

## GCC Councillor Shaun Parsons: 2019/20 Report

### SOMERFORD KEYNES

Starting with the few weeks of shut sown, a singularly in appropriate word when it comes to many of the essential services provided by the county council particularly in respect of children and adult services. Officers have moved quickly and effectively into working from home, very ably assisted by IT. I am aware that you are in receipt of regular information from the council relating to Covid 19; I will therefore only give two examples as to how the county council has been able to maintain a high level of service. There are in excess of 1500 children who are living in the county and considered at risk. Their wellbeing is closely monitored by social workers, some on a daily basis, others less frequently. With schools being shut the number of referrals has dropped by about 40%, although residents are encouraged to refer any concerns they have to the council. This important service has continued without a hitch. The £150m road re-surfacing programme, after a short pause, continues. However, the opportunity has been taken to re-surface in the shutdown those roads which in more normal times are very busy. The number of covid related patients to our hospitals has been many fewer than expected and they are now re-opening their doors to those who had operations delayed. It is also interesting to note that at the time of writing this report, the county has over four weeks supply of PPE. There have been instances where complaints have been received that PPE supplies are in dangerously short supply. The said comments are often made by those who do not know where to ask for new supplies. Also, at the time of writing there are no covid testing stations in Gloucestershire, the nearest ones being at Bristol airport, which is difficult to reach from the county and Worcester. The County Council, is working with our MPs' to have a testing station in Gloucestershire ASAP. I realise that residents of SK may find it easier to travel east, though I have failed to find where the nearest testing station is in that direction. Residents in the more rural areas are of course more likely to remain virus free and that has been the case in Gloucestershire, where the overwhelming number of cases have been concentrated in Gloucester and Cheltenham.

The county works closely in partnership with a great number of other bodies, including the police, (e.g. safeguarding) the NHS and district councils. One such area of activity is the collection and disposal of waste, where the districts are responsible for the collection of waste and the county for its disposal. At the time of writing all district councils, other than the CDC, are providing a full service including the collection of garden waste. It would seem that an exceptional number of operatives are unable to work in CDC due to Covid related issues. The absenteeism percentage is higher than elsewhere, for example the level of absenteeism within the fire service due to Covid, is about 2.5%. It is to be hoped that operatives currently re-allocated from the recycling centres to help with the kerbside collection, will be able to return to their normal workstations soon, with a full collection service, including garden waste. When the re-cycling centres do reopen it is likely that at least in the first few days there will be a booking system in operation and probably a police presence

The BC (Before Coronavirus) era.

This now seems to be a long time ago, but in reality is only about five weeks. There is nothing I particularly want or need to draw residents attention to. Despite a very wet winter the Churn basin survived a very wet winter without any serious flooding issues, unlike five years ago. It is interesting to note that more rain fell last winter than the previous very wet winter, but over a much longer period of time, and there were no very long intense periods of downfall as there were then. Last week I was informed that Thames Waters capital programme for the Churn basin has been approved by OFWAT; I do not have any details of the programme

as yet. I will keep the parish informed when they become available though undoubtedly most of the schemes will be concentrated on improving the network in Cirencester. Vandalism at Neigh Bridge remains an ongoing concern to which there seems no satisfactory answer as yet.

There are always highway issues to be sorted out from time to time, not only potholes, and I would like to thank Wendy publically for the excellent working relationship she has established with Richard Gray, the Highways Manager. I am always kept fully informed as to what is happening, but very seldom do I need to become involved.

I look forward to us all being released from lockdown and am very happy to answer any questions. In the meantime may you all keep yourselves safe.

Shaun Parsons

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020