

## CHAIRMANS REPORT 2025 2026

This has been a challenging year and I indebted to the support of the Councillors, who have unstintingly given many voluntary hours to deliver a superb culmination of the projects that arrived simultaneously.

We started the year with six councillors out of the full compliment of 11. Undaunted by the lack of numbers they continued to deliver for the Parish and meet all obligations. It is disappointing that despite their efforts we were unable to attract new members to fill the vacant seats.

At the end of the year we reluctantly accepted the resignation of long serving Councillor Colin Jacobs, whom we wish an enjoyable well earned retirement. Colin served the Parish with distinction from 2002.

Although our annual precept is approximately £58,000, through their efforts and experience, CIL income and matched fund Grants, the village received investment, enabling us to achieve £180,000 of infrastructure improvements.

It was quickly realised that more assistance was needed in the accounting and we are fortunate to find CILCA qualified person and warm welcome to Carly Small who joined as the Responsible Finance Officer early in the year.

In November Our Clerk Nicky Dunn announced that she wished to retire, but agreed stay until a new clerk was appointed. Our grateful thanks to Nicky for her service during which time she covered both offices. Following an exhaustive search we were pleased to welcome Letitia Martin as our new clerk. The Council is well set to meet the future with impending new Unitary Authority taking over from ESC and SCC. With two employees, we approach the future with confidence of well organised medium size Council.

During the year we worked with ESC to deliver the new Faulkeners Way Play Park Project. Culminating in a spectacular free opening event, supported by local business, expertly organised by Councillor Lynn Beale.

In addition The Parish Council installed new picnic tables and seating on St Marys Green, bringing the total of seating in the village to 40.

New Storage facility at the Welcome Hall

Grant funded Solar Panels for the Welcome Hall

Engaged with the Public over road safety / parking around Station Road with an expected delivery in 2026

Match Funded a new £65,000 extension to the Childrens Play area on Stennets Memorial Playing field. Much needed as this is the only public playing field serving St Marys and St Martin.

All of the work and achievements are covered in the minutes of the monthly meeting at the Welcome, where all are invited to attend to view the Council decision making.

I am proud to have led a Council who give their time to make the village an enjoyable place to live

David Southgate

Chairman