

Chair's Report – December 2023

Show pictures of Food Bank

The first thing I would like to say is how proud I am of this village who with the help of some people from surrounding villages made a huge contribution to the Food and Toy Bank last Saturday. (photos) Many had gone to a lot of trouble, buying both food and toys and then wrapping and labelling the toys for the appropriate age group. It was a freezing day but so many braved the weather in order to give gifts food and toys. I could only think of how pleased parents would be to see happy children on Christmas morning having had some lovely chocolate in their Christmas stockings and looking excitedly at presents under the tree. All together we contributed 154.86 kilograms of food and a mountain of presents.

Our focus tonight is on the future – 2024/25. We have all learned how difficult it is to turn aspirations into reality. Projects drag on and on – we suffer from a lack of communication and action from both the district and the council on issues key to our village. And yet, we remain optimistic and positive in that we know our core value of 'community' is at the centre of everything we do.

Several of us have noticed and commented that the village demographic is changing. The results of the survey we propose to do early in 2024 will help us focus on our future plans. Meanwhile, it is important to engage with new members to the community. I've spoken with a number who have moved here from a city and the identity of being part of a village is very new to them. Key concepts in our Neighbourhood Plan are also new, for example our 'dark village', use of land, the meaning of being half in the Green Belt and half in a Conservation Zone. People move into the village and propose changes that could change the identity of the area. It is our job to work alongside them, and find out how we can forge a new community with traditional design whilst being aware of climate change and new ways of working/living.

We are currently making a complaint to Gigaclear on behalf of a number of villagers who are not happy with the delivery of full fibre broadband. A lot was promised, road were dug up and now people are having difficulty getting hooked up. Once I have agreement on my draft letter from James, I'll circulate it to the PC. Susan will also comment on a strong complaint we gave made to CDC and OCC regarding the lack of value put on our NP Design Code. The ONPA's view is that new officers need training in NPlanning and long serving officers need a reminder that NPs are part of planning regulations – a number of villages are feeling stropky about this.

We have a good meeting ahead.
Thank you

Diane Bohm. Chair