

Brent Knoll Parish Council **Annual Report for 2020/2021**

This is the annual report for the Parish Council and covers the period from May 2020 to April 2021.

The Clerk

Owen Cullwick is the only employed member of the Parish Council and is both the Proper officer and the responsible financial officer of the Council and is contracted to 12 hours per week to ensure that the Council acts legally and with full consideration to its statutory obligations and powers.

As clerk I would like to thank the Chairman and the Council for the tremendous support given to me during a difficult year and without this support my job would have been considerably more challenging.

The Council

Currently the Parish Council comprises of 11 Councillors 10 of whom were elected in May 2019 and 1 who was co-opted in 2020 under the co-option procedure as laid down.

during this Council year we held a total of 15 meetings and 1 confidential meeting.

Councillor Attendance 2020/2021

Cllr Townsend	15
Cllr Freestone	14
Cllr Filmer	14
Cllr Summers	14
Cllr Borland	14
Cllr Hurkett	13
Cllr Harper	13
Cllr Camp	12
Cllr Trivett Bill	11
Cllr Holmes	10 (Only Councillor part year)
Cllr D Knott	9

All of the meetings were held virtually and members can only be congratulated in coming to terms with new technology and managed to achieve a very high level of attendance at the Parish Council meetings.

Other Duties

In addition to Council meetings our members undertake monthly green inspections on a rota Basis to fully comply with our duty of care.

As the Chairman has pointed out in his statement a number of working groups have been formed during the year to undertake specific projects and report findings to the full Council.

The Chairman's Report

We are now half way through our elected four year term as councillors of Brent Knoll Parish Council.

I firstly must acknowledge the work of our Clerk ,Owen Cullwick, and thank him ,on behalf of all councillors, for his support and professional manner that he continuously provides to the council.

The last two years have seen the completion of the development at 2 Brent Street and the commencement of the development at Station Road. It is pleasing to see that young families, who either work in the village, or who have family ties within the village have taken advantage of these new properties.

Notwithstanding that we are a small village your councillors are constantly seeking to manage the assets of the village, these include footpaths and enhancements, roads, hedges, landscaping , the village green (new perimeter fencing), St Michael's Church grounds and communal areas. I must thank the Nuttall Trust who have provided grants over the last two years so that we can update our picnic benches with more sustainable furniture. It is pleasing to note the popularity of our play area with young children and their families.

The difficult past year has seen a major change in the way we hold our council meetings. I am pleased to report that all councilors have taken an active role in participating in virtual meetings by way of zoom. This has enabled us to ensure planning applications are dealt with in time and all councillors are kept up to date with current matters. We have carried out improvements to the village website. and increased our level of communication in particular through "NEXT Door" and Burnham on Sea.com. All our meetings can now be viewed "on line" please refer to www.brentknollvillage.co.uk and select "Council". This is a good opportunity for all residents to see their councillors in action. We hope to return to our normal "face to face" meetings mid May 2021 and ,soon after, the reinstatement of parish surgeries.

Our use of working groups to develop projects is proving to be the most efficient way of carrying out our work. Ongoing projects include the purchase of a new speed indicator device which we hope will soon be operational. The new unit will be capable of providing accurate data of traffic speeds to enable your council to report directly to the Sedgemoor North West Beat Team. Most important is the future support for the Brent Knoll Community Shop. The working group of the council are in active consultation with the Shop steering committee. Formal presentations, by both parties, will be made to the full council in May.

Being a Parish Councillor provides an opportunity for anyone to become involved in their community and provides a platform to make a difference. To all those who would like to consider standing for election in two years now is the time to get involved and find out more. You can find contact details in the Brent Knoll News or online at the village website. Alternatively please contact any of our councillors or our clerk directly.

Planning Applications 2020/2021

During the year the Parish Council consulted on 25 Planning applications which is largely in line with a typical year. The Planning team are Cllr Hurkett, Cllr Summers and Cllr Holmes. All planning matters were submitted to the District Council within the required dates.

Reporting to the Council

During the year we received monthly reports from the following and these were forwarded to all members of the Parish Council

GB Sports	Playground Inspection.
Police Activity	Regular updates on local issues.
Speedwatch	Two regular groups now formed in Burton Row and Ham Road.
Claire Faun	All regular Sedgemoor reporting

Contractors

Our Village contract was undertaken by JP Mayo and covered all of the areas under the Council's responsibility including Verges, the Green we continued to offer support with the churchyard maintenance.

We also used specialist contractors to replace the fencing on the village green in 2020 which has made a vast improvement to the aesthetics and security on the village green.

Finance

The Accounting statements this year are as in previous years prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis and are presented from the excel spreadsheet accounting process used in all previous years. The accounts run from April 1st 2020 to March 31st 2021 and cover all actual expenditure of the Parish Council

Summary of Accounts

The Parish Council commenced the year with a budget set in December 2019 approved by the Parish Council of **£35,195.00** of expenditure and an actual

Spending total of **£35,906.18**. This is remarkable given the circumstances that developed in this accounting year a difference of just **£693.00**.

On the Income side of the accounts the Council set a precept of **£33,000.00** in December of 2019 and together with Community Infrastructure Levy payments of **£14357.73** and the Covid grant of **£10,000.00** the Council received total receipts of **£61,590.98** which also includes year 4 of 5 Solar farm grant of **£2000.00** and Vat reclaim of **£1733.25**. There was also the gratefully received **£500.00** from Nuttall Trust towards the cost of a new Bench.

Specific Changes

There were a few areas of increased spending in this financial year most notably the increase in website costs due to legislative obligations and also Toilet block charges increased as there were maintenance charges early in the year that were Unforeseen. On balance we had lower costs on office expenses and room hire however much of the detailed costs were in line with both the budget and previous year's figures.

Reserves

As part of our budget process the Council looked at the reserves for the Council and they were set at approx. 6 months of annual expenditure. The Current Fixed reserves are as follows

Election Fund	£1735.00
Clerks gratuity (in lieu of pension provision)	£3690.44
Community Infrastructure Levy reserve	£20,487.86
Cottage Hill (Solar grant for Community benefit)	£2,500.00
Nuttall Grant (Picnic Bench 2021)	£500.00
Total Fixed reserves for specific allocation	<u>£28,913.30</u>

Operational Reserves (available) **£31,884.90**

This reserve represents 88% of total expenditure in 2020/21

Conclusion of Accounting Statement

In the year **2020/21** the Parish Council achieved its operations very close to the budget set in 2019. The income has grown significantly due to CIL and Covid grants and the operational reserves ended the year at much higher levels than forecast at the beginning of the financial year

The coming year has the potential to be a significant challenge as the Council moves to decide on whether to invest in the Community shop project.

As Clerk and financial officer of the Council I have no hesitation in presenting these statements to both the Parish Council and the Auditing process as accurate numbers in relation to Brent Knoll Council Finances.

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Owen J Cullwick
Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Dated : March 31st 2021