“Councillor’s Corner” notice

**A New Full Council; A New Flagpole and A Revised Neighbourhood Plan**

**Your Help Needed**

At our first meeting after the summer break, we co-opted Eliza Lewis to take the sixth available place on the Parish Council. So we are now a full team. Our lead responsibilities will be:

**Christopher Prentice** - Chair and Representative on the Village Hall Committee and the Neighbourhood Planning Group

**James Greenham** - Vice Chair and Volunteers Co-ordinator

**Huw Owen** – Finance Officer

**Molly Westen** - Website Officer

**Daniel Crowley** - Highways Officer

**Eliza Lewis** - The Connectivity Agenda; Communications Lead

We are here to serve the whole community as best we can over the next four years.

There are two initiatives which I wish to highlight and for which we need your help.

First, **the time has come to review and update our Neighbourhood Plan**, which you voted for so enthusiastically in 2019. Major developments in planning and development are underway at local and national government level which we need to try to influence. Those emerging new policies will have to be reflected in our own NP, if it is to be at all effective in promoting what we want for our community. Climate Change / Sustainability and Transport and Digital Connectivity are at the heart of this new agenda.

To lead this review, **we have set up a new Steering Group** and I invite everyone with an interest, please, to come forward and share your thoughts and expertise. The first task of the group will be to consult all residents about what is going to be most important to us as a community over the next 25 years.

**Please consider coming forward to contribute to this effort.** No particular experience or professional background is needed. Awareness of our community’s needs and the will to help is enough.

If you are interested in joining this effort, please contact Christopher Prentice either by text message to 07444786786 or by email at cnrprentice@gmail.com

The Group will be meeting next at 1900 on Wednesday 18 October in the Rose and Crown. Please come along. You will not be committing yourself to any long-term role.

Second, **we need everyone’s help to restore a flagpole to the top of the church tower**. After last year’s Platinum Jubilee, there were calls for the parish to have a flag to fly and much debate followed on where it might be put and how to pay for it. Last week the Council decided that the best place for a flagpole, if the funds for it can be found, will be back on top of the church tower, where flags have been flown in centuries past and from where a flag can still be seen from many approaches to Ashbury. The Church Wardens have agreed to the project, a volunteer has offered to manage the flying of a flag from the tower for the first two years and we are confident planning consent for a listed building can be obtained. **We now only need to raise the funds. At this stage we believe we need an additional £2,000**, to add to the £1,000 grant already in hand from OCC.

We hope that this is a project which will appeal to all in the parish. The best result would be to raise the £2,000 through hundreds of smaller donations. That would show true breadth of support and engagement across the community. We are launching this appeal now and urge you, please, to give whatever you can afford to **“Fly the Flag for Ashbury”.**

There will be collecting boxes in the Rose and Crown and the Ashbury Village Shop; and we are planning other initiatives to help to reach our goal. Perhaps a sponsored walk; or a craft project with wood from a churchyard elm, which is having to be cut down. Every little will help. If you have an idea for raising funds for “Fly the Flag for Ashbury”, do please let us know.

**To give direct now to the appeal, please send your donation** by BACS to the following account:

Account Name: Ashbury Parish Council

Sort Code: 30-13-35

Account No. 01946200

Reference: Flagpole

With your help, we can reach this goal and fly the flag!

Christopher Prentice

Chair, APC