

KIDDERMINSTER FOREIGN PARISH COUNCIL
Report from Chairman for the Year 2021/22

The last 12 months have gone extremely quickly - it seems no time since I was voted in as Chair in May last year, whilst standing outside at the Village Hall Car Park, because of Covid restrictions. I am pleased to say that we have been able to achieve a great deal over the last 12 months despite the difficult start. We have resolved many items that have appeared on the agenda, some for over 2 years. This has happened despite, for some months, a continuation of the Covid epidemic, which caused issues with meetings and has disrupted our plans, from time to time. But this has not stopped us! Some of the things achieved include:

- 1. The eventual installation of bollards at Low Habberley, that has been 'on hold' for a long time. This was not an easy install, with WCC Highways attending three times, but it is now virtually complete. This was followed up by a daffodil planting session in the Autumn, which has produced a beautiful display and will of course carry on for many years. I hope that this planting of bulbs, plants and trees will continue into the future in the Parish, for the enjoyment of all.*
- 2. The installation at last of three well made bus shelters in the Parish. This had been on the agenda for a long time, but these are now going to be of great help for many years to come, for people who need to use the bus service.*
- 3. The moving and starting up of the speed sign on Trimpley Road, which is now operational.*
- 4. The inspection, which was carried out by the Parish Council members and reported back to WCC Highways of the sump and 'cross road' pipe work in Low Habberley. This should now be complete.*
- 5. The setting up of a working party for the Churchyard, which now looks substantially better than at the start of 2021. Long may this continue!*
- 6. The plan to build a future team of contractors, who can do work when necessary for the Parish, without total reliance on the Lengthsmen was also achieved, which can only be a good thing for the future.*
- 7. The final approval, after many issues of getting people to sign up, of the 'Openreach Fibre to the house' voucher scheme for the 50% of the Parish not connected to the Bewdley Exchange. This is now fully underway, with house inspections taking place. It will make a dramatic difference in internet connectivity when it starts up sometime in the Autumn to the properties involved, who currently have very slow internet speeds.*
- 8. This year we have reduced the Parish Precept by 50%, which has been made possible by the careful spending of Parish residents monies over several years. This is the reverse of what has happened everywhere else, where generally precepts have increased. The Parish now has one of the lowest precept per head in the whole of Worcestershire. We all hope this helps a little in these difficult times! We will continue to spend money carefully for the good of the whole Parish. All the Parish Councillors are focussed on this.*

Thank you : *I would like to thank our County Councillor, Ian Hardiman, and our two District Councillors, John Byng and Paul Harrison. You have all been of great support to the Parish through some difficult times and have ensured that when help was needed from District or County Council this was done as quickly as was possible. We look forward to working with you into the future! I would also like to thank the members of the public of the Parish who have contributed time and effort to many of the things that have been achieved throughout the year. This has helped enormously. Finally, of course, I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors, for all the hard work that has taken place. I would also like to thank Elsie, our Clerk, for all the work she does on our behalf, which often involves far more than one would expect! I have enjoyed working with Elsie over the past 12 months and have learnt a great deal about how Parish Councils work! The commitment from everyone has been fantastic, with Councillors getting involved in all of the above projects and many others. This has had a great effect of bringing the Parish together with many people getting involved. This is what it is all about! I urge, for the future, for more Parish members to get involved in moving our community forward, for the benefit of all. There is still a lot to be done, but we are moving in the right direction, without a doubt. I have really enjoyed my year. Thank you all for your support.*

Chris Jordan Chairman. May 2021 - May 2022