

## Chairman's Statement

This has been 12 months full of changes. We sadly lost our Chairman Willie Luxton in 2015 and also, his predecessor as chairman, Paul Vogel. Both were Gentlemen who cared very much for this village and served its interests faithfully. They left very large boots for me to fill but I have tried my best to live up to their example.

Our Parish Clerk Heather Harris retired last year after many years of looking after the Parish Council's interests. Fiona Lowe has joined the team and is doing a grand job of guiding the Councillors around the new legal requirements and helping us to access the information we need from Torridge District Council. This is especially challenging for us, now that they have gone almost entirely paperless. She has also been wading through the old records seeing what to discard and what to keep in the files.

This year Keith Rooke retired as editor of the Petrockstowe News. He did an excellent job, which I know he enjoyed, but he wanted to take a step back and do a bit more travelling. Jane Brasier has stepped into the breach. She has tweaked it to her style and everyone I speak to agrees that she is doing a really good job, continuing to keep us informed about the happenings in the village.

We managed to secure funding to enable Wi Fi to be installed in the Baxter Hall which we think will be an extremely useful tool in the future, both to the Parish Council and the Hall.

Phase 1 of the Play Area refurbishment is happening, thanks to Josie Jeffs' tireless efforts to track down both obvious and also extremely obscure grants. Well done Josie. A new rubberised ground cover is to be installed which should need no more

attention once down and won't stain the childrens' clothes! The two new swing frames have been erected and two more modules will be installed soon. This new equipment is more durable and comes up to the modern standards. It also can be added to. However this is only the first part of the installation and there is still much to be done raising funds for the refurbishment to continue, so any fundraising ideas will be welcomed.

The Recreation Ground views have opened up since Clinton Estates removed the conifers. The car parking surface is to be improved and we all look forward to supporting the new bar when it is finished.

I think we have some challenging times ahead as Central Government seeks to devolve more powers to regions, and County & District Councils in turn put more responsibilities on to Parish & Town Councils. There have been new rules regarding transparency for us to abide by, and of course the long awaited final draft of the Torridge District local plan.

Last but definitely not least, this meeting gives me the chance to thank all those who work so hard to make this village such a lovely vibrant place to live. I have mentioned one or two people but there are so many more, the parish councillors, those who serve on the committees, organise the clubs, distribute the Petrockstowe News and even pick up litter as they walk round the village. All are volunteers who mostly get little thanks for all their work. You know who you all are. A heart felt thank you to you all. I am very honoured to be chairman of your Parish Council.

Thankyou.