

Chairman's Report For 2022/23

At last life is getting back to normal after the Pandemic, we have been able to open all the facilities at the Community Centre for business as usual. We have welcomed back our regular hirers, and look forward to welcome newcomers. All the Council's staff have worked hard to maintain the high standards expected by our community.

Nationally this has been an exceptional year, the death of the Queen so soon after her Platinum Jubilee, which we celebrated on the recreation ground with music and picnics, and later the pagentry associated with her lying in state and funeral. We then acknowledged the accession of Prince Charles as King Charles III and his wife as Queen Camilla, and shortly we will be able to celebrate his Coronation.

I would also like to congratulate our Parish Clerk Mrs Nicola Greenaway who completed 20 years service to the Parish during this period. I would add my personal thanks for her help and guidance in carrying out my duties. I also congratulate Councillor Mike Porter who will have achieved 30 years as Councillor in May, and was a Previous Chairman for many years. I'm also pleased to welcome our new Community Warden Donna Sales to the area, you heard from Donna earlier when she addressed the meeting, also thanks to our previous warden, Sue Absolon who did so much for Ditton during her time with us.

I have to thank the Committee Chairs for their reports covering what has taken place in their areas of responsibility in the year.

Planning: Councillor Newman has been especially active, putting in many hours checking applications and compiling comprehensive presentations so we were able to see exactly what we deciding upon. In addition since we found out about the plan to build 1600 houses on land between kiln Barn Lane and Hermitage Lane Councillor Newman has been involved with meetings with our neighbouring parish councils to formulate a joint approach to any objection we may make when a formal application goes in to Tonbridge and Malling Borough

Council. I would personally like to thank Nigel for all the extra work this has caused and which he has seen through without complaint.

The Parish Rate: We have again, managed to keep our precept down to 76 pence per year on a class D property, this equates to about one and a half pence per week. This has been achieved by use of our reserves and investment income, this has enabled all maintenance and repairs necessary to keep our premises safe for use.

Parish Council Membership: As our election this year was uncontested we still have vacancies for additional members to join us, and could be co-opted in May. It would be good to have some younger people join us to represent the views of the younger generation.

Staff: I am grateful to all members of our staff, both full and part time for their efforts to keep the Centre running smoothly, without them everything would grind to a halt, the new Bar Management has encouraged old and new customers to use the Kilnbarn.

Events: Sadly we had to cancel the New Years Eve dance due to the poor sale of tickets which made the event unviable. We have only one other event planned for this year, which is the music festival on the green on 3rd June. We have no events planned for the Coronation, however we have made donations to each of the local schools so that they can organise their own celebrations for the big day. The Remembrance Service is being held in the Church this year, with only one ceremony on Sunday 12th November, the 11th is a Saturday.

Twinning: Councillor Anne Throssell and myself, together with representatives of the Twinning Association went to Rang-De-Flier in July for their Bastille Day celebrations, and will hopefully be able to go again this year. Twinning are organising a Barn Dance on 13th May and tickets are available from the Parish Office.

And Finally: I would like to thank KCC Councillor Andrew Kennedy, Bourough Councillors Rob Cannon and David Cooper for their service and support to the Parish throughout the year. Rob is standing in the May Election good luck Rob, but David has decided to stand down at this time, thank you David for your past service.