

Good Evening everyone and welcome to the 2023 Parish Meeting. This last year has given us all challenges. Some of which we have managed to overcome and others which are still being managed.

First I'd like to say a few words about this Parish Council and the role we play in the community.

The PC is a statutory body and is integral to what makes our village a great place to be. My current council were elected May 2023 and we have seven councillors. The council has seen many changes over the last year and at the moment we have vacancies for 4 more councillors. We would welcome new members, as the current shortfall does make it difficult at times to deal with all the various issues and concerns. I would like to say thank to all councillors past and present for their service to the Parish for many years.

We raise our funds through the precept, an additional annual charge that appears on the Council Tax demand that pops through our letterboxes around April time each year. The great thing about having the precept means the money can be spent on local projects, decided by the residents.

What do we do with the money raised? Well we are able to award grants to local organisations like the Scouts, the Girl Guides, the CIC (Football Club), Village Hall and other local groups which directly benefits the community.

The council working with the CIC have agreed a long term lease for the football ground with the hope that this will unlock funding and grants with an opportunity to improve playing and changing facilities.

We have taken ownership of two more allotments and are working alongside MALGA to ensure these are well run outdoor spaces. The tree planting at the Meadows was very special. Fruit trees were also planted.

Communication with the community is very important, and thanks to our Clerk we have a website and we will consider other forms of social media as we look to improve our sources of communication.

As a statutory body we respond to nearly all public consultations that affect Mulbarton including local plans, transport plans, joint spatial plans etc. This work is often time consuming and is done by councillors in their own time and to a high standard, it is also vital that we do contribute as no one else will fight our corner for us. We are very lucky to have an excellent Clerk. Lorraine is technically the Parish Council between meetings and I cannot speak highly enough of her professionalism and positive outlook.

I am happy to report the current council get on really well with each other, (yes, we do!!) and we have a very constructive and positive attitude towards the things we get presented with. As Chair, I really appreciate how fortunate the village is to have a group of Councillors who have a broad range of experience and skills to offer as we are all volunteers and do it for the love of the job(?).

We publish an agenda before every meeting and the minutes of the meeting are made public a few days later to show we are accountable and above board. We scrutinise all planning applications presented to us. For those who attend our meetings I hope we project a feeling of unity and that we are all acting in the best interests of Mulbarton. The council has ideas for the future and will want to reach out to residents to get their views.

We will be working on our strategy for the year and future and will always welcome residents views and comments at anytime. I am extremely proud of my council, and would like to thank my fellow councillors for their hard work over the last year, their support and in trusting me in the role of Chair, it has truly been an honour to represent our wonderful village.

Thank you.

Mark Kerr

Chair, Mulbarton Parish Council