

ANNUAL REPORT

Chairman St Martha Parish Council – May 2017

To give some insight into the sorts of things we get involved in as Parish Councillors and to inform and hopefully to recruit and fill our one current vacancy – there follows a brief run through of where we were at the beginning of this Parish Council year and where we are now.

At the beginning of the year,

- We had a full complement of Councillors.
- We had our new bus shelter of correct proportions and distance from the highway but somewhat rickety.
- West Lodge was in our sights as a possible community building providing facilities for educational visits to the Gunpowder Mills Site and a space for rental by community groups and ideally an office and storage space for our Clerk.
- We were in dialogue and taking Architect's advise with the contractors who had renovated the WM as the stone used had immediately been badly frost damaged.

And now,

- We have sadly accepted Councillor Seabrook's resignation and now have a vacancy on the Council. Thank you, Clive, for all your work for our parish!
- The Bus Shelter at the Station now meets modern safety requirements – and is securely fixed.
- We (with Chilworth2gether and Chilworth Gunpowder Mills Group) were able to stop the immediate sale of West Lodge and are now at the point of putting together a formal pre-planning application to Guildford Borough Council for change of use of the building. We are looking to gain funding to bring the building up to an acceptable standard for community use should our planning application be accepted – watch this space. Community projects may seem to move slowly but progress is being made. It is also hoped that acquiring West Lodge for community use may help to secure the ongoing legacy of the Tillingbourne Trails project.
- The necessary remedial repair work to the War Memorial has now been completed.

Ongoing throughout the year,

- Full Council has met monthly and our local County and Borough Councillors have regularly attended our meetings, giving feedback and updates on matters of interest and concern each time.

- We keep close links with Shalford Parish Council and representatives from each Council attend the other Council's meetings and report back each meeting on matters relevant to the village of Chilworth.
- We have repeatedly expressed our concern to the Surrey Highways Department about the appalling state of the stretch of the A248 by Pine View Close but sadly, while on the agenda for repair work, this is not scheduled until 2018-2021.

Members of the public are encouraged to report their concerns via the Surrey County Council website.

- A change in recent years is that we no longer have regular Police reports at Council meetings, although crime statistics can be viewed on line.
- We continue in our advisory role to comment on all Planning Applications submitted in our Parish. We do not have a decision making role but the Borough Council takes Parish Council's comments into consideration, as 'local knowledge', when making its decisions.
- We are working on improving communication with our parishioners and the website is developing well and hopefully proving useful. We now have email contacts for some parishioners – please contact the Clerk if you would like to be included in emailed communications.
- The Council has liaised with Surrey County Council on highways matters and footpath and drain maintenance.
- We have been represented on the Tillingbourne Trails Steering Group. This Heritage Lottery funded project has now come to an end. There is a newly refurbished gallery at Shere museum charting the industrial heritage of the Tillingbourne valley with puppets and stories - and local schools are benefitting from this project.
- We are also represented on the Quiet Lanes and Decluttering Working Group. This initiative with Surrey Hills aims to protect some of the rural characteristics of our villages by removing unnecessary signage and monitoring heavy goods traffic access

on quiet lanes. Concern about the amount and speed of traffic through the village is always a consideration.

- **Vehicle Activated Sign** – Shalford Parish Council now have a sign that we can also use at times, possibly outside the school. We are awaiting the necessary agreements for its use.