PYECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

The District Council elections that took place at the beginning of the year meant that Pyecombe would be represented by a single councillor on the newly formed 'Downland Villages' ward, and we welcomed Geoff Zeidler into this elected role.

He has continued with our endeavour to seek a long overdue upgrade of the children's play area, by attending various meetings throughout the year with the Mid Sussex District Officers involved, and although faced with numerous stumbling blocks, which included the area being designated a site of scientific interest (S.S.I.), efforts to see the area gain financial funding continue to be pursued. It appears that being a small parish in the area of Mid Sussex, can presently seem to hinder any progress, but hopefully we will begin to see some sort of progress in the coming months ahead.

My thanks to Geoff for his continuing support.

Plans were put in place to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III in May, with an event in the Wyshe field, but the weather conditions meant a late change, and a gathering in the church yard under the marquee, was hastily arranged, to raise a glass of cheer to our new monarch.

Efforts to improve the safety and traffic awareness of the South Downs Way crossing on the A273 with West Sussex Highways, resulted in two new visual signs being installed, however we still feel that more needs to be done to ensure safety for all users of this popular crossing, which include walkers, horse riders and cyclists. The parish council did support a consultation being put forward by West Sussex County Council to reduce the speed limit on the A273, and we currently await any outcome.

Joy Dennis has been our West Sussex County Councillor representative throughout the year, and my thanks to her for the support towards the parish council.

Rainfall during the past year has been creating headlines across the county, and Pyecombe has received its fair share, which sadly has added another flooding occurrence on the slip road adjacent to the BP garage, due to blocked drains.

This together with the continuing flooding at the bottom of Pyecombe Street, has been constantly reported to West Sussex Highways, who, despite originally 'dis-owning' the responsibility of the slip road flooding has recently accepted that it needed to be resolved by them.

At the bottom of Pyecombe Street, we are currently awaiting the outcome of a recent site visit from an Operation Watershed engineer, who was then putting together a plan to deal with the run off, with a report for us to review., following which we would then need to apply for grant funding. We are now awaiting this report. Clearly one of the instant problems that could be dealt with immediately is more regular clearance of the two tanks, which are quite likely full of silt, preventing the water from filling, as they were originally installed to relieve

the problem, which even today continues to affect despairing residents in the area. Your parish council will actively pursue these issues in the weeks and months ahead.

On a positive note, approval from South Downs National Park was finally given last year on our village project, and once funding was received work began in February this year, and clearance of the site, together with the installation of new planters, tree/sapling planting and re-installing the restored village sign, have now taken place. New entrance gates have also been installed, which include the South Downs National Park logo.

This project, which was several years in the planning, was possible with funding that was being held by South Downs National Park.

I am grateful for the many residents that have contacted me and congratulated the parish council for our efforts to improve the appearance and safety of the area.

The brick bus shelters were also given some much needed attention, and now have window openings installed and painted interiors. Following on from the bulb planting the previous year, a further additional was done this season which also attracted complimentary comments from local residents.

Despite the ceasing of the 'Love Your Village' group a few years ago, set up to improve and tidy areas in the village, it is apparent that several residents still actively voluntarily give up their time towards litter picking and path clearance, and my thanks to them all, (they know who they are – it has not gone un-noticed), for taking the time to care about our village.

Both the village website and newsletter, sponsored by the parish council, continue to keep residents informed, and my thanks to Tim and Jane Cullen, as editors of the newsletter, for their valued contribution.

Dawn Langston has been our Parish Clerk and RFO throughout the year, and I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the council and the whole community, to thank her for the total dedication and commitment shown to us all over the past year.

Lee Sullivan was co-opted onto the council towards the end of last year, and my thanks to him and my fellow councillors, in our voluntary role, for their contribution and assistance in the past year.

My thanks also to some eagle-eyed residents who were just recently able to alert the parish council to a developing situation that, had it not been for their quick action, may have taken us much longer to resolve.

I take this opportunity to welcome all new residents to our village, and remind everyone that your parish council meets on a regular basis, every other month, as a public meeting open to all.

David Wilson
Chairman Pyecombe Parish Council
9th May 2024.