



# **Annual Parish Meeting**

## **Report by Cllr Gerald Jennings Vice Chair of Harden Parish Council**

I would like to begin my report by thanking my fellow Councillors for their contribution to the Parish Council and to Harden over the last 12 months.

This year has seen a number of changes in the Council, with Ann Taylor joining as a new co-opted member and Gerwyn Bryan taking on the role of Vice Chair.

The Parish Council has had another busy and successful year. We have worked hard to engage with residents, seeking representative views wherever possible and responding to queries and issues.

We have started work on a Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with refreshing the Parish Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan enables the residents of Harden to help shape the future of the village and influence the wider plans and strategies proposed by Bradford MDC. We hope to appoint a Planning Consultant to work with us in developing the Plan and are very keen on having interested residents working on this alongside the Parish Council. Please do let me or the Council's Clerk know if this is of interest.

We have also started to progress the request from a number of residents for Allotments in the village. The Parish Council will set up a working group and we would welcome help from residents, so please get in touch with either myself or the Clerk.

The new website is now up and running and we have also made efforts to improve transparency by making greater use of the site to share information, such as our consultation responses. We are happy to receive information for posting on the website to help us keep everyone in the village as informed as possible.

Other projects in the year have included replanting of the village flower beds and the area around the War Memorial, alongside completing repairs to the War Memorial itself and the stonework. Remembrance Day and the Christmas Lights switch on were once again well attended and our thanks go to St Saviours for their help at both.

The community, public access defibrillator or cPAD has been installed. Swift access to defibrillation improves cardiac arrest survival rates from less than 3% to over 75% and cPAD's are being installed across the UK in areas like Harden, where ambulance response times are longer than average. The cost of the cPAD was met by a grant from the Big Lottery Fund. We are grateful to the Pharmacy for agreeing to allow the unit to be installed on their building.

The Parish Council is now also the proud owner of the former BT telephone kiosk on the corner of Long Lane and Keighley Road. We will be repairing and repainting the kiosk to maintain it's iconic status and style.

Throughout the year, we have continued to comment on planning applications received, supporting development that is in keeping with the village and opposing that which is not. Cllr Kay Kirkham is our lead on planning matters and has, once more, done a sterling job throughout the year, visiting many sites and leading our discussions.

A big issue in the year ahead has been the future of the Memorial Hall. Bradford Council had no budget to operate the Hall after April 2018 and the Parish Council has been liaising with Harden Pre-School and Bradford Council in looking into various options and giving consideration to the possibility of a community asset transfer. The Pre-School has been successful in taking on the Hall and the Parish Council look forward to supporting them in their endeavours to maintain it as a community facility, alongside the successful Pre-School.

The Memorial Hall illustrates a trend that is impacting on Local Councils across the district. Austerity means there is less money available for non-essential services and Bradford Council is increasingly looking to either close or transfer assets and to reduce non-essential services.

This presents an opportunity for Parish Councils to try and preserve those services that matter to local people. This is another reason for the Parish Council to engage with residents, to understand where these impacts will be felt locally and where we may be able to make a difference.

It's not possible to describe all activity in a year but I hope I have given a flavour of our work. I am, of course, grateful to other Members for their input and for freely giving their time to support the Council and to contribute to village life.

Gerald Jennings  
19<sup>TH</sup> April 2018