

Annual Report

Due to the pandemic limitations, the Annual Assembly usually organised by the Parish Council could not take place in April this year. It normally provides an opportunity to summarise the activities carried out by the Council over the last year, together with annual reports from some of the village organisations. Instead, here is a written summary and there are links to each of the reports received from the individual organisations.

Elections

The new council year began with two new councillors joining the council – Judy Petty & Dianne Mower. They have embraced their new roles with much enthusiasm and are very welcome additions! They replaced Chris French and David Gasson after many long years of service – over 70 in total between them for which we were incredibly grateful!

Planning

Over the course of the year, 10 planning applications have been discussed. This usually takes place at one of the scheduled parish council meetings, but if necessary, a special meeting is convened, as was the case in August. Of these applications, the Council objected to 4, expressed concern about 1, requested special conditions be applied to 2, and made no comments about 3. The decisions from the Planning Department largely echoed these comments & three further existing matters/ applications have been referred to the enforcement department.

Highways

The fingerposts in the parish were surveyed by Doug Andrews and the majority are in a good state of repair – some are just in need of a good wash if there are any ‘sponsors’ who may have forgotten their duties! One required a partial repair due to damage from an ant’s nest, and this was duly carried out.

The state of our roads through such a long, wet winter was no surprise and Cllr Petty worked tirelessly to chase up pothole repairs and drain clearance. She made the flooding at the bottom of Rectory Hill her particular mission and after investigations by East Sussex Highways they found that several drains had collapsed, one of which was partially blocked by a lump of concrete and the others were totally blocked, all of which didn’t exist on their schedule for clearing. All this work has now been carried out together with further clearance at Stacy’s Corner, and thus far things appear to be much improved.

Finally, attempts to prevent a repeat of the damaged wall at Becket House due to cars speeding as they enter from Long Reach resulted in several safety measures being introduced. These included repainting the white lines, a REDUCE SPEED NOW sign and the cats’ eyes being replaced. The Council is waiting to see the results of these measures as further initiatives incur substantial costs.

Other Matters

The Tree Warden’s efforts to repopulate Black Poplars in the area resulted in several being planted around the parish.

After many months of research, the renaming of certain roads within the parish were voted upon in an exercise carried out by Rother's Street Naming & Numbering department. The results of the votes meant that all bar one of the proposed changes were agreed upon, and duly implemented.

The Council also voted in favour of fewer verge cuts by East Sussex County Council in a bid to allow wildflowers to grow. The situation will be monitored over the next 12 months and reviewed.

The various grants that the Parish Council gives to charities and resources of local benefit were made again this year, with a significant increase in the amount given to the village hall.

The Council commented on the Civil Parking Enforcement being introduced - Robertsbridge is the nearest area to Brightling to be affected – observing that there should be a statutory free number of minutes in order to allow local residents to use the shops. The enforcement has moved to planning for approval and the scheme is due to be implemented by September 2020.

UK Power Networks came to the March meeting to discuss the numerous power cuts in the area and they provided some interesting & useful information - see the link below to the minutes from that meeting for further information.