

Report from the Parish Council Chairman – 2021-22

The Chairman thanked all present of attending the Annual Parish Meeting, noting that due to obvious reasons this was the first APM since 2019. There was lots of information to update. The Chairman started by talking about something it was hoped is now fading from our lives: COVID. When it was announced just over 2 years ago that we were all going into lockdown and our way of life would change in ways we never thought possible, the Parish Council acted quickly to ensure our villagers could get access to essentials from Sheree's Store. The Parish Council also provided shopping from supermarkets for those that could not get deliveries. A Leaflet was distributed to all residents. A Prescription collection and delivery service was provided and later transport to vaccination sites to those who needed it. The Chairman was a member of a COVID Action group run by TDC that met fortnightly to discuss measures to assist our community and share resources. All Parish Council meetings were held via Zoom which was a sharp learning curve for all but has resulted in everyone being more tech-savvy. At this time, the Parish Council updated its Emergency Plan to include COVID and any related problems that may occur in the future. As a result of COVID grants from the Government, the Parish Council was able to grant funds totalling £20,000 to help small businesses and organisations in the Village.

The Parish Rooms at the Aileen McHugo Building has been undergoing lots of improvements including a new boiler, redecoration of the meeting room and hallway and new carpet and tables. The meeting room continues to be available for hire and is starting to receive regular bookings again. There are plans afoot to repaint the toilets and reception room, together with the refurbishment of kitchen and communal areas which will be happening in the near future. The art work by Ben Holmes from the Tatol Bed commemorating the anniversary of the Battle of Britain was relocated to the side wall of the AMB for all to enjoy. At the same time the mosaics were moved to the wall beside the entrance to the Village Hall.

One of the key roles of the Parish Council is to act as consultees on planning applications in the parish. During 2020-21, the Parish Council was consulted on 29 planning applications. From this 8 Objections, 16 no comments, and 5 comments asking for additional information or recommendations to planning were submitted. The Parish Council also received a request to comment on a planning application from Kent County Council on an application to infill Covers Farm Quarry in Westerham as the Lorry movement would have an effect on our parish. A strong objection was submitted.

During this last year (2021-22) planning applications numbers have increased and the Parish council has been consulted on 42 applications. The Parish Council recorded 5 objections, 30 no comments and 7 comments requiring extra recommendations and requests. Again, the Parish Council reiterated its strong objection to the Covers Farm infill in response to the KCC planning application.

Another role of the PC is to award grants to many village organisations. Since 2019, grants to Tatsfield in Bloom, the Composting Group, the Allotments, Not so Young Club, Fairtrade, Tatsfield Helpline and Citizens Advice Oxted have been granted. The Parish Council also sponsors the village Remembrance Service and the Christmas Carol Singalong and would like to express its thanks to Dave Bishop for his

assistance in organising these events for the community. A one-off grant was provided to St Marys Church to assist with a planning application to extend the burial ground at the Church.

Tatsfield is lucky to be surrounded by Trees and unfortunately the parish has been badly affected by ash dieback, with Kemsley Wood being especially affected. Many trees have had to be felled as they were deemed dangerous. Once the felling had taken place the PC was luckily able to secure 135 whips and 10 feathered trees from the SCC Tree Canopy Scheme. These were planted in early February and more will be planted in Millennium Wood during the next planting season. Tree work is ongoing around the Parish, with surveys and monitoring continuing to be undertaken, as well as work to remove fallen and dangerous trees. A few clumps of Japanese Knotweed were reported as they appeared on PC owned land and these have been treated and this continues to be an ongoing project. The PC supports and has contributed to the Surrey Hills AONB boundary review.

In the Village centre, the Parish Council was successful in securing Assets of Community Value on the Old Ship and the Store and Tearoom. This will enable the community to have an opportunity to submit a bid to buy either of these village assets if they were ever put up for sale.

A VAS sign has been received by the Parish Council, with thanks due to Becky Rush. This will be moved around the village and will hopefully make everyone more aware of the speed limits in the village. This will be managed by Ashley Clifton. Also, with thanks to Becky for monies from her fund, the Parish Council was able to replace the old noticeboard on Westmore Green. This will be underplanted soon by TIB.

Together with Becky Rush and Martin Allen, the Parish Council enjoyed visits from the new Police and Crime Commissioner and the new CEO of Tandridge District Council. Both had a tour of village and made presentations with Q&As for villagers.

In 2019, in the village centre, the Christmas lights in the trees were replaced. The old ones had come to the end of life and an opportunity to receive sponsorship from a local electrical company meant lights could be replaced in all three trees. This project is ongoing and the Parish Council is hoping to carry the lights across onto Westmore Green. The pond continues to look fabulous and is kindly maintained by Ian Hayman and his team at Tatsfield Aquatics. The Parish Council is hoping to be successful in its application to Your Fund Surrey and receive a grant to replace the wooden benches and thank all who have taken time to comment on the fund to aid the application. Fingers crossed we will be enjoying them soon.

Another responsibility of the PC is to maintain and repair the litter bins around the village. Some have already received attention and there are several more on the list awaiting repair which will be done in the next few weeks. Recent repairs were made to the two kissing Gates at either entrance to Kemsley Wood.

During late 2019, the Parish Council was informed that the website service that was hosted by SCC was being withdrawn. So, with thanks to Alex Davies who headed the team for the PC, together with assistance from Chris Mitton and the Clerk there is now a new site. Thanks also to Chris Mitton for maintaining this.

Another task of the PC is to organise Hustings. These are led by the Vice Chairman David Pinchin and have been held for both the PCC and SCC elections in 2021.

Due to the weather in Tatsfield and the usual likelihood of snow, the PC joined forces with Woldingham Parish Council and a local farmer to go 1/3rds on the purchase of a new salt spreader. The contract with the farmer was renewed to provide private gritting along Paynesfield Road and the made-up parts of Westmore Road, Crossways and Lusted Hall Lane up to the boundary of London Borough of Bromley. Luckily, this service has not had to be used this past winter but this is a good investment for the future to help keep the village moving in when there is snow and ice.

The Neighbourhood Plan, after a break due to COVID, is now back on track and held a village consultation in March. Jason Syrett, the PC lead on the Neighbourhood Plan, will provide an overview later in the evening. The Chairman thanked him for all the time and hard work he has contributed to the plan.

The Chairman finished her report by thanking all the members of the Parish Council who give their time freely to help the community and Samantha, the Clerk, for her clerking duties and more and finally to all the residents of Tatsfield who make this village a wonderful place to live.