

CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31st 2008

Harbury Parish Council is the smallest tier of local government, with one part-time employee, and yet it is also the tier that is closest to the people. The money raised in the parish is spent in the parish, maintaining assets such as the playground and the playing fields, and making grants to village organisations. All the parish councillors live in the parish, and hear about the issues that concern people in the pub, at church, on the school playground, or at any number of village events including the regular councillors' surgeries. This flow of information enables the parish council to act effectively on behalf of the village community. Another aspect of the Parish Council's role is to liaise with Stratford District Council and Warwickshire County Council to ensure that the parish gets its fair share of centralised resources. Sometimes dealing with these much larger authorities with hundreds of employees and multi-million pound budgets can be frustrating as the wheels of administration sometimes move very slowly. We are fortunate in that we have excellent working relationships with our elected district and county representatives who intervene regularly on our behalf.

There were several changes to the Parish Council during 2007-8. Dutch Van Spall, Karena Elis and Kevin Biddle all resigned due to work pressures, and we thank them for several years' service. In their stead we co-opted Ron Grey (for Deppers Bridge), Alison Baldwin and Alan Knowles. All but one of the current council stood for election in May 2008, and were re-elected. Ann Winchester chose not to stand again, and we also thank her for many years hard work on the Parish Council. We will fill the spare place by co-option.

Harbury continues to deal successfully with the challenges it has faced during the past year. A suitable masterplan was agreed for the Bishop's Bowl site; consultation is ongoing about new social housing in Bush Heath Lane; and the Parish Council was able to meet all its financial obligations while increasing its precept only by the rate of inflation. We continue to work on improving the village environment, and hope we will be able to implement some traffic calming measures in the coming year. We entered Warwickshire's Best Kept Village competition and received a Gold Award.

As ever the role of the chairman would be impossible without an effective parish clerk, and we are extremely fortunate that in Nicola we have an experienced person who ensures that parish affairs run smoothly. The work of my fellow councillors also makes my job far easier and is much appreciated.

Dr Tim Lockley
Chairman