

SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mrs M Clark, Somersham Parish Council Chairman.

It seems hard to believe that a year has passed since I became Chairman of Somersham Parish Council, but since I have been asked to write the Annual report I guess it must be true. I would have to say that I believe it has been a good year for the Council, not least when you read about the achievement of Quality Status. It is traditional to end the Chairman's report by thanking all those who have contributed to the year's achievement, but in a break with tradition I would like to start by thanking Penny, our very able and trusted Clerk and the team that work with her in the Parish, Henry, Yasmin, Hannah and Marie.

One significant achievement for the year has been the laying of the pathway around the lake. As I am sure those of you who know this area will agree it is a peaceful haven within the Parish, and can be a tranquil place to reflect on what life brings our way. I am aware that there have been some concerns about interference with the natural setting by the introduction of so much tarmac, but for those with buggies or wheelchairs this beautiful spot is now accessible. It was reported that perhaps the Parish Council could have spent what the path cost more wisely. I am delighted to report that of the total cost of £ 28,257.25 just £ 927.25 came from Parish Funds which had already been allocated to the Lake area. We are keen to ensure that the lake area remains a calm and welcoming space, so if you see this oasis of calm being disrupted please report the problem to the Police or the Parish Clerk so that action can be taken.

Those of you who have been keeping abreast of Parish Council activities through Voices over the course of the year will know that the Parish Council borrowed £ 18,000 to finance the essential repairs and refurbishment to the Victory Hall. We are pleased to note the overall improvement of this much used village facility and wish the Victory Hall Management Committee well with their continued efforts. The repayments of this loan are being financed by earmarking the recycling credits earned from the paper, bottles and cans that are recycled within the village. We would like to encourage you to continue supporting the Parish by using this facility.

The Millennium Sports Pavilion is now operating as a Trust, a separate entity from the Parish Council but supported financially as it increases its income from users. There has been a considerable increase in activity over the past year and promise of more to come. It is hoped that 2006-2007 may see the installation of an artificial surface for year round training.

The Christmas Lights working party excelled themselves once again; the village looked almost magical throughout the festive season.

It was with deep sadness the Council learned of the sudden and untimely death of Bruce Baker. Bruce had been a stalwart of Somersham Parish Council for many years; his contribution to village life had been immense. He will be missed.

As the year draws to a close we have just learned that we have been awarded a grant of £4,200 from Awards for All to upgrade the CCTV system in the village, most particularly at the Victory Hall. We are confident that the new system will prove a vital tool against the disruptive element that spoil the area and enjoyment of others by their anti-social behaviour. At the time of writing we are securing quotations for the work and hope that it will be in place before the Summer.

All in all I feel that 2005-2006 has been a successful year for Somersham Parish Council, I have enjoyed this first year as Chairman. We are fortunate to have a vibrant and dedicated team of councillors who each make a significant contribution. I would personally like to thank each one of them for all that they do, both to support the Council and to make a difference in Somersham. Thank you all.