

Well, it's been another active year for the Council, and I think we can be pleased with the improvements and additions we have made to the village and our engagement with residents, listening to their views and representing them in the best way we can. I would like to thank all my fellow councillors for their commitment and hard work during the year, we function well as a group and contribute both as a group and individually. Massive thanks also to Vysian, our Parish Clerk, she does so much to keep the Council operating effectively and her knowledge and years of experience are invaluable.

What have we achieved during the year?

During the year we organised a Street Party for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which brought together a pleasing number of volunteers who were prepared to help with the organisation. The event went really well and over 100 people attended in all, on what was a special day.

Having spent a significant amount of our reserves in the previous year on a number of projects we have been more prudent this year but have still managed to make improvements to the village. We planted a total of 11 trees on the Playing Field under a resident sponsorship scheme and these are growing well despite some drought challenges last summer. Bulbs were also planted around the trees and the Hay Field area now looks significantly improved. We have some money left over and are planning to plant a further tree this year in celebration of the coronation of King Charles III.

We have been continuing to monitor the safety of the equipment on our Playing Field and some renovation work has been carried out. We have also purchased nets for the Junior Football Goals and this has been well received by some of the younger residents of the village. We also felt that our existing noticeboard, sited at the old Bus Stop, needed to be more visible to residents so a new Noticeboard was purchased and has been placed, after agreement with the Beckingham Bell Public House owners and landlords, on Beckingham Bell Green. We made a small increase in the precept last year but have decided to maintain the same level for this year as our reserves are at a satisfactory level and we have no plans for any major spending this year.

Planning issues, as always, have taken up a considerable amount of our time and, as always, there have been frustrations and dismay at some of the decisions that have been made and you cannot please everyone. However, as a council, I believe that we have listened to the views of the village and have supported these where we have been able to and put these views forward in a coherent and balanced way. We have no decision-making capacity as a council but our views are taken into account and it is important that we and the village as a whole engage in the planning process if we wish to have any influence on those decisions. We live in a lovely rural environment and it is always a challenge to try and maintain that environment but at the same time allow sympathetic and enhancing developments.

Road safety is also a constant battle and we have continued to fund regular SpeedCam operations in the village. Our Community Speed Watch program has started again but with a small number of people who are willing/able to be involved it is not operated as frequently as would be desirable. We continue to investigate the purchase/installation of an electronic speed sign in the village but this will require additional funding in the future. Parking issues outside the Business Park have not improved and we continue to monitor this situation although there is little we can do at this time.

Footpaths are very much a part of country life and we have a significant number in our parish area. We are fortunate to have one member of our council who has been interested in footpath maintenance for many years and along with members of the public helps to keep our footpaths safe and accessible by reporting any safety issues to the appropriate authority.

The Parish Council registered its interest in supporting the Homes for Ukraine scheme and although no refugees were sponsored through the council there were at least two Ukrainian families who

were accommodated by residents and both have now moved on to find their own accommodation and new lives in the UK.

Following last years' Jubilee celebrations for Queen Elizabeth and her subsequent passing we have the new King's Coronation celebrations in May, let's hope this is another wonderful occasion for the village.

This will be my last year as Chairman and I would like to pass on by best wishes to the new Chairman, who will have my continued support on the council.