tipplers alike a new home. Laying on activities like the weekly quiz and coffee mornings, as well hosting events like our fabulous Coronation party. Once the Parish Council has secured the government funding for the new monorail we won't even have to walk there! Thank you to Rupert, Penny, and the team for their support.

Finally, I would like to thank our SGC Council representatives, Stephen Reade and Ben Stokes for their work supporting us as a Parish Council, my Parish Council colleagues, Katy Pool, Janet Wells, Sue Giles, and Rebecca Derry-Evans for giving their time freely to help make the Parish a better place, and of course our Parish Clerk Jack Turner for keeping us on the right path!