



BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL Annual Report 2018-19

From your parish councillors 2015-19

Jon Abbott, Philip Blatchford, Richard Higgins, Cath Law, Phill Roberts, John Scadding, David Stone

Our big project was natural **flood prevention work** in Binegar Bottom. John and Paul Sharp – who is also our footpaths officer – managed this with a £4,070 grant from *Somerset Rivers Authority*. There is now a “leaky pond” to manage peak surface water flows and so help prevent flooding downstream in Gurney Slade.

2018 saw the **centenary of World War I**. To mark this, Diane, Jon and Phill hosted a charity lunch. It was a great success. We shared the £660 profit between the *Royal British Legion* and *Help the Heroes*.

Improving **A37 road safety** remained a challenge. To make progress, we needed evidence so we monitored traffic in May and February. From this, we have enough to put forward serious proposals to help slow traffic, improve pedestrian safety and prevent the frequent demolition of the post office wall.

Our **new village signs** tell drivers clearly they are entering a residential area. Our crest (above) is on one. It is two chevrons, intertwined to symbolise vale and hill, Gurney Slade’s in gold for mineral riches, Binegar’s in white for the sacred sites around us. The blue background is for the Mendip Hills sky and nods to our long history as a prebend (like a manor) of Wells Cathedral.

Phill and Colin Maidment started the planting of cheerful daffodils on Marchants Hill to welcome drivers to the village. We want to plant many more but need help. Will you plant some?

This year, it became clear that **air quality** on parts of the A37 further towards Bristol was not safe. Hearing that, we arranged for Mendip to monitor levels of nitrogen dioxide – the harmful gas from vehicle exhausts – at the location in Gurney Slade where air pollution is most likely to gather. We need a full year’s results to be clear about air quality but we have been encouraged by the first month’s low reading.

An achievement – and Philip deserves credit here – was to keep **bus 173** running through the village. Without troubling to ask us, Somerset agreed to cut us out of the route. Happily, *First Bus* listened. There was, though, lots to do to get double decker buses through, so thanks to residents who cut back their trees.

Binegar **Cemetery** is ours and we maintain **Holy Trinity churchyard**. Here, we are on the way to reclaiming the yew, have felled the damaged conifer and replaced the missing pier caps on the gate, matching them to the fine ones at the cemetery. This has opened up the churchyard to light for the beautiful cherry tree and fine views of the church. In the Cemetery, a kind donor has planted a shrub to soften the view.

In the **playground** this year, Jon and his team replaced the flight of steps up to the slide. We monitor safety carefully and must thank the volunteers who help. Will you help and join our rota?

You gave your time to the **Great British Clean up** collecting more litter than you could imagine.

Our aim is to improve where we live. Often this means **small things**. This year, David and John cleared churchyard undergrowth, Jon replenished the road salt bins and Philip and Gus Halfhide sprayed roadside weeds with herbicide. We got potholes fixed, mowed lots of grass, cleared Gurney Slade drainage ditch and installed a water butt in the Churchyard to make watering grave flowers easier.

Mendip District Council consult us on **planning applications** and we consider about one a meeting. Where a proposal is controversial, we ask for your help. Together, we fought off an unwelcome big development.

Looking after your interests means scrutinising plans, like Somerset’s one for **Shepton Mallet library**. We supported the Town Council’s plan to keep it. No civilised society sets out to destroy its cultural assets.

Finally, we must thank Diane, our Parish Clerk, without whom none of this would have happened and Richard, our Chair, for leading the Council for the last four years.