

### **3. Chairman's Report**

Thanks for coming – and welcome to our guests – John Izett, Tom Thacker, Derek Mellor (congratulations on your election) and Richard Baldwin from the Police and our guests from BDBC and Sue Adams from the Kingsclere Neighbourhood Plan Committee

But first I want to introduce the Councillors who provide their time and skills on the Parish Council activities.

Marian Dain, Sam Keyse, Stephen Bate, Lissa Lowrie, Nick Owen and Jackie Bayliss.

But the person who keeps us all on track is our Parish Clerk Doreen Gascoine. I have to announce that sadly after 10 years as our stalwart clerk and responsible financial officer, Doreen has decided to retire and we are busy recruiting for her successor. This won't be an easy task because Doreen has run a fantastically tight ship and we owe her a huge debt of thanks for the work she's done over the years. We are sad to see her go and, although she's staying with us to train up the new clerk, Doreen's last PC meeting will be next month. I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing her a long and happy retirement.

Another bit of sad news is that of the sudden death of John Broxis late last year just a day after he and Heather had moved out of the parish. John served as a councillor and Chairman on ES&BG PC for a number of years and we all owe him a debt of gratitude for all the work he did on behalf of us all in the Parish. Our thoughts are with Heather and the family.

Let me say a few words about what we've done this year.

- For the first time in a couple of years we're now at full strength with 7 parish councillors.
- We've replace the coronation oak thanks to the kind donation of a parishioner
- Intention to have bonfire to commemorate WW1
- We've liaised with the two landowners to resolve the fallen tree situation in Digweeds. Not owned by the PC but we made a grant towards the work needed.
- Managed the work of the Lengthsman – a facility provided by the generosity of HCC to help with clearing ditches, cleaning road signs etc
- We've launched a new website
- Replaced the bench at pond. Again not the responsibility of the PC.

We're going to spend some time tonight talking about a neighbourhood plan – what's it all about and what do we need to do as a community to devise and deliver it. We don't have to have a plan – and there are no plans by BDBC to “allocate” a housing requirement to us in the parish – but a neighbourhood plan would help us to defend our wishes in the parish and protect our fields and green spaces that might be subject to housing development at some stage in the future.