# End of year report 2017/18

## Finances

On the attached Financial report, you will see that the Community Fund was over spent (more work was needed on the hall than we anticipated), but overall we were 10% under the total budgets set, mainly because the playing field improvements did not progress as planned (see below). To achieve the significant and much needed improvements to the hall, we utilised some of our reserves, but with the unspent amount carried forward plus the VAT reclaim, we will retain around £8000.

We continue to support the Villager to ensure it is delivered free to every household; the Church, to help maintain the public grounds; the Playgroup; other local organisations; and, of course general maintenance of the hall, playing field and other areas of the village.

## People

During the last year we lost two big characters - Jim Parsons had a lifetime of experience in local politics, and helped make our council run smoothly, because he always knew who to speak to, to resolve any issues that we encountered. My dear friend John Catterall (who first brought me into the council) will also be greatly missed for his forthright financial analysis, and honest assessments of potential projects. But with every loss there is an opportunity, and we have welcomed two new councillors; Christine Howell, and Craig Forster. We also have a new District Councillor, Richard Morgan, and following the retirement of Tony Hicks, our new County Councillor is Stephen Hirst.

## Achievements

The school kitchen has always been largely off limits to us, as it is sub-contracted to the school caterers via GCC. However, it became apparent that it was pretty much condemned, and could be a danger to the rest of the building. Following months of detailed negotiations and meticulous design, led by John Collinson our project manager, all parties came together to create one of the best school catering facilities in the area. The project spawned additional (and expensive) remedial works focussed around safety and fire protection for the entire building, which has meant we can shortly bring the reading room back into use for our PC meetings – this will be dedicated as the Jim Parsons Reading Room.

The condition of our roads continues to occupy our attention, and we work closely with our district, county, and Highways colleagues to fix the most urgent issues, and prioritise other works in our area.

Our two new visitor notice boards are proving popular, but we will move them to new positions on the north side of the road to make them easier to interpret.

We have purchased the old phone box at the corner of old Hill and Lawrence Road, and will be installing a second defibrillator in it shortly.

This summer will see the completion of a long project to restore our historic village pumps. A few years ago, the pumps were enthusiastically adopted by individuals and organisations, but while things may have seemed to have gone quiet, there has been a lot of work going on behind the scenes to get planning permission (they are listed features), and designs for the new parts. These new parts will be fitted over the coming weeks.

One of our main aims has been to bring people together, and to give the village a sense of community. We have initiated or improved several events to encourage people out to join us. The Christmas tree lighting has become an established tradition, and the new AGM/show format also looks like a winner. Both of these events have attracted younger people and families, which is really encouraging. This year is a bumper year for events, with the return of Pig Face day in September, and the WW1 celebration and show in November. These are of course woven into the summer season of fetes, shows, and one off special events organised by a myriad of volunteers.

## Playing field

This should ideally have been in the achievements section, but we didn’t covey our vision for the project effectively, and following an adverse public reaction to some elements and a misunderstanding of others, we are reviewing plans and re-consulting on what should be done.

## Website and social

The website continues to evolve, and its already rich and informative content is being supplemented by a new ‘History’ section – this will continue to grow over the coming year to showcase photos, documents and artefacts from Avening’s past. Also, having located historic copies of the Villager, these will be added very soon.

Our Facebook page now has almost 350 followers, and is a valuable direct communication tool. As well as PC events and news, the public are free to use it for other important messages and publicity.

## The coming year

This will continue to be a particularly busy year for events and ongoing projects, but as we enter the final year of our current tenure before local elections in May 2019, we will continue to strive to make Avening an even better place to live, work, and play.

We always welcome members of the public to our meetings, but you can also contact the clerk, or any PC member directly if you have any comments, issues or suggestions that we might be able to help with.