Pyecombe Parish Council – Annual Report 2013/2014
Tuesday 13th May, 2014

The past year has seen several new dwellings in the village reach their conclusion, and this, and the work on the extension to The Church currently taking place, will be of great benefit to the future of our village and the wider community, with Pyecombe Church being one of only two churches to sit directly on the South Downs Way. Together with the soon to open new Farm Shop and Tearoom at Wayfield Farm, the outlook this year is an encouraging one. Earlier this year we finally received the news that the issue surrounding the local polling station was to remain in the village, back at its present site, and once the work on the Church extension is completed, would then be held there in future years.
The Parish Council continues to work together with West Sussex County Council and during the past year we have been able to arrange a Community Project in the Improvement Initiative in Church Lane, when on a day in September, many villagers responded by voluntarily helping in the vegetation clearance resulting in the overall appearance of the area. The past few months has seen much more flora begin to appear, and it is hoped that we can continue to address the area soon for further clearance, and arrange for additional planting later in the year.

Following the freezing conditions at the beginning of last year, West Sussex County Council decided to ensure the Winter Maintenance Plan, which failed to materialise the previous winter, was set up earlier for each village, and by August they agreed to supply us with three additional grit bins and a surplus supply of grit in preparation for the ensuing winter. Little did they know that it was to become one of the wettest and mildest winters for decades, and despite the plan being in place, it was not called upon into action.
The continuing wet weather, however, only added to the problem of flooding at the bottom of Pyecombe Street. Our application in September under Operation Watershed resulted in the success of a £2754.48 grant towards alleviating the situation, and it is hoped that this work will be carried out soon.

This year marks the 100th Anniversary of World War One, a conflict during which millions of people lost their lives, and very few towns and villages across the UK were unaffected. Our village was not immune as five brave soldiers did not return, and of course many more suffered from the effects of the Great War. The Parish Council has recently planted an Oak Tree in commemoration of all those that sacrificed their lives, as all of us today would have had distant relatives that were involved. Looking back at the minutes, the Parish Council continued to convene during the war years, chaired throughout by Reverend Seymour Terry, and amongst the items covered, the state of the main road through the village continued to be brought to the attention of the local authority requesting that the road be tarmacked annually to prevent the inevitable dust caused by the increasing volume of traffic using the London Road through the village, together with requests to replace various road sign posts. **100 years on – some things never change!**

Youth activity in rural villages such as ours can sometimes be restricted, but it is refreshing to learn that not one but two of our young active scouts have both been selected from the Mid Sussex area to go Japan next year for the 23rd World Scout Jamboree, providing they can continue to complete their funding.

Peter Griffiths has been our local West Sussex County Council representative during the past year, and Colin Trumble has been one of our local Mid Sussex District Councillors for our area, and I would like to thank both Peter & Colin for their continuing support to the Parish Council on various issues throughout the year.

It is now three years since the newly formed South Downs National Park was created, into which the area of Pyecombe falls into in its entirety, and indeed the National Park continued to oversee all relevant planning applications for our parish in the past year, delegating most decisions to be dealt with by the local authority, being Mid Sussex District Council. In all, there were eleven planning applications, seven of which were duly approved, and four currently being considered. Despite the slowly improving planning website portal, the Parish Council has received concerned comments from local residents regarding the lack of publicity given to planning applications in our area, with regard to the prior public advertising in the local press that does not appear to take place, for which, although is the responsibility of the National Park, appear to have an agreement with the District Council on this issue.
The proposed District Plan by Mid Sussex District Council has yet to be approved by the Inspector, but it is hoped that following a further re-submission later this year it will then be agreed. Although not directly affecting our village, the possible Mayfield development to the north of us would have a big impact on us all should it gain further momentum and be granted, and despite Mid Sussex District Council being unsupportive towards this initial development plan, the current dithering with their District Plan is possibly not helping matters.

To help the continuing litter problem, the Parish Council completed the purchase and installation of two litter bins situated near each Garage/Shop footpath location, following a contribution from each garage, but I am also aware that many people take it upon themselves throughout the year to keep our streets clear of rubbish, to which we should all be grateful. Consistent parking by Lorries close to the junction at the bottom of Church Lane has been highlighted by the Council as potentially hazardous for moving traffic in the area, and despite a recent meeting with Highways, we are currently frustrated at the lack of response to help alleviate the problem.

Neighbourhood Watch is fully supported and encouraged by the Parish Council, and I take this opportunity to thank our current Village Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator over the past year, David Hunt, and our recently retired co-ordinators for the past twenty years, Eric & Val Farncombe, for their valuable contribution. It is, of course, the responsibility of us all to remain vigilant and alert against any sort of unwelcome criminal activity in our village, no matter how small.

Meeting the demands of an open form of local government, making information openly available and transparent, is duly met with the Parish Council website, **www.pyecombe.org.uk** , which is constantly maintained, and together with fifteen minutes set aside at the beginning of each Parish Council meeting for any member of the public to address councillors on issues of a village nature. This communication is also addressed in the Village Newsletter, sponsored by the Parish Council, and indeed my thanks to the editor, Vicky Clapperton, for her contribution during the past year, as I am sure she should continue to be encouraged by us all, with this excellent service.

I would like take this opportunity to thank our clerk, Dawn Langston, for her hard work and dedication shown over the past year, quickly settling into this vital and pivotal role of Clerk to the Parish Council.

My thanks also, to my fellow councillors for their contribution and assistance in the past year, as we welcome all new residents to Pyecombe, and if they or any other residents wish to raise any issue of village nature, please feel free to contact myself or any other councillor to discuss further. Your Parish Council meets on a regular basis, every other month, where the meetings are held here, in Pyecombe Church, a public meeting that remains open to you all.

David Wilson
Chairman, Pyecombe Parish Council