

Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2007-2008

When I started to write this report I thought nothing much had happened in the last year but I was wrong.

Starting off with the Shop, this time last year we were getting worried that Pete and Sue would not be able to sell it, but finally luckily they did in May to Bal. This settled the one worry but very soon we were confronted with the Post Office closure plan reaching this area. We decided to be proactive rather than reactive and formed a steering group with some Parish Councillors and David Horton who had spearheaded the campaign in the Newsletter. We put up posters and urged people to use the shop more and in late January culminating in a visit from Boris Johnson to the shop and a meeting with the steering group to put our concerns to him. Whether anything we did made any difference we don't know.

We hope the shop is safe for the foreseeable future today being the end of the consultation period. That being the case it is still important that we all try to use the shop

Last year we were also asked by the school to look at the path which runs from the lych gate to the small gate. We effected some improvements to it and whilst doing the job we realised that the Copper Beech tree was growing ever bigger and spreading its wings and effecting both the grass underneath and the view of the Church. We asked a Tree surgeon to have a look at it and see whether it could be lopped back a bit without spoiling the tree. They have applied to the S.O.D.C. for permission and they will decide how much we can do.

Also last year we had the Village Sign completely refurbished and Tim and I rehung it to cheers from the crowd, one blackbird I think! Now we must make sure we keep it in good condition.

The Adventure Playground keeps us busy with always something to repair or improve, often thanks to some kind vandals!

The Sports Field has as usual been kept in very good condition. This winter the football ground has been used by a team from South Stoke which contains a number of local players.

There is a good group keeping the ground in order and the PC helps where it can.

After last July's unusual storm which caused some flooding in two of the Bungalows we put into place a drainage ditch which hopefully will stop this ever happening again.

Planning There have been a large number of planning applications over the past year mostly small ones which have been dealt with very effectively by Matthew and Tim. I know there are some concerns in Whitehall Lane and we will try to represent people's views.

At our May meeting we make donations to various local organisations. The Church (graveyard) maintenance and the Surgery Bus being the largest, others include CAB. Woodcote Volunteers, Age Concern etc.

Footpaths Adrian has dealt with any problems or requests concerning footpaths very well Like the Adventure Playground, there is always something that need doing.

During the past year Michael Weller decided to stop regular litter picking. He has done this task for 15 years most thoroughly. He has walked miles keeping not only the centre of the village but also the outlying areas tidy. Thank you very much Michael. Whether we shall ever be able to find someone to keep the same standard I very much doubt, but we must all do our bit and not rely on others. We owe it to Michael to do our best.

Many thanks to Malcolm for keeping everything that he is responsible for, so neat and tidy.

Thanks go to our County Councillor, David Nimmo-Smith who has been very conscientious barely missing a meeting, also to our District Councillor Maurice Newland.

I would also like to thank all the Parish Councillors very much for their contribution over the last year. Lots of different things come up at our meetings and I hope we deal with them to people's satisfaction, we do try very hard to do so.

Last but not least we are blessed with an excellent Clerk and we do appreciate this. Her knowledge and experience makes our job much easier, we don't always make her job easier but she rises to the occasion sometimes with a moan but more usually with a smile. Thank you Claire.

Doug Griggs