

Report to Hinxworth APM 2023

Thanks to all the parish councillors and Wendy the clerk for their hard work throughout the year.

This is the final year of my term so I will be up for re-election in May. Must try not to say anything too political here as we're in the pre-election period!

This year I've continued to do my best to help individual residents with issues that arise – planning questions especially, some straightforward, others less so.

One thing I have got the planning department to do is to add a statement to the neighbour notification letter to remind people that the parish council is part of the planning process. My name is on the letter as well but you can always turn to your parish councillors for advice as they will have the first say in the decision-making process.

On the subject of planning, this was the year that finally saw the adoption of our Local Plan after five long years of deliberations by the Inspector.

The waste service has been operating well and I haven't had any complaints about missed collections this year at all. And I thought the crews did an outstanding job during the great freeze-up in December. Apart from some garden waste bins they caught up with everything in time for Christmas.

Now we are in the process of formulating and offering a new contract to start in 2025. This gives us the opportunity to correct the shortcomings of the current contract and improve our service by

- reducing general waste
- increasing recycling
- reducing our carbon footprint
- cutting costs
- maximising alignment with our partners in East Herts

This will deliver a service that is cleaner and more cost-effective than before. The alternative would be to continue with the present model – causing unnecessary environmental harm and wasting taxpayers' money.

Next: speeding is a topic that gets raised in all of Arbury's villages. I have been working with the police to see if we can set up a local Community Speedwatch group, probably based in Ashwell but also including Bygrave and Newnham at least if there's demand for it. We could then maximise the number of volunteers and cover a wider area. There will be a meeting with the police soon, open to anyone who wants to find out more about what's involved – no commitment required. I'll liaise with the parish council about this. Let me or them know if you'd like to know more.

Finally: community grants. Charities or organisations that meet the criteria (bank account, secretary, etc.) can apply to our area committee for grants for specific purposes (not general running costs). See me or the NHC website for details.

Any questions?