



Chairman's Report April 2021 to March 2022

Presented at Annual Parish Meeting – 23rd May 2022.

Another strange year has passed for us all, but the Parish Council has continued to operate efficiently throughout.

We said farewell to 3 councillors during the year so were somewhat shorthanded culminating in a few taking on much more work. However, we were fortunate to recruit Steve McAuliffe in July, Sam Wicks in September, and Toby Hewson in January this year.

However, as you know I have now retired so there is another vacancy.

The majority of councillors are working so you are needed to help be their eyes and ears around our villages.

All Parish Council and committee meetings are held in public, and you are welcome to come and see what happens.

Councillors also represent the parish on other groups including Walberton Village Hall, Community Play Centre, Walberton & Binsted school, BEWAG (Barnham, Eastergate, Westergate Advisory Group) ADALC (Arun District Association of Local Councils), Arun DC Parish briefings, Villages Community Resilience team (Yapton, Clymping and Walberton).

There have been a total of 26 meetings over the year of Full council, Planning, General Purposes and Finance and Legal.

74 planning applications were reviewed – varying from simple to very complicated. Concerns have been lodged with Arun about 4 non-compliance issues – none have been investigated yet as Arun are operating with a team of only 1 instead of 5. Most applications for additional housing were refused by Arun DC but 2 are at appeal stage. It is suspected there are other appeals in the pipeline as the Planning Inspectorate is currently almost 6 months behind! An additional complication is that Arun have not met their housing target.

What a **Grey** time we are having with the **A27**. The Highways Working Group consists of some councillors and 5 residents. We were extremely grateful for their help in researching and commenting on many aspects of

the consultation. The council has committed more than £30,000 from our Protect Our Parish (POP) fund for legal advice. The response to National Highways was 35 pages plus 7 appendices and is on the web site. There is likely to be a further consultation this summer before NH apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in the Autumn when there will further opportunities for you to air your views.

Traffic Calming. There are strict rules, mostly through West Sussex County Council, that must be followed, and this often takes months to navigate and negotiate. At long last the 30 roundels have been painted on our roads and by the time you read this the Speed Indicator Device (SID) may be operational on Yapton Lane. SID will also be used on Barnham Lane and West Walberton Lane. Work is continuing on applications for 20 mph speed limits, but this too will take time!

Grants – were increased to £6,000 per annum for local organisations and just under £5,000 was distributed.

For the third year we are delighted to have had zero increase in Walberton Parish Council's portion of your council tax. The annual cost per Band D dwelling is £60.34 which is well below the average Parish Council share in Arun district of £79.56.

Fontwell Meadows

The Parish Council now owns the 11 acres of Public Open Space on this development. This area will include allotments – several people have already registered interest, a community orchard, paddocks, play areas and a MUGA – Multi Use Games Area.

In addition, a new community building has been started incorporating the Old Bottle Store and this will in due course be transferred to our ownership.

Avisford Grange

We are pleased that at long last building has recommenced. We fought the Tye Lane access, which was refused, and managed to obtain through a Freedom of Information Request a copy of a legal document signed by the landowner and National Highways confirming that Yapton Lane access will be retained.

There will be 2 tennis courts, adjacent to the playing field, which will be transferred to the council's ownership.

Neighbourhood Plan

We completed the update and you voted overwhelmingly to support this. Several planning applications have been objected to based on the Plan and indeed we supported some.

Way back in 2009 local friends suggested I join the Parish Council. My initial reaction was laughter, but I joined in 2010 and my 12 years as a councillor have been both enjoyable and interesting although extremely challenging at times!

My thanks go to so many people for their support over the years. Councillors, our Clerk, volunteers, local businesses and you, our residents.

Back in 1980 Maggie Thatcher said

'A great nation is the voluntary creation of its people—a people composed of men and women whose pride in themselves is founded on the knowledge of what they can give to a community of which they in turn can be proud.'

This equally applies to our villages, and I am proud to be a part of this community.

I wish the Parish Council well for the future and am sure they will continue to help keep our villages a great place to grow up, grow businesses and grow old.

Suzanne Clark

Walberton Parish Council Chairman – 2016 to 2022.