

## **Chairman's Report**

**14<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Looking out of the window at the trees being blown sideways, as I write this on Monday, I think we can all be thankful that Friday was a lovely balmy day to celebrate VE day, without having to chase our bunting to Evercreech to retrieve it! It was great to see so many people in Cornwall Road having a street party from the comfort of their own drives. In the afternoon I went for a long walk and the theme was the same in Shaftgate Avenue where the party was still going on long after dark. Although we all met to celebrate the end of the war, we need to remember the fallen and as you may have seen elsewhere, The Royal British Legion laid a wreath at the Cenotaph with the police paying respect from a safe distance. It is worth remembering that the men and women we pay our respects to are a dwindling number now and it was sad to see that Flight Lieutenant Terry Clark died on the eve of VE day. He was one of the few who flew in the Battle of Britain, his death leaves just one member left. It's also worth remembering how young these men and women were, Flight Lieutenant Clark was 101 when he died, so was just a young lad of 21 during the battle of Britain.

We will all be aware that the Prime Minister announced a few changes to the way we can go about our daily business on Sunday evening. The message is open to interpretation, but please still respect the social distancing rules when enjoying the increased amount of time you can spend enjoying places such as our wonderful park. The main message was be alert, as the old joke goes Britain needs lerts!

It was good to see cycling and walking mentioned in the brief and one of my many walks of late was to investigate potential routes for The Strawberry Line and how we can overcome the logistics of routing along a partially developed corridor. As a body, the Town Council have some finances set aside for this project and I believe it is important to make some headway on this as this will encourage those who have enjoyed their Boris hour to stay on their bikes once we return to normal. It would be nice to think that the upsurge in cycling and walking is maintained and that cars can be left at home for short journeys. It has been noticed worldwide how quickly the planet is able to recover from the lack of pollution. London is cleaner without cars and the Himalayas can be seen from Punjab, an Indian state a hundred miles away, as the air clears and the mountains are visible for the first time in 30 years. I know our pollution levels are not at the level of India, or indeed London, but think of the benefit to our school children of the lower pollution levels, especially as all schools in Shepton are on busy through routes; food for thought. On that note I'm off as I need to remember I'm not padding an essay at school!

**Edric Hobbs, Chair, Shepton Mallet Town Council**