

## THE COMPTON Toller and WYNFORD PARISH COUNCIL

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The past 14 months have proved a difficult period for administration of local government. However, I would like to start my report by thanking Michelle Harding for her support in steering a faltering Parish Council with only 4 members, back onto the rails and for the support given to the Councillors, new and old, and in installing Amanda Hart in her place as the Parish Clerk.

With local government in a state of limbo through late spring and early summer 2020 due to Covid lockdowns, to collate the accounts and assist in appointing 3 new councillors to allow the joint parishes to form a quorum, was no mean feat and both Michelle and Amanda must be applauded for their good humour, patience and hard work in a time when all is done remotely.

Regardless of the nation being home bound, meetings have been convened virtually. We have yet to meet our new clerk and three new councillors in person. Regardless of this, items concerning the Team of Parishes have continued to need addressing. The change of local government in Dorset from County and Local District Councils has appeared to have gone well and Anthony Alford as the Councillor for the Eggardon Ward has been very supportive.

Issues that required addressing by the 7 councillors continue to include the improvement of Broadband in our rural location, the resurrection of fingerposts which are no longer the remit of the highways department, the state of our rural roads and other traffic mitigation measures.

The drafting of the new Local Plan for the new Dorset Authority, proposes to change little in the parishes as no village boundaries have been drawn and policies for open countryside in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty remain restrictive. There is clearly more consideration to be had before the final version is published.

Issues that may impact on the rural setting in the future that have come to light in the past year include the proposal to open the old Bridport to Maiden Newton railway as a cycle path and tramway, although the claims made by the proposers seem to fall short of what the Landowners on the line have agreed. Also, the proposal to impose a Dorset National Park on to the area currently covered by the AONB, proposing more financial support to come to the area, while reducing the opportunities for locals and businesses to develop, all while being subject to a non- elected Park Authority. Views on these issues are diverse and will no doubt require considered debate and responses in the future.

Charles Sclater

Chairman

30<sup>th</sup> April 2021