Over the past 4 years we have not increased the precept in spite of taking on additional responsibilities. We have been fortunate in retaining the Parish Grant from the District Council as the current intention is to finally phase it out – however, I hope this does not happen.

The Work Hub opened in November. It has become very successful with all offices leased out. This is a major achievement and a major responsibility for the Parish Council.

We have continued our policy of updating our play equipment. The Knowle Play Park Castle themed play tower will be installed early in May.

Fortunately, we have secured 106 funding towards the Village Green while also receiving funding from the community. The Elm “New Horizon” has been planted to replace the Norway Maple and the circular bench is now installed with additional landscaping around it. When the final works are completed, that will be the time to officially thank all those involved.

We continue to maintain the County Verge grass cutting and the daily litter picking. It would be helpful if the County Council could give us a 3 year contract as opposed to an annual one.

During the year we have installed two new dog waste bins. The emptying of the Parish owned dog bins is now done in house and negotiations are ongoing with the District Council.

We have continued to publish the Braunton Express newsletter in EX33.

A small step forward with the Air Quality monitoring now includes the Parish Clerk attending the principal authorities’ Technical Working Group meetings. We earnestly hope that substantial progress can now be made.

The upgrading of the drainage system in Caen Street has now been complemented by the installation of the underground pump. Training has taken place regarding maintenance. The soft engineering of the Acland Stream catchment area continues. Working with the Flood Resilience Team a new flood defence scheme has been built alongside Deans Bridge. The Parish Council made a contribution to this scheme.

Sadly, during the year, Councillor Linda Wellstead passed away. Clearly, she was a committed councillor and was never afraid to make her contribution at meetings.

The result of Linda’s passing triggered a by-election and we welcome back to the Council, Councillor Marguerite Shapland. She has a wealth of experience to contribute.

The popular annual Christmas Market was held again in 2018. In addition of course many events were held on the Recreation Ground - The Village Fair, Big Bash, Inflatable Extravaganza, Wheels, Braunton Free Traders and Dog Show.

The Tour of Britain Cycle Race proved to be very popular and we were very proud to welcome them through the village.

The Community Shared Space continues to be popular – charity stalls, craft markets and live music. The Parish Hall is regularly let out to many organisations and private individuals.

Plans for the Museum refurbishments have been fully supported by the Parish.

November saw the centenary of the end of the Second World War. This saw a considerably increased attendance at the Remembrance parade and service which were held on Sunday 11th November 2018. This was a very poignant event. I thank not only our Clerk who put so much effort into it but also the Royal British Legion, the Church and many others who gave additional meaning to this celebration.

During the year plans were started for the D Day 75 year anniversary arrangements – the Parish Council are supporting the Royal British Legion and allowing them to hold their 40s dinner and dance free of charge in the Parish Hall on 15th June 2019. The Museum is putting on an exhibition and there will be events on Saunton Beach, and more.

For the second year running, this year’s Parish Council Civic Service was dedicated to Live Well in Braunton with a collection at the service amounting to £207.66. We are very pleased that Live Well has obtained a substantial grant towards the administration and coordination.

We’re delighted that the Parish Council worked with the Devon Air Ambulance Trust to secure a Night Landing Site for their helicopter in the Recreation Ground.

Finally, the North Devon Local Development Plan has been adopted. This paves the way for the Air Quality Supplementary Document, particularly relevant to Braunton.

The Council remain committed to reviewing the Parish Plan.

The resurfacing of the overflow car park will take place in May.

We continue to negotiate with Devon County Council to get permission to install finger post signs in the village.

We're looking forward to seeing the colourful display of wildflowers which have been seeded on the verge of the Tarka Trail behind the fire station. By attracting a greater number of insects, this should help the rare greater horseshoe bats that live nearby.

It is with great pleasure that I thank all the Councillors for the hard work and diligence they have given to the Council and the community throughout not only 2018 but for the 4 years of this current Council. This is also the time to thank those who are not standing again for election. We very much appreciate all that you have done for the village, and indeed in other spheres you still do so. For those standing again, I wish you all well!

Finally, my grateful thanks to Tracey and her hardworking team, both office staff and outdoor staff - without them we could not operate.

Councillor Derrick Spear

Chairman