

SOUTH CADBURY & SUTTON MONTIS PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2023/2024

It has been another challenging year for the parish council, particularly owing to the uncertainty of the impact of the financial emergency declared by Somerset Council in the autumn to prevent the need for a Section 114 Notice to be issued, meaning the council declares it cannot meet its expenditure commitments from its income. Whilst a balanced budget for 2024-2025 was declared, the financial future remains very uncertain, and it has left parish councils bracing themselves to take on assets and services devolved from Somerset Council. Inevitably it has been necessary for the parish precept from council tax to be increased for the first time in 5 years to prepare for this.

We are most grateful to our Somerset Councillors Nicola Clark and Sarah Dyke (also our local MP), for their continued hard work and support on our behalf in raising local concerns at county level. This has included the challenge to Somerset Council about the excessive volume of HGV traffic on the very rural road between Sutton Montis and Queen Camel which has not only adversely impacted local parishioners but members of the wider community in Queen Camel, Sparkford and Corton Denham. A working party of the 4 parish councils has been formed and a robust letter signed by the chairman of the respective councils, sent to the planning enforcement team of Somerset Council requesting immediate action is taken to halt the activity at Sutton Farm which allegedly has no planning consent.

In May 2023 we welcomed Peter Cook who was co-opted as a parish councillor. Currently we have 1 remaining Casual Vacancy for a parish councillor that we are hoping to fill by co-option and welcome applications from anyone who may be interested. Please speak to the Clerk or any of the councillors if you require more information.

Purchases this year have included a new office laptop also 2 defibrillators for which 50% grant funding was secured. This will save the parish council £2000 on the current 4-year defibrillator contract with SWAST which is due for renewal next year.

The parish council has made grants totalling £1400 to both village halls, Citizens Advice Somerset, Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance, and the South Somerset Community Access Transport bus. Additionally, £4024.61 was used from income received from Community Infrastructure Levy to help purchase new toddler play equipment for the playing field in South Cadbury.

The Clerk continues to report to Somerset Council, highway disrepair matters such as potholes, roadside verge erosion, worn lines and signs and blocked storm drains and gullies. However, owing to the financial challenges faced by Somerset Council work is prioritised according to urgency of need with no known timescale for repair.

Please continue to raise any concerns you may have with the Clerk and we will do our best to address them on your behalf.

David Soper

Chairman

15/05/2024