

## CHAIRMANS REPORT 2020/21

May I start by offering my deepest condolences to those families who have lost loved ones since we last met. Whether or not the passing of loved ones were a direct result of the covid virus, the on set of pandemic restrictions has made saying our last farewell's difficult and very traumatic. Shortly a book of Remembrance is to be placed in the church for people to record their thoughts and prayers for those who have lost their lives during the pandemic.

This year too, as a nation we have paid our respects to Her Majesty the Queen for the loss of her husband Phillip. For my generation, and perhaps for all of us who have been brought up to respect the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh, they have been a stabilising influence on this country during the difficult post war years through many national conflicts since and indeed during the pandemic. Although I have never met either, I had the opportunity of seeing them both, once as a youngster, during their drive through of Gillingham a few years after the coronation and recently when Jane and I were privileged to attend one of the annual garden parties at Buckingham Palace on your behalf.

Since our last Parish Meeting the village has grown! May I therefore welcome all the new residents of High Halstow to our village You are most welcome and I do hope you take an active part in our community which continues to make High Halstow a great place to live. Since my last report of April 2019 there has been an election for the Parish Council in May 2019, so welcome to our new Councillors, Marilyn Stone, Adrian Catchpole and Tim Munday who were newly elected in May 20219 and Cora MacFarlane and Marc Buckland who were co-opted this year after the resignations of Councillors Brian Williams and Adrian Catchpole. Brian was a driving force on this council and primarily responsible for the procurement and installation for our timber bus shelters in addition to performing other important duties. Adrian was particularly involved in the formation and early progress of the now emerging Neighbourhood Plan. I thank them on your behalf, both for their support and efforts for our village. You will have I'm sure noticed too that Cat Bloomfield has resigned as Parish Clerk and that Jenny Allen has stepped into the breach. May I say thanks to Cat for her resolve and hard work and a special thanks to Jenny who has proven to be a great asset to us all.

Our Parish Council meetings held monthly are the public formal face of the Council and is where resolutions are passed or rejected and various topics and reports are debated. Committees and working groups are another (also public) side of Parish Council work and where the real work is done and policy formulated. Most committees consist of parish councillors, some however are augmented by members of the public. On your behalf I would like to thank the public members of.

◆ The HHT delivery team for their patience and hard work especially during the pandemic.

- ◆ Project 90 volunteers for keeping the village roads clear of litter.
- ◆ Council Representatives of the Relief in Need Charity.
- ◆ Members of the Neighbourhood Plan team.

Since the pandemic started our Parish Council and its various committees, employees, volunteers and contractors have continued to work as normally as possible with the exception of our frontline street staff who were prevented from working for their safety for periods of time during this last 12 months. I'm pleased to say all are now back full-time, thank you both Jack and John and the whole Parish Council team. A final thanks must of course be expressed to your Parish Councillors who have worked tirelessly throughout the preceding 2 years.

It has been traditional at this meeting for the Chairman to expound on the progress of the Parish Council over the last period. You of course now get a monthly resume of Parish Council activities included in the High Halstow Times so I'm sure I would be just be reiterating what you already know so perhaps better to look briefly at the future. Covid 19 and the development of the village are perhaps the two most important things to focus on.

There are early plans to host an end of pandemic celebration to signal the next new normal way of life that will mean dealing with the endemic Covid virus. Those of you in the various groups within the village who are interested in helping please contact Tim Munday or any Parish Councillor.

As you know the Developer Redrow is progressing an application for planning permission for around 150 houses on the western part of the land east of High Halstow. This is one of the parcels of land suggested in the Medway Draft Local Plan that could form part of the 5 year Strategic Land Allocation for Medway. The allocation is not yet fixed and the Local Plan is of course still some time away from being put forward for inspection at the regulation 19 consultation. Redrow are hoping to apply for permission in July this year but do not expect it to be determined until the outcome of the Local plan is known.

The Parish Council firmly believes that development east of the village and the Peninsula in general is unsustainable. The Parish Council is however pragmatic enough to believe the village should have in place a Neighbourhood Plan in the event that development takes place with or without the adoption of the Local Plan. The Plan is nearing completion and we hope to put it before you for adoption in a community referendum in the next few months. To this end it has engaged the services of David Rudland of Urbed Author of the Proposed National Model Design Code to assist in trying to achieve the very best design code that will help shape any future development.

