

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016 - 2017

It is pleasing to report that the year 2016 - 17 was the second consecutive year without Council being confronted with any seriously contentious issues. Such matters as aircraft noise/flight-paths out of Gatwick and housing development proposals impacting on Green Belt land, albeit not yet resolved, are at this stage being ponderously pursued elsewhere.

Planning has, of course, been an ever-present item on the agenda of Council meetings and a variety of applications have been considered, with comments being directed to the relevant authorities where appropriate. A major concern in respect of new building or extensions is that of over-development, together with that of the concomitant increase in vehicle parking - itself an ever-more acute problem in the Village. An issue that remains outstanding is the possibly unlawful use of land adjoining the Grandon Lodge/Carpel House site; a meeting to assess the situation is to be arranged with the M.V.D.C. Enforcement Officer when an appointment to that currently vacant post has been made.

The Playground and equipment on it have been the subject of Wicksteed's annual inspection and matters reported on have been attended to. Council is making an insurance claim in respect of damaged - as distinct from worn out - safety surfacing and is monitoring the probable short/medium term need for total replacement of the surfacing which is nearing the end of its effective life. Quotations are currently being sought in respect of repairs to the seat adjacent to the slide. Meanwhile, other public facilities have been upgraded by the installation of new handrails at the War Memorial and a heart defibrillator at the Village Hall; in appreciation of a well-attended demonstration and training course in the use of the device a donation of £50 was made to the British Heart Foundation.

The Village Hall's well-being continues to be overseen by Council in its capacity of Managing Agent. A major upgrade of heating to the Hall is a pressing requirement, as is the installation of an upstairs toilet in the Cottage. Notwithstanding parking

difficulties seen as a possible hindrance, bookings have been steady and the Hall is currently "balancing its books" and is not at this stage seeking Council's financial assistance.

Other matters of concern to Council have been:-

- The A24 cycle way and subway: in the light of recurring vandalism, Surrey C.C. will not be re-installing the barriers that Council had requested as safety measures in the subway and work on the cycle way has been deferred until funds become available.
- Public payphone in Warwick Close: supported by local Councillors, an approach has been made to B.T. to reverse their decision to remove this facility.
- Parking in the Village: Council's representations for the installation of parking restrictions at critical points in the Village are under consideration by Surrey C.C.

Finances have been kept under firm control during the year and Council is thus able to seek no increase in its 2017/18 Precept over the 2016/17 figure of £11,500 even though mindful of probable expenditure on the Playground in the not too distant future. The possibility of reclaiming the costs of complying with the new Transparency regulations is currently being explored. Meanwhile, Council has secured the services of a new Internal Auditor following what was felt to be a less than qualitative performance by his predecessor.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks to the Mole Valley District and Surrey County Councillors for their attendance at our meetings and their support and assistance and, of course, to my fellow Councillors and our Parish Clerk for their contribution to all that needs to be done for Council to meet its obligations; I extend special thanks to Cllr. Mrs. Mary Mansell who has been a great help in keeping Council in general - and myself in particular - on the procedural "straight and narrow". Finally, I'm sure my colleagues join me in conveying our best wishes to Cllr. Mrs. Kathy Wheeler who is bravely combatting an extended period of serious ill health.

