

Chairman's Annual Report 2024/25

www.stmartha-pc.gov.uk

I have been a St Martha Parish Councillor for many years, but this is the first year as Chair. After forty-five years of living in the Parish, it has always struck me that Chilworth Village is a very good community to live in, where people support each other, and where we are blessed with wonderful surrounding countryside.

It is the aim of this Parish Council to help enhance, if only in small ways, this lovely Parish and to work across the two Parish boundaries in our village, together with Borough and County Councillors. As one of the smallest Parishes in the County we are delighted to have a full Council of seven Councillors for the first time for a long time and I am grateful for everyone's hard work and dedication over the year. However, little would have been achieved without our very professional Clerk, Anne Tait.

We, like all Surrey Parish and Town Councils, are facing big changes with devolution and the transfer to unitary authorities. This will bring challenges and opportunities, and we will be thinking about what are the needs of our Parish and asking the questions, 'What is important to our community?' 'How can services best be delivered?' For more information about Surrey reorganization go to: www.surreylgrhub.org

Here are some of this year's achievements, and ongoing projects:

- *Created a new website*
- *Installed a new Notice Board by Old Manor Lane*
- *Reinstated fencing and cleared sections of Footpath 252a near Lockner Holt, and engaged a Volunteer Footpath Warden for 252a and part of 254*
- *Consulted residents and continue to consider road safety along the A248 near Roseacre Gardens in conjunction with Surrey Highways*
- *Liaised with Borough and County Councillors – including ongoing discussions on village speed limits, particular near our schools*
- *About to put in directional signage to the Gunpowder Mills by Vera's Path*
- *Engaged with Guildford Borough countryside wardens relating to the Gunpowder Mills Site, including reassessing if there are dormice on the Site*
- *Repaired stonework on the Chilworth War Memorial and further repairs are on-going*
- *Worked to enhance Chilworth Station, alongside Network Rail, GWR, South East Community Rail Partnership and Surrey Hills (Rail to Ramble)*
- *Working with Surrey Hills to update the directional finger posts by the green outside the Station*
- *Engaged with residents and SCC over tree planting at Halfpenny Close*
- *In the process of replacing the old Defibrillator outside the Percy Arms Pub*
- *Seeking quotes for bus shelter repairs*
- *Reviewed numerous planning applications*

- *Attended conferences, outside meetings (including all-important monthly Shalford Community Council meetings), and training sessions*
- *Keeping abreast of local government reorganisation coming in 2027*
- *Set a Budget for 2025/26 and agreed the annual Precept. (A local tax levied by Parish Councils to fund its services and operations). An increase this year from last of 12.5% (12.9% on the Council Tax Bill after SCC adjustments). The increase was due to Government threshold changes to employer's National Insurance, new PC initiatives, and increased cost of expenses. However, the cost to our residents is still less than it was in 2021/22.*
- *Successfully nominated Councillor John Peake for special recognition by the Surrey Association of Parish and Town Councils for his huge contribution to the Council and community life*

This is not a comprehensive list but hopefully it gives some idea of the variety of things your Parish Council does. Do continue to keep in touch if there are things you wish to share, raise, or suggest. You are also most welcome to attend our monthly meetings. We are always very happy to hear what anyone has to say. Also – do keep reading our updates in the Chilworth Magazine and look at our Website for News and further information or follow us on Instagram.

Patricia Allen

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