

# Ryarsh Parish Council

## Chairman's Report 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Another year passes and time once again to reflect on the events of this last year, and possibly anticipate what the next 12 months may hold in store for us

It's fair to say the village is in a period of flux, considerable local residential development has, and continues to occur, and we now regularly see many new residents and visitors within the village

Most are possibly seeking a decent pub but certainly for those now living within the Parish it is essential that they are rapidly integrated into the local community and is something the council should address.

In parallel due to the new developments and the influx of visitors, many people are now seeking to buy into the village. which with the strictly limited availability of stock, has pushed house prices to all-time highs, at levels which even 5 years ago were unimaginable

From a personal viewpoint and speaking to many of the longer-term residents there is a distinct wind of change and we are in a period of transition from being a quiet rural community to becoming a desirable investment location. Inevitably high earners buying in will work in London and it seems quite likely over the next 10 years we may well become a commuter village like so many popular locations elsewhere.

Possibly as a result these changes or simply that the big local issues are now under control, or dealt with, the role of the Parish Council is also changing. I suggest we now need to become more proactive and hands on, to ensure the village continues to grow and flourish. That means effectively moving away from the more defensive/protective role which of necessity we adopted in the past albeit vigilance must be maintained

Inevitably planning remains a big part of our remit and this year after a long drawn out battle we successfully ensured that Brionne should simply be refurbished and not demolished to make room for a multi-unit development

We were sadly less successful on the former riding stables where with the support of Birling PC we strongly opposed plans to build a small warehouse, the concern being this would likely create a precedent for further construction on the sizeable site Consent was eventually secured on appeal

Despite central government directing local authorities to identify potential housing development sites, for the present at least, nothing of high enough priority has yet been identified in the parish

The former brickworks (Ryarsh Park) is now being rapidly developed and sold with some 20 plus units occupied. As noted above it is important these new residents quickly integrate into the community

Through traffic is increasing and we are now very much a rat run from junction 4 M20 We are presently about to talk with County Highway with view of ameliorating this position having ascertained limited County monies are available

Highways continue to deteriorate and potholes to increase. County have done numerous patching jobs but unfortunately are not able to do much more with their ever-tightening budgets

On a positive note after a long period of objection we are told improved broadband internet will within months be brought into the village which presently suffers dreadful download speeds to the extent you sometimes seem to be going in reverse

Again, on a positive note the Council elected to replace two out of date and worn out games in the children's playground and these works should have been completed by Friday the May 5<sup>th</sup> These works were paid for out of Council funds and we are presently seeking grant monies to replace other worn out equipment. We would also like to thank County Councillor Sarah Hohler for making a £2000 County contribution to this project

We have at last after a long delay also completed the Resource Room in Chapel Street, the former telephone box, and a formal opening is presently being organized

A financial contribution was also made to the village hall allowing the worn-out carpets to be replaced by state of the art acrylic tiles

Sadly, over the year we have also suffered a spate of increasing crime, thankfully most of a minor nature, a situation similarly experienced by adjoining parishes. As examples the hall post box was wrenched off the wall, a 4x4 and horsebox were stolen and the container being used for the playground works was broken into.

In addition, minor shed and vehicle break ins regularly occur and within the last few days a lorry fly tipped a load of rocks and soil in Workhouse Road completely blocking it and requiring a road closure for clearance purposes

For the first time for many years we increased the parish rate basically to offset cut backs at Borough level

The Council itself has had no personnel changes and we work well as an experienced team clearly reflected in that policy and decisions are made quickly and positively

Turning to an entirely separate issue. It has been suggested we don't market ourselves or let villagers know what we do, this being why we have few members of the public at meetings, with most only attending if they have a personal concern or grievance.

It could equally be argued attendances are down on the basis we deal with concerns as they arise but I would be interested in hearing councillors thoughts and views on this point

Lynne Mackie our Parish Clerk as always continues to provide excellent support and guidance albeit having to wade through ever more red tape and regulation which despite government promises has failed to decrease on the grounds of ever increasing transparency, and ensuring political correctness is maintained at all costs. Apologies for my cynicism Thank You and well done Lynne

I have inevitably missed out on various points but happy to pick up on them and answer any questions after this article is read out

Finally, a big thank you to all Councillors for their continued support and efforts without which the village would I suggest. be a slightly less pleasant place in which to live

Good Evening

DCS 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017