

Chairmans Report

In the twenty days since I inherited the rather large shoes left by Caroline, the main event was the meeting with Julie Jones from Lichfield Diocese. This was attended by myself, representing BHPC, representatives of the BH Scouts and Guides and Cllr Mark Underwood whose other hats are as the chairman of The Friends of the Glebe and the applicant for village green status. John Hitchcock, who we all know as a champion of the Glebelands, was also present for FOTG. The land agent for the Diocese, Michael Watney, was there, acting in an advisory capacity. This informal meeting was to hear all parties views on the future of the Glebe and the associated Scout hut.

A number of reasons why the land should be retained as an un-developed public space were put to Mrs Jones. These included the evident response from villagers about the threat of losing the last green space in the village centre, the ecological damage and loss of habitat for wildlife, and the concerning situation with the Scouts and Guides regarding the lack of suitable accommodation and the resulting waiting lists of children wanting to join.

Having listened to all the arguments, and expressed great sympathy to what was put to her, Mrs Jones then made it quite clear that the Diocese was intransigent on this matter and that the Glebelands was going to be developed come what may.

I then asked if the Diocese might consider granting a temporary lease for the Parish Council to maintain the Glebe, as we have done for the last 75 years, until any future planning application was resolved. Again the answer was a categorical No. Mr Watney then explained that the intention was for the Glebe to be fenced off to prevent further public access. The legal reasons for doing this would be supplied to BHPC. Our clerk received this on the 30th May and all councillors should now have it for some light bedtime reading!

Otherwise, the only hitch was in the installation of the Zipwire in the Park which Julie will cover.

June 8th will see the start of Big Green Week held on the Glebeland with kind permission of the Diocese. Hopefully the weather will be clement so villagers can enjoy the attractions whilst absorbing the 'Green' message. I know some of our councillors lead very busy lives but, if any of you are able to devote even a small amount of time to help at this event, please let Julie know. There will be a meeting at the Pavilion on Monday 3rd at 11am to make final arrangements.

Rob Ruscoe.