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## **CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025**

Last year was a typical year for the Parish Council. We held 6 meetings during the year and moved forward with a number of projects. The most notable activities were:

- We welcomed councillors Terry Waites (via the election in May 2025) and Karl Brace (via co-option) to the council to replace councillors Carrie Walsh and Mike Smurthwaite who stepped down. We are very pleased to have them on board and have valued their input and contributions this year.
- We purchased a replacement defibrillator. The old one had reached the end of its life and had become unreliable. Because of the urgency of the matter, the Council moved rapidly and made the purchase. We are also putting aside a small amount of money each year to financially plan for another replacement in the future.
- We engaged a new grass cutting contractor for the Playing Field who made 10 cuts in the year. The results appear to be satisfactory. We are also grateful to our local farming community for cutting the hedge around the field. Two new picnic tables were purchased by the council and painted by Cllrs. Brace and Cowdery with paint from Cllr. Lane.
- After lobbying, the culvert where Billing Brook passes under Bullock Road was repaired by Cambridgeshire County Council. The headwall at the upstream end was collapsing and getting very close to the road. New headwalls have been built at each end; capacity wasn't increased though, which this winter's rains have demonstrated very effectively.
- We have suffered from potholes again, as is the norm for the winter. As always, we have to report them to North Northants Council if we want anything doing about it! Note that there is a new reporting tool - the HORT ! Although Fix My Street still works, North Northants Council much prefer us to use the HORT which can be found on the council website.
- We held a meeting with North Northants Council (Kier) to see if there was any chance of village gateway features. The short answer is not really - our verges are not wide enough. However, we might be able to have some road markings such as a 30MPH roundel. Bigger news is that we are well on the way to having some Speed Activated Signs in the village. We have received £5K of grant funding for the project. We have finally had approval from North Northants Council for the location of 3 posts, one at each end of the village and one in the 40MPH section. Silver Fern Agri will do the installation. A group of patient volunteers has come together to run the project once installed. A single speed activated sign will be moved around the village and data gathered to inform any future traffic calming projects.
- The village wildflower area has had signage added to prevent a repeat of a previous mowing incident. Carrie Walsh has continued to look after the area and purchase new seeds etc. as required.
- The two footpaths leading from Lutton Farm southwards towards Bullock Road have been improved by North Northants Council with new bridges and a stile. Although they are not very easy to use at this time of year because of the mud, we must all use our footpaths to keep them open.
- The Parish Council agreed to give a donation of £250 to the church in 2025 to help them with the cost of grass cutting for the churchyard.

Finally, our Clerk has indicated that she wishes to step down in the Summer. Although Kerry hasn't been with us for that long (2 years), she has made great strides in bringing us up to the latest standards expected of us. Kerry has also been the main driver for the Speed Indicator Device project, from which we will all benefit once it's installed. So now the search is on for a replacement Clerk.