

## **Ferring Parish Council - Chairman's Report 2022**

As we come to the end of another Council year and look back at what has been another "abnormal" year which hopefully has seen us start to move into a greater degree of normality, whilst reflecting on the challenges to life in general for our community over the past 12 months.

I would firstly like to again recognise the sterling work done by our Parish Clerk and Admin Assistant over the past year and thanks them for maintain that key link between the Council and the Community. They are the public face of the council and provide a huge range of support and guidance/help to residents. In this year alone, this has ranged from managing the allotments, reinvigorating the Christmas Market and Remembrance Services, during periods of great uncertainty, and dealing with the direct and indirect impacts of Road Traffic Accidents, many of which are clearly outside of their perceived job descriptions.

I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for their continued commitment and dedication in working to deliver the best outcomes for the village and to be the representatives of our vibrant community. It is also great to have new councillors on board and be almost at full strength for the first time in ages.

Whilst the challenges of Covid related restrictions throughout the year had some impact on the way we worked and what could be achieved, the Parish Council and its Committees have managed to deliver on a number of fronts and also develop plans for potential future enhancements and improvements to the village. There have also been opportunities for the Parish Council to re-invigorate engagement and relationships with the various organisations in the village to work together for the benefit of the community. Some of the key achievements and challenges are as follows:

### **Planning and Licensing**

Over the past year there has been a surge in planning applications as the country emerged from the COVID lockdowns. Changes to Planning regulations and ADC staffing issues has led to minimal site visits with ADC and WSCC Planning staff relying increasingly on 'desktop reviews'. A total 148 applications have been reviewed in the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

Within the Village, many traditional style dwellings are being redeveloped in terms of both scale and style along with an increase in back garden development proposals and increasingly attempts to re-designate agricultural / horticultural land to commercial / industrial and residential.

There is a renewed onslaught of applications being submitted to develop our green spaces (the gaps to the east, west and north of the A259) by developers attempting to capitalise on Arun and Worthing housing target shortfalls.

### **Environment Committee**

Beach Litter: Following active engagement with Arun District Council, to address issues with litter in general and overflowing dog waste bins, general waste bins were placed at key locations on Patterson's Walk throughout the summer and had an immediate impact on reducing the problems. They have been reinstated for this summer and recommendations made to make them a permanent fixture.

Ferring Covid Snake: The decorated Ferring Covid Snake pebbles were permanently fixed around the bench and new shelter by the office and a plaque put in place as a reminder of the strong community spirit that developed in Ferring during the Covid pandemic. The remaining pebbles were placed at the boat/bench site on Patterson's Walk.

A number of smaller projects to clean, repair and improve community areas were completed in partnership with community groups, including cleaning of the war memorial; repair of the fencing and provision of bird boxes at Warren Pond and replanting areas on the Village Green .

## **Highways and community**

Sadly, the proposal to enhance safety issues on the junction of Rife Way and Ferring Street were unable to be completed by West Sussex County Council and the Parish Council is continuing to engage to identify an alternative solution.

The TRO for implementing parking restrictions in South Ferring has been implemented and hopefully we should now see a reduction in access problems for both the Compass Bus service and, more importantly the Emergency services in that area of the Village.

Parking in the village centre continues to be a concern for both residents and business owners.

Both the Remembrance Service and Christmas Lights events were restored to a level of normality and well attended by the community. In addition, the Christmas lights raised an opportunity to work in collaboration with the Village Hall to deliver a covid safe event. The Parish Council has also been working closely with a wide range of groups from across the community to plan and deliver a range of events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June.

## **Projects**

As a result of matters raised at both the Environment and Highways Committees a projects working group was formed to look at developing a process for reviewing and initiating projects around the village to enhance and improve the amenities. Many of the proposals under review coincidentally relate to accessibility and inclusivity for those with mobility issues, including dropped kerbs, accessible toilets; recreational facilities and access for wheelchair users. Work continues to refine and prioritise the proposals. A notable early success in delivery of projects has been the replacement and installation of additional benches on the Patterson's Walk Promenade, with support from Arun District Council.

## **Looking Forward**

Having reflected on the achievements of the past year, I would also like to look forward to the next 12 months.

The structure of the council is being refreshed to improve its ability to react promptly to changing circumstances; actively engage with residents and deliver improvements to the community as a whole. This involves pulling together the work of the Highways and Environment Committees into a single General Parish Issues committee with active membership of representative groups. A Parish Facilities and Projects Committee being formed to manage the routine functions of the Council and improve the decision-making process with Full Council focussing on longer term plans and governance of the council.

The Parish Council is engaging with Arun District Council to work in collaboration on projects to refurbish and improve the public conveniences and play equipment on the Village Green as part of their capital investment programme for this financial year and to review the potential to enhance the public conveniences at the Bluebird end of the Rife

We have successfully secured an offer of sponsorship from Rampion in the form of funding to install a telescope and information boards on the Patterson's Walk Promenade area. Adjacent to the Pill Box.

We will also be reviewing other potential projects and engaging with residents and businesses to understand the needs and desires of the community in enhancing the amenities.

We will also look to build on the collaboration of the wide range of organisations that have been involved in planning and delivering an ambitious range of activities for the Jubilee celebrations.

Chairman, Councillor Peter Coe