

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS – 2026

INTRODUCTION

Good evening and welcome to the 2026 Parish Assembly. It's nice to see residents at the meeting as normally, we only have one or two at our monthly meetings. We are either doing something right, or something wrong. This is the meeting where we get to tell you what we have been doing over the past year, and what we are proposing for the next year.

So here goes.

FINANCES

Over the past few years we have been informed by the External Auditor that we have been carrying too much money in reserve. We hold approximately 1½ times the precept whereas they have said half is sufficient. We challenged this as three years ago, we were informed the electricity charges for our street lights would rise from £8,000 to £25,000, something we could not live with. On top of this, we know have to pay a charge for emptying litter and dog litter bins, which previously, the Borough Council did. We are looking to spend some of the reserve on The Pavilion, which is well overdue for some improvements.

POLICING / COMMUNITY ALERTS

Steve has made great inroads into forming a good relationship with the Police. The monthly surgeries in the Pavilion have been a success, although some weeks they are a little sparse of residents. It's nice to see that we have accessibility to the Police and that they do listen and act on resident's concerns, from parking to motor bikes in the woods. You might not see them in the village, but I can assure you that they are here on a regular basis.

LITTER PICK

I can only offer a big 'thank you' to Lisa Male and her merry gang of litter pickers, who do a sterling job of cleaning the streets and parks of Binley Woods. Four time a year you will see them in hi-vis jackets, no matter what the weather, with bags-n-grabs, conscientiously picking up every last little piece of debris. This is all about taking pride in the area, and a lot of her volunteers certainly do this. I know Lisa take a lot of the praise for her organisation skills, but thanks go to everybody who helps.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS/PLANNING

There has not been much movement towards local development over the past year, and apart from speculation, no plans have been put forward for consideration. Both the Speedway and the Nursery site have gone quiet, with nothing tabled. The only slightly contentions areas are the Council Garages around the village. The site behind the children's nursery on Birchwood Road has been 'put-up' for sale, and we just hope that whoever purchases the site will be sensitive to our needs and not try and overdevelop it. As soon as we have any information, we will keep you informed.

POT HOLES

My background as an aircraft engineer instilled in me that things had to be right first time. This makes me wonder why filled pot holes are being refilled on a regular basis. You only have to look at Oakdale Road and Woodlands Road to see what I mean. Both have been repaired what seems like every two weeks. The tarmac breaks up and spreads all over the roads, and the men are back. Perhaps the County Council have too much money and need to disperse of some of it.

PAVILION

I touched earlier in my report that we are looking at improvements to The Pavilion. The outside has had a coat of paint, but the inside now looks very tired. We have been investigating a new kitchen, new doors and a repaint of the inside. It is a sports facility first, but the Café in the Park has been a great success. Now is the time to invest in the hope that we may be able to hire it out for occasions throughout the mid-week.

CONCLUSION

Once again, I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors, who have done a sterling job throughout the year. We have a 'team' who each have their own jobs on the Parish Council, whether it is recreation grounds, policing, lighting or anything else we are involved with. Please remember, we are all volunteers and are working to make the village a better and safer place to live.

Finally, I have just completed my 24th year as Chairman on the Council. I can honestly say that it has been a joy and privilege for me to serve as Chair. There comes a time when new blood is required, with new ideas and a greater fitness, to take the village to the next level. With this in mind, I have decided that this will be my final year, and I will step down in May 2027. It is time for change, but I will always be there to offer advice should I be asked.

Thank You.