

Border Group Parish Council
Chairman's Annual Report 19 May 2015

This year has seen some big changes in the Border Group Parish council in terms of both activities and personal.

The Parish council has been very active in liaising with Balfour Beatty over many improvements on our minor roads network. Working with our excellent locality steward, Rachel Dixon, many of our worst by-roads have been either resurfaced or top dressed and although there is always more to do, I would like to thank both Rachel, Balfour Beatty and the council for all their hard work.

This year has also seen the Border Group conduct what I would suggest is the most wide ranging and comprehensive survey of its parishioners ever undertaken as part of our ongoing Neighbourhood Plan. This project has seen a small but dedicated group of parishioners, along with some excellent professional support in both Chris Gooding and Bill Bloxsome from Data Orchard, progress our plan forward to the point whereby if the Core Strategy could be finalised, we should be able to present a plan to our communities which can both enhance and protect our villages for the future in terms of development.

I would like to thank everybody who has been involved in this project for all the time and effort they have put in so far, particularly Harley Thomas, Tony Swainson, Simon Whiteman and Moira Williamson. I feel it has been a really positive process for bringing our communities together, which hopefully we can continue to a successful conclusion over the next few months.

Sadly, this year saw us lose two of this council's most dedicated supporters in both John Miles and Olwyn Barnett. John was our Chairman for many years and I think it was fair to say that he lived for the Border Group Parish Council. He worked tirelessly for the community he lived in, and his experience will be sadly missed.

Olwyn was our County Councilor in the Mortimer Ward for many years and did so much for not only this locality, but also at county level, to enhance the lives of its parishioners. I know in particular she was proud of all the work that St Michael's hospice does in support of people with terminal illness in this area. She was a founder member of a small committee faced with the challenge of building the hospice and did the bulk of the fund raising to get the building open. To think that St Michael's Hospice is now one of the country's leading cancer support centers is a fantastic legacy to Olwyn's memory. It was typical of the lady that Olwyn worked so hard behind the scenes, supported those that needed it, and never sought praise or thanks. We all have a lot to learn from her.

Along with John, Olwyn's experience and tireless work for the communities in which they lived and worked in all their lives, will be sadly missed.

I would finally like to thank all my fellow councilors for their support over the last year, and especially thank Andrew for his hard work with the finances, which he has done again without any remuneration, for which he needs commending.

I would also like to thank very much Maureen, our Clerk, who I know you will all agree has done an excellent job of supporting the Parish council in a way that has been both efficient in terms of time keeping and also in terms of getting things done. Thank you Maureen personally for all your help and advice.

I will finish by saying I look forward to working with the new council to continue the good work done by many people over many years for the benefit of everybody in our lovely parishes.

Thank you.

Stephen J Chilman
Chairman