

**SHRIVENHAM PARISH ASSEMBLY**  
**Chairman's Report 2018**

When giving my report last year, you may recall that I embarked on a litany of staff changes during the previous year. I am delighted to announce that we have had no staff changes since I last spoke to you. Indeed, we now have a settled and experienced team who have had some notable successes during the year, including being the only Parish Council in the District that had its audit passed without comment, setting up a new web site and registering all the land and property owned by the Parish Council with the Land Registry – something previous Parish Councils had failed to do.

During my last address, I also mentioned that one of the Councillors had resigned and that we were looking for a volunteer to be co-opted onto the Council. I'm delighted to announce that Liz Jenkins volunteered and has been on the Council since the Autumn. In addition, I revealed that Councillor Vic Clements was very ill and, although he remains very poorly, he told me last week that he would be going back into hospital soon for more treatment. We all wish him well and hope that he will be on the mend soon.

Here I must mention the continuing support I have had from all the Parish Councillors. In the eleven years that I have been on the Council, the demands on Councillors' time have increased enormously. They are unpaid volunteers and they put in a great deal of their time to ensure that our village continues to be such a fabulous place in which to live. I would like to personally thank them at this village meeting.

Inevitably, it is planning that has taken up so much of our time and here we have had our successes and our failures. Sadly, since I took over the Chairmanship, it has been far too many failures than successes and I'm afraid to say that in this, the Vale planners have done us no favours.

Taylor Wimpey continue to be a thorn in our sides. As well as causing a great deal of inconvenience to villagers, especially those on Vicarage Lane, they also put in plans to increase the number of houses on the Longcot Road site. I thought that we had a pretty good case to oppose this application. When the original application went to appeal, the inspector specified that up to 59 houses could be built. The new application took the number up to 64. But this site is not in the Vale Local Plan, and it is not needed for their 5-year land supply. In other words, there was no justification in allowing these extra houses to be built. Yet the application was passed despite my arguments against it. We have

also had little success in getting the Enforcement Team at the Vale to make Taylor Wimpey conform to the conditions placed upon them by the planning inspector.

We've had a little more success with the Townsend Road application. Bovis have, in the last year, submitted a number of plans for the site. In each case, we have consulted with residents and with the Bovis designers about the plans and slowly but surely, we have had the plans changed until the design was acceptable to people living close to the development.

We are meeting with Legal and General who will be developing the large site to the East of Highworth Road, in two phases. They seem to be very keen to include the village in decisions about the design and layout of the site. Let's hope that we can have a similar consultation exercise to the one we have just finished with Bovis.

I was delighted to join a number of other Councillors at the official opening of the affordable housing on Queen's Crescent off Highworth Road. These consist of 14 dwellings – flats and small houses for let, suitable accommodation to meet the needs of younger families of the village. I have information available about the ways in which younger people who have left the village to find more affordable accommodation in places like Swindon can make a case to go on the housing list and maybe come back into the village in affordable accommodation such as that in Queen's Crescent.

Although it seems a long time ago now, I would like to thank all those who joined with the Parish Council and the Churches in the Welcome Event here in the hall. The idea was to welcome newcomers to the village and, though some did attend, it seemed to be more of an opportunity for long standing villagers to see what other clubs and societies were doing and to socialise. I think it will be worth-while doing again, especially as the village grows in size in the coming years but perhaps it should be thrown open to everyone as a means of showing all of us what the many clubs and societies in the village are doing.

I mentioned last year that we had found enough money to install another Vehicle Activated road sign and, although it took Oxfordshire County Council long enough to get their act together to put it up, it is now working and I hope, helping to slow down traffic entering the village from Highworth.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor John Lloyd for working so hard on the village Emergency Plan. Those of you who attended his meeting in the hall earlier this year will have heard about the plans he is setting in place for emergency situations in the village and in particular for the safety of the more vulnerable members of our community.

Finally, another thank you to Pam Berridge and her Neighbourhood Plan team. The hard work has finally paid off and the first draft has been submitted to the District Officer and returned with a small number of observations. The finished pre-submission document is expected to be with the printers by the end of May. There is a short report from Pam in the documentation that you will have found on your seat.