**Chairman’s Report - May 19th 2022**

At last, the grip of the Covid pandemic has been released but it is certainly not a time to become complacent as there are still people suffering from its effects either on daily basis or, even worse, a long term bout of the virus leaving people with breathing difficulties and fatigue. Under these circumstances I wish all of our Parish residents the strength to repel the virus and also get back to a more normal way of life including much needed holiday breaks.

           The Parish Council has continued to operate with the Councillors working on behalf of the community on a voluntary basis although our mode of working has changed by virtue of Committee Meetings being held on Zoom rather than face to face. Legislation deems that we have to meet once a month at Full Parish Council and every third Thursday of the month 7.30pm at Tipps Cross Hall you are more than welcome to voice your concerns at the Public Forum.

             Probably the most contentious issue that has been around for the last 14 years is the development of plots R25 and R26 adjacent to Woollard Way and Orchard Piece. Despite Consultations and meetings with the Planners at Brentwood Council this disastrous development looks to have been given the green light by the Inspectorate and a pre planning application is now in the pipeline. Opposition to these plans by the Parish Council more that backed up by the Blackmore Village Heritage Association was totally over ruled despite flooding issues, lack of Primary School places, an oversubscribed doctor’s surgery and an overflowing sewage system. Please do not think that this is the end of development in the area as the new Local Development Plan is about to come into operation whereby landowners can put forward plots for development which is due to start in the 2030’s.

         A similar timescale has elapsed over our discussions with BBC regarding the issues of double taxation where we are paying for services that other parts of the Borough get for free. We had in depth meetings with the Deputy CEO in November with a follow up meeting in January when things looked quite positive and some sort of Service Level Agreement was proposed. Unfortunately nearly six months later, even though we were the flagship Parish, there has been no further progress. Obviously this is still in the too difficult box and I appeal to our Borough Councillors to take up our mantle to resolve this issue on our and other local  Parish Councils behalf’s.

          The Parish Panning Committee under the Chairmanship of Cllr.Terry Lockhart has continued to comment on applications for extensions, tree work and new housing and a very high percentage of decisions recommended to Brentwood concur with the eventual outcome. It is refreshing to see some plans for eco and less traditional designs coming forward.

          The Parks and Open Spaces Committee under the Chairmanship of Andrew Watley has continued to ensure that our environment is kept up to an excellent standard. As I reported last year there has been a demand for street furniture and planters for people to sponsor as a memorial to a loved one. With the new Beacon erected for the Queens Platinum Jubilee the Green has now reached capacity for benches and planters.

            Our playing fields have the appearance of being well cared for and the Mill Lane and Ted Marriage Recreational areas are benefitting from some much needed replacement equipment. Our sporting facilities at Walter Hobbs Field continue to be extensively used especially by the Junior Football Club who have somewhere in the region of 170 members.

            This year threw up a conundrum as not only did Ted Hall decide to stand down as Chairman of Tipps Cross Hall but we also had the retirement of Nurse Ann Davis. Ted of course had been a long standing member of the Parish Council Chairing it for many years but also worked on the rebuilding of Tipps Cross Hall after the original Ex Serviceman’s Club was demolished. Nurse Ann worked at the Deal Tree Health Centre for many years servicing our every medical need and when Covid struck became a guiding light in the inoculations at the Brentwood Centre.

             Both cases were very deserving of the Parishioner of the Year Award and it was unanimously agreed that this year it should be shared between them.

            At this point in the Report I would like to thank Sue our Parish Clerk for doing such an excellent job on our behalf despite having bouts of very poor health during the year. Similarly, Rosemarie Nelson our Responsible Finance Office must also come in for praise in keeping our balance sheets and banking in good order. Finally, a big thank you to all the Councillors who take their civic tasks so seriously and provide some superb decisions that make a difference to the way the Parish looks and functions.