

Chairman's Report **Annual Parish Meeting 6th May 2021**

The last parish meeting was in 2019 and the intervention of Covid legislation has meant that the 2020 meeting was cancelled. The same legislation expires tomorrow hence the current meeting to be conducted in a sterile environment.

The 2019 minutes revealed that the previous chairman of the council advised that he was to stand down at the next annual meeting of the Council. However he was persuaded to carry on and further renewed his chairmanship at the 2020 council meeting. At the virtual council meeting in September 2020 Donald Burton resigned his position as a councillor and subsequently I was elected to take the chair.

The current Council consists of five councillors. In common with the national trend for Parish Councils we are finding ourselves with a number of vacancies and welcome any approaches from parishioners who wish to serve on the council. Training is available and encouraged.

Council has continued to issue two editions of its newsletter each year. This is delivered to all households in the parish by councillors. The full budget for 2021/2022 is fully disclosed in the 46th edition.

The 2019 Parish meeting recorded a presentation by Andrew MacPherson, at that stage a prospective trustee, of negotiations to fulfil obligations entered into by the Council many years ago, to place the Community Centre with tennis courts, bowling green and Recreational ground into a Charitable Trust. A number of Councillors worked with the newly formed Charity to enable the transfer to conclude on the 1st November 2019. Assets of £937,378 were transferred from the asset schedule, with £25,000 cash reserves (to address contingencies) and agreements to provide ongoing funds. The Council have provided financial support of £15,286 for the year 2020/2021 and have further agreed the sum of £13,135 for the year 2021/2022. The support is intended to include expenditure deficit over income and includes maintenance of parts that do not produce an income. It should be noted that in addition to all of these transfers to the CIO the council retained the debt that was incurred to finance the project over the years. This debt remains with the council until 2030 and at the end of the current financial year was outstanding at £87,938. It is repaid at the rate of £13,152 per annum. Council is very grateful for a generous anonymous gift of £26,000 intended to repay the debt for the next two financial years. Council has been advised of a liability under the agreement for business rates which has been levied by MSDC. The Council are making representations regarding this levy. The total sum involved is £11,676. Currently repayable in 3 yearly instalments. The Trustees of the CIO are addressing the many and varied challenges. Council are confident that the objectives that were laid out at 2019 Parish Meeting can be achieved despite the catastrophic events of the last year. These included a plan to reduce the dependency on Council funds by 50% over 4 years.

No report that reflects on the past year would be complete without a reference to the Covid19 pandemic that affected us all.

This disease affected the whole world. Our National Government responded deploying resources via The District and County Councils. The situation has also given rise to numerous professional bodies offering advice and guidance for all financial, physical and mental well-being. Their joint response is ongoing and likely to be necessary for some time to come. The Council has regularly updated its website, coddenhampc.org.uk with official data.

In common with a lot of parishes Coddenham responded with the formation of 'Coddenham Covi-19 Response Group'. (CCRG). The Council chipped in with initial funds and Councillor Neil Scoresby chaired the steering group. As time has progressed the CCRG is now the acronym for 'Coddenham Community Response Group'. The group provides a web presence for numerous local societies.

This report is the Chairman's report and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Council.

