

## **REPORT TO TOWN COUNCIL – ANNUAL MEETING MAY 2021**

Since March 2020 the country was locked down, but work continued behind the scenes, elected members and Council staff working from home, meetings and administration etc continued via internet access. Now is emergence, with many good things to look forward to.

### Communities

Lockdown does not prevent one from gardening. In fact, having a garden or some outside space has been a huge benefit and for those who do not, the regulations have encouraged at least one walk outside every day. The Town Improvements Committee is promoting a parish competition for gardens and already we have two local businesses who have sponsored prizes – CRS Building Supplies, on the Walrow Industrial Estate and Westcroft Farm Shop at Berrow. Any further donations of prizes will be very welcome whether it be garden centre vouchers or gardening items – please!!

Our community halls have been affected by the lockdown, but on the bright side this has given their administrators an opportunity to review procedures, marketing, deep clean, repair and generally get ready for the ‘grand re-openings’.

Morland Community Hub has continued to serve the community throughout. At Christmas the Hub, in partnership with the Live West and Homes in Sedgemoor Community Enablers, received food donations from local businesses, a gift of £500 worth of non-perishable groceries from Wincanton Transport. The volunteers packed and distributed over 110 food boxes on Christmas Eve to local addresses. Heartfelt thanks to all those who so generously gave, worked and supported.

### Regeneration

Highbridge is the focus of a regeneration project steered by the Sedgemoor Economic Development department. Together with colleague councillors from this Council many different aspects of regenerating the town have been formulated, including the redevelopment of the Morland Community Hub. The Trustees are in advanced discussions with Sedgemoor Council so that the value of this facility to the community will be enhanced for many more years to come.

Other projects include upgrading the facilities at Apex Park, which will be subject to consultation, possible increase in small business units for ‘starter’ businesses and also repeated pleas to the rail company to improve and upgrade the passenger waiting areas on the platforms. Before lockdown the rail company issued the figure of ¼ million passengers per year using Highbridge station – most of which are outside the tourist season – and all they have are two small bus shelter type canopies.

Whatever is in front of us, work continues and will continue to serve the community.

*Janet Keen*

*Town & District Councillor for Highbridge & Burnham Marine – District Councillor for Alstone area of West Huntspill*

*May 8<sup>th</sup> 2021*