

Welcome to our Spring 2021 newsletter. As we come to the end of the financial year, we thought it would be appropriate to provide the parish community with an update on what has been achieved in the parish in the last year. Looking forward to 2021-22 we have also set out in this newsletter our aspirations and ambitions for the year ahead and beyond. We would appreciate your feedback and ideas on what you would like to see in future editions!!

A challenging year for many of us

The COVID-19 situation made this an exceptionally difficult year for many of us, so PPC was heartened by the large number of people who contacted us with offers to help locally with shopping, pharmacy runs or just to check on neighbours. As a result of our experiences, PPC is looking to revise and update its Emergency Plan to cover its response to serious incidents that may occur in the future. With additional capacity in our offices, we are considering the creation of a formal support network. A huge thank you to those who volunteered. Keep safe everyone.....

Prestbury Playing Fields – a significant investment for the Parish

Many of you are fully aware of the improvements at the Prestbury Playing Field where the new multi-use games area (MUGA) has been built, alongside an outdoor gym and a ‘mile-a-day’ track. This is a significant community investment of approximately £200,000 (funded by monies given to PPC as a part of the Starvehall Farm development) and has been delivered on time and on budget despite



Barley Road open space

the COVID-19 regulations. These facilities have proven to be extremely popular. The maintenance costs for these new facilities will be the responsibility of PPC in future years, in a normal year adequately funded by MUGA income.



Multi use games area opened August 2020

The hedge along Prestbury Road has also been lowered and some re-planting has been carried out to create a more attractive hedgerow. In the adjacent Barley Road public open space, trees have been planted and three new tree benches are in place. Again, we look forward to the foliage developing over the next few years. Continuing with our ‘green agenda’ PPC has been working

with and given financial support to Prestbury Planters during 2020 and you will have seen the lovely planters of flowers around our parish. Our plan is to increase the number of planters across the Parish.

For the first time in many years PPC has a full complement of councillors, fifteen in total. The five new councillors are a welcome addition to a dynamic group who want to improve Prestbury for the good of the whole community. Please make your views known to your councillors via the website and tell them what is important to you: <https://prestbury-pc.gov.uk/contact/>

2021-2022

We are now at the time of year that PPC discussions are required to finalise plans for next year and to make recommendations to Cheltenham Borough Council about budgets.

PPC will be implementing several improvements during 2021 and early 2022, including:

- Working with Cheltenham Borough to investigate the possible purchase of Idsall Drive Car Park to retain it as a car park for the parish
- Tree works and planting across the Parish including at Robson Field
- Replacement and repair of broken gates and damaged fencing on the Playing Field
- Upgrading damaged noticeboards
- Providing a second defibrillator within the Parish
- Investigating the possibility of creating a Junior Football Pitch on the Playing Field

Against this ambitious programme of enhancements, as well as our regular works, PPC has been setting its “precept” (the charge to local parishioners) for the next financial year which, like council tax, is payable over 10 months. Although PPC has in recent years made very small increases in the precept, PPC is unable to sustain this. The 25% increase to start in April 2021 works out at 56p per month for a house with a Band D rating – a total of £5.60 for the whole year. To put this into context, the increased precept is likely to account for at most 1.5% of your council tax bill, compared with 1.2% this year.

Even then, our budgeted income for next year will not cover our expected expenditure and so PPC will be taking a further £10,000 from its reserves to cover the shortfall. Please visit the PPC website for a more detailed breakdown of our costs and expenditure.

During the coming months, PPC will be sharing news of progress with the development of a Parish Business Plan that will set the vision, objectives and actions for the parish over the next three to five years. As this Parish Plan should reflect your local concerns and aspirations, public consultation is essential. COVID-19 restrictions may temporarily delay our consultation process, but we will share, via our website and others means, our outline timings and goals.

Please participate in your Parish Council. Our full Parish Council Meetings take place on the second Monday of each month at 7pm. During COVID-19 restrictions, these take place by Zoom call, details of which can be obtained from our Clerk – contact parishclerk@prestbury-pc.gov.uk. Outside Covid restrictions the meetings take place in the Prestbury Library or St Nicholas Hall, details at <https://prestbury-pc.gov.uk/events/>