

Parish Chair Report 2021

1).I think that all Parishioners will agree that this last year has been like no other, but despite the restrictions that were in -place and then replaced the Council continued to carry out Parish business.

2) We were fortunate to have held our 2020 Parish Assembly and Council meeting before the start (of what was then our first set) of restrictions.

3) To comply with the rule of the total, initial, lockdown, all councillors were issued with an official letter (as approved) confirming that if needing to be outside on parish matters, such duties were being undertaken in support of the community.

4) In August we were (fortunately) able to hold a face to face, covid compliant meeting. This, as it transpired, was the only other one during this reporting year.

5) The Council continued to operate via email and “attend” external Zoom meetings where necessary. Councillors were consulted on whether to pay for a Zoom contract, but it was agreed that there was limited cost benefit in this and that we could operate on an “email, non discursive regime” Items that required debate are delayed until we finally ,physically, meet again. - which turns out to be the scheduled 20th May Council and Parish assembly. Meetings.

6) However, with elements of continuing restrictions, it was decided that this year there would be no formal Assembly, but the provision of annual reports from County, District and Parish. would still be provided and published on the Parish website and reported in the Village News.

7) Parish administration has continued without interruption and with some progress being made on the, as usual, long running issues.

We now have a road name sign for Woodmans Green Road, and whilst there remain unresolved issues regarding the Hoath Lane sign, matters may be considered to have effectively been concluded with regards to Parish council involvement.

8) Zoom meetings have been held, during the year, with Rother Association of Local Councils, our Local PCSO, and Highways England

9) The latter was a consultation on Highways England's proposals to improve safety on the A21 (as reported in the Village News) which included our proposition for a pavement throughout the village and gateways. As ever we will continue our activity to progress this to a satisfactory conclusion. - which is currently planned by 2025.

10) The outlook for future meetings looks promising and whilst the May meeting will be subject to covid restrictions, we hope for a return to normality for our August council.

11) Despite our difficulties Councillors have continued to contribute to the Parish councils activity on matters of finance, planning and Parish policies, for which I thank them. Our District and County Councillors, likewise, have been available to us as they continued to carry out their duties, again I thank them.

!2) My thanks also to Village News - who went digital - during the restrictions, for helping maintain essential communications. I'm pleased that it will now be able to provide a printed version again.

13) Finally, my thanks to our clerk who has had a significant burden of work passing across her desk during this time. Despite IT and telecommunication issues she has maintained a high level of support activity in difficult, uncharted times.

R. Fisher