

# TEWIN PARISH COUNCIL

## Annual Chairman's Report – April 2023

In my 2022 report, I introduced the subject of the Parish Council responsibilities with regard to its stock of trees. Over the last year the Parish Council have had a professional survey done at a cost of £2500 covering some 484 trees. Note that this only includes trees on land that the Parish Council has some form of ownership or responsibility for.

This survey recommended work to varying degrees on 172 trees over several years. We have already carried out some of this work, but we are currently having work done on 31 trees mostly dead or dangerous at a cost of £5550. We will consider ongoing work on trees as part of our annual spring risk assessment.

Another ongoing problem is the repair of potholes. This is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council. The Parish Council keeps reporting potholes and chasing the Highways Department, but it is a widespread problem, and the resources of the Highways Department are limited. They prioritise work by not filling potholes unless they are a certain depth, not filling holes which are adjacent to but not actually part of the road surface etc.

Members of the public can help by reporting potholes via the Highways website.

Another area of interest is planning applications. These are the responsibility of East Herts Council. The Government guidance for planning applications is the National Planning Policy Framework. This is not always explicit and is open to interpretation by the Planning Inspectorate when applications go to appeal. These interpretations then become part of the rules, in the same way that High Court decisions become part of the criminal law. The above considerations take precedence over the policies of the East Herts District Plan. Against this background, East Herts Planning can be a slow process, and can come up with some novel results, both as permissions and refusals.

The Parish Precept for 2023-24 is £35,000. This is a 6% increase partly to take account of the expected expenditure on tree work. The household charge is 6.7% higher (£40.41 pa Band D £80.82 pa Band H). This is because it depends on the tax base which varies dependent on how many households are exempt, how many claim the single person discount, how many houses move up a band after being extended and if any new houses are added.

My thanks go to the other members of the Parish Council, and to the Parish Clerk for their help and support.

Thanks go to our County Councillor Ken Crofton and to volunteers who help the Parish Council throughout the year. Special thanks also go to our District Councillors Michael McMullen and Linda Haysey, both of whom will be retiring at the forthcoming elections in May.

We should all thank the many other volunteers who contribute so much to the quality of life in Tewin. Please don't take them for granted. New help is constantly needed. Tewin Horticultural, Arts and Crafts Society is being mothballed because of a lack of officers, Friends of Tewin is running without some senior positions being filled, and Tewin Stores is always in need of volunteers.

All Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers and all Council business is decided by a majority vote. Parish Council documentation is on the Tewin Village website.

Keith St Pier, Chairman