

Chairman's Annual report year ending 21.05.2025

I wish to first thank all my fellow Parish Councillors, our Clerk Ursula Deighton for their hard work, enthusiasm and support in the last 12 months. The Parish Council continues to serve the areas of Awre, Blakeney and the Hamlets within our Parish.

During the year Jessica Johnson resigned as a Parish Councillor. I would like to thank her for her work during his time as a Councillor and I look forward to working with her in some local projects in the future.

The Parish Council along with other Town and Parish Councils within this County continue to be proactive in supporting the public awareness of their role. The Parish Council's role has been that of a voluntary, non-political, professional one communicating and engaging with our community over their needs and concerns.

Where it is not directly within the remit of this Council, whilst still supportive of any requests, the Council have signposted these issues to the appropriate body.

A number of items throughout the year are worth highlighting:

Donations:

A number of requests have been received from charities and organisations with direct involvement with the Parish.

The Council were able to support local schemes and provide funding.

- Phone Box restoration funding for the Awre, Blakeney Hill and New Road boxes and support of the resident groups involved. The Blakeney Hill and New Road boxes will house Defibrillators.
- Funding and support for Defibrillator training for the Parish due to be held at the Awre Village Hall for all parishioners later in 2025.
- Ongoing maintenance costs for the Village greens within the Parish and Blakeney Cemetery.

The Council precept had remained at £16660, which in this time of "a cost of living crisis", indicating the Council's careful management of public monies for the Parish. Regrettably with the forthcoming large asset expenditure projects of Parish Assets the Parish Council Precept is due to increase by 10% which is on average about £20 per resident for the year.

Telephone Boxes :

Telephone boxes in the Parish are assets of the Parish Council and are due for renovation. A Council working party continues to consider the rolling programme of renovation, these would then be available for a variety of community uses. The boxes at Awre village and behind the Blakeney Post Office have been directly considered by the Council for renovation.

Groups of parishioners in the Blakeney Hill and New Road, Blakeney locations have sought permission to restore and use the telephone box in those locations for defibrillators. These proposals were welcomed and the Council are working with these groups on these projects.

Flower Baskets, planters and Wildflower Meadows:

Wildflower Meadows have been created on Nibley Green and Collins' Garden supporting the biodiversity and pollinators in the area and continue to be used.

Defibrillator @ High St Blakeney :

The Defibrillator attached to the Public conveniences on the high Street of Blakeney is well used by the community when it is needed in emergencies. The Council maintain this machine as the other machine under the Council's control. Due to there being building works equipment of third parties in front of the machine the access to the machine for the public in emergency is becoming restricted. The Council are endeavouring to resolve the issue and ensure safety of the public when using this emergency equipment.

Office of Police and Crime Commissioner

This Council is represented within the OPCC Advocacy Scheme, being able to raise and be aware of strategic issues with the Police Commissioner and Police Force representatives on a quarterly basis.

A meeting with the local Inspector in charge of Neighbourhood Policing the area was undertaken within this reporting period. As part of the discussions the Council requested regular contact from his team on results and issues to be relayed to the Council via the Clerk or Chairman.

Housing Needs Survey:

Following a survey by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council on housing needs throughout the Parish, the Council has met with them to begin exploring possible ways it may work with other partners to provide affordable housing within the Parish. This is still in the early stages and the Council will engage with the community as the process continues.

Blakeney Cemetery:

There is ongoing maintenance of the grounds including removal of Knot weed and the restoration of the hedging , following the planting of hedging whips.

The Eel and Lamprey Pass was transferred to the Parish Council for its stewardship with the cessation of the Foresters Forest Group in March 2022. The scheduled annual maintenance of the Eel pass area continues. The activities and usage of the Eel / Lamprey pass is due to be reviewed mid 2025.

Highways: The Parish Council have engaged with the Gloucestershire Highway Department on various issues in regard to road closures, hedge cutting, verge cutting and road repairs

Groundskeeper / Council Handyman

The Council have identified the need of such a role due to the shortfall of workload not being undertaken by Highways. A trial period has taken place and a this will continue within the forthcoming year.

Finally , I wish to thank all the Parishioners who have supported and contributed to the Parish in various activities in making this Parish a better place to live and work.

On behalf of the Parish Council, we look forward to a positive year ahead in our Community.

Ray Cotton

Chairman

Awre Parish Council 21st May 2025