

Chairman's Report 2011

Looking at last year's report for inspiration, I was again struck by the continuing work that the Parish Council does, fortunately our time is still spent on all the usual things that concern our community, the three "P"s , Planning, Potholes and Parking!! And perhaps I should now add a fourth, Pennies, as, in these straightened times we have to watch our finances so carefully in order to keep within our budget without increasing our call upon our residents.

This year we have set a budget that maintained our precept at its previous level, any increase shown on Council Tax Bills being due to the fact that there were sadly so many deaths in our village last year, and therefore so many properties awaiting probate and because of that, not taxable.

The Parish Council has spent a lot of time and care looking at planning applications, and, as always, have had disappointments in some decisions taken by inspectors. We await more details of the future role of Parishes in these decisions as the Localism Bill becomes a reality, and hope that more weight will be given to really local opinion. Planning Enforcement has also been high on our agenda this year, as we continue to try to protect our village from unauthorised development.

The snow before Christmas, what a long time ago that seems, again caused disruption, but we have now persuaded Kent Highways that School Lane should be kept clear, we have also taken delivery of an extra Salt/grit supply that is in the corner of the overflow car park. We hope in future that we will be able to arrange for this to be distributed should there be a need. The pothole situation has not been as bad as last year, but we still have a few quite vicious ones awaiting the attention of Kent Highways. The Parish Council reports these regularly, but I would like to stress that any resident can report problems direct to Kent Highways and would urge you to do so.

The new posts for the Village Green have been decided upon, and we await their installation, thanks to Sarah Hohler for financing this for us through one of her special grants. While talking about the Village Green, I must thank Jimmy again for mowing it and keeping it looking so nice. Also thanks to The George for erecting and lighting another beautiful Christmas Tree, and thanks to Richard for arranging it's supply.

The problem of parking outside the George seemed to have been solved last summer, huge thanks to our local police presence, and also to Alan and Mark for making additional parking available. I did notice that a few cars were illegally parked last Sunday, but I am sure a little reminder will solve that.

The allotments continue to be well used, thanks to Martin for looking after them for us. I believe we do have a vacant one if anyone is interested.

The Play Area also continues to be well used, thank you to Mike for all the work he continues to do here, also we were very grateful to the Scott family for their generous donation in memory of Lily, Geoff and Ken King, which enabled us to install another seat on the recreation ground and a wonderful Camel in the play area.

Thanks to Trevor for making a new parish notice board for Pinesfield Lane. Comments regarding the size of it have been noted, and if residents feel it is necessary, we will try to provide a larger board for general use. Unfortunately we do not have representation from Pinesfield Lane on our council, so it is up to residents to let us know of any particular concerns they have.

We really would like to see more members of the public at our meetings, not only when there is a problem, but also to take an interest in our community, a reminder that we meet on the first Thursday of the month 7.45 in the Village Hall, we would love to see you.

As we were returned unopposed at the elections last week, I hope that means that the village are happy with what we do. I know that all members contribute a lot to the community and would like to thank them all for all their work, commitment and support. I would also like to thank Kim Hockey for her regular attendance at our meetings and her continuing assistance.

Thanks also to Matthew Balfour and Sarah Hohler for their support and advice.

And finally, my greatest thanks to Frances, our clerk, for the huge amount of work that she does so efficiently, we really couldn't function without her!!!