

ANNUAL REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS IN THE THREE FIELDS WITH GREAT NOTLEY COUNTY DIVISION FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GRAHAM BUTLAND

The last twelve months have been challenging for all our communities as the effect of the COVID pandemic has been felt throughout the area.

I congratulate all eight Parish Councils on maintaining their services to residents and for the way in which many of them have helped to look after more vulnerable members of the community.

As the local County Councillor, I have not been able, due to lockdown, restrictions, to get around the area as much as I would normally do. Nevertheless, working with the Parish Clerks and being able to attend many of the Parish Council meetings via Zoom I have been able to deal with most of the local issues that have arisen.

Throughout the year Highways issues have tended to dominate the agenda together with flooding matters arising from the wet period in January and February. Essex County Council invited each County Councillor to put forward 50 potholes in their Division for priority treatment. I forwarded all the potholes “nominated” by the Parish Councils and they have been dealt with during the year. However, rather like painting the Forth Bridge, road repairs remain a never-ending task.

In February 2021, I facilitated a meeting between the Parishes and the Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst, on the issue of nuisance vehicles speeding through our villages. I am delighted that the Commissioner recognised the disturbance that it causes to residents and that he has agreed an action plan to tackle the issue.

Finally, in 2020-21 the county Council introduced a new Locality Fund whereby each County Councillor was allocated £10,000 to use in their Division to support local projects.

I was delighted that I was able to support projects in all eight of the parishes as follows,

£2,250	Salings Parish Council to provide wooden gates at entry points to the village.
£1,000	William Bendlowe Charity towards the cost of building a petanque terrain at Shalford Village Hall.
£2,000	St Mary's Church, Wethersfield towards the cost of urgent roof repairs at the church.
£1,000	Panfield Community Association towards the cost of repairs to the roof of the Village Hall.
£1,000	Great Bardfield Parish Council towards the refurbishment of the school green footpath.
£1,000	Great Notley Parish Council to support the upgrading of village maps at the entrances to Great Notley and White Court.
£700	Wethersfield Community Centre to complete flooring in the community centre rooms.
£400	Friends of the Flitch Way to support the maintenance of the area.
£300	Rayne Village Hall to purchase PPE and cleaning supplies during the pandemic.
£132	Finchingfield Guildhall to purchase a whiteboard for the Guildhall.

Let us hope that 2021-22 will see a gradual and safe return to normality.

Best wishes,

County Councillor Graham Butland