

Ditton Parish Council



CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2019

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/2019

Welcome to my report on the work of the Council during the financial year 2018/2019. It has been another busy year for the Council and this report gives you just a small insight into the work undertaken during the year. As you are aware we are in an election year but as insufficient candidates applied, there will not be an election for the Parish Council on 2nd May. Local residents can vote for the Borough Council Election at their nominated Polling Stations.

As you have heard from the Committee Chairmen, the Community Centre continues to thrive with new business and the ongoing maintenance programme is progressing and more events are being planned. Outside the Grounds Staff work hard to maintain the recreation grounds etc and the Committee continuously looks at ways to improve and monitor the wonderful open spaces we have in Ditton. Also, the Personnel Committee has been kept busy keeping up with legislation, training and recruitment. There has also been much to consider by the Planning Committee with the proposed local development.

Parish Rate

It is a difficult task to run the parish, maintain the Community Centre and open spaces with the ever rising costs of services and equipment plus keeping up to date with changes in legislation and rises to the minimum wage. The Council recognises that everyone is feeling the "pinch" as living costs are ever rising and I am pleased to report that there was no increase to the Parish part of the precept this year and the Council will fund its ongoing additional maintenance issues from its reserves.

Donations

During 2018/2019 this Council gave donations totalling £1,550.00 to the following charities and organisations:-

Ditton Pop-In-Club; Ditton Heritage Centre, Kent Air Ambulance; Heart of Kent Hospice; Ditton Junior and Ditton Infant Schools, Tonbridge & Malling Citizens Advice Bureau, and Communigrow.

All donations are funded through money raised by volunteers at raffles held at Parish Council functions and not through the precept.

Policing

We are being well looked after by our PCSO for the village, Jamee Salam and KCC Community Warden Viv Hickmott. Crime in the parish has been low recently and we

thank the neighbourhood team for their part in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in Ditton. In particular the Police for their efforts in dealing with the particularly distressing anti-social behaviour of large groups of youths on bikes.

Youth Centre

The Youth Centre has unfortunately remained closed for an extended period whilst new youth leaders are sought. However, this excellent facility is still being well used by the internet café.

Twinning

The annual visit to Rang du Fliers to lay a floral tribute at their Bastille Day Celebrations took place in July and there have been several other exchange visits including short mat bowls, petanque and Ditton Minors Football Club. Next year will be the 25th Anniversary and additional celebrations are being planned and will be publicised nearer the time. The Twinning Committee are looking for new members so if this is something you are interested in, please give your details to the Parish Office and they can be passed on to the Committee.

Events

The Parish Council held several functions last year including the two seasonal dances. All were very well attended and we look forward to more this year. Details of all functions are available from the parish office and will be publicised in the gazette and on the website.

Ditton Minors celebrated their 50th Anniversary last year and a large Community Event was held on the Recreation Ground. It was well attended and a great success. We even had a screen in the Don Carman Hall to show one of the England World Cup matches.

The special Remembrance Day Service held to commemorate the centenary of WW1 was extremely well attended and I sincerely thank all those people who helped on the day.

Staff

I would like to thank all the Parish Council staff for their continued hard work and loyalty to the Council – Nigel and the Grounds staff, Gina and the caretakers and to Julie and her bar staff team. Thank you to Nicola, Sally and Gemma in the office and welcome to Ben.

We have also had some changes to the Council membership – we said goodbye to Paul Jobling last year and this year to Lee Mayell and Peter Dalton who have decided not to stand for the Council this year. We thank them all for their service to the Council, in particular to Peter for his 6½ years of service and commitment to the planning committee during this time. We were pleased to welcome Janice Tebbutt, Nigel Newman and Paul Cole to the Council.

Finally, I will end with some more thank you's:

Firstly to my fellow councillors all their support, dedication and assistance over the past year

I would also thank our representatives from our partner authorities, Co Cllr Peter Homewood for his continued support and financial assistance with various projects and our outgoing Borough Councillor (s) Tom Cannon and Ben Walker. Finally, I would also like to thank all the volunteers who have assisted the council during the year in various ways with the Quarry, Twinning, Heritage Centre and Remembrance Day.

I would like once more to reiterate congratulations to those that received awards for outstanding contributions to the village and to Matt and David Stephens and David for their wonderful films and photos.

Thank you all for attending and as we have received no questions, I will now close the meeting.

Again thank you for coming and everyone is welcome to stay for refreshments.

Mike Porter
Chairman
Ditton Parish Council