

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The meeting on 8 May 2017 was our Parish Council Annual Meeting and the first of the new financial and administrative year. I was re-elected as Chairman and Elizabeth Brown was re-elected as Vice-Chairman. We were pleased to welcome our new County Councillor Dr Kate O'Kelly and we recorded our thanks to the outgoing Gordon McAra for his help particularly with the Shared Space Traffic Scheme for Rogate.

As it was the beginning of a new financial year we considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2017. The latter document summarises the final accounts for the past year and both the documents can be found on the Parish noticeboards and on our website: [rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk). If you have any queries on either document please contact me or the Clerk ([clerk@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk)).

Our Clerk continues to improve our administration and we accepted the final draft of the Complaints Procedure and the Data Protection Policy, which will be posted on our website.

We heard reports that access to some of our public footpaths is being hampered by the poor state of the stiles and we agreed to liaise with the WSCC Footpath Warden to see where improvements may be necessary.

On the 27th April we had the Annual Parish Meeting. This is a statutory meeting where we invite parishioners, all the organisations we have funded, other community groups, the schools and the church to hear reports on what the Parish Council and others have accomplished during the preceding year. Although it has a similar title, it is not the same as the Parish Council Annual Meeting we held on 8<sup>th</sup> May at which we conducted the normal business of the Council. The Annual Parish Meeting is an opportunity for all to hear about the work of a wide range of organisations and groups that operate in the parish. However, this year we were very disappointed with the low turnout – both from contributors who only sent in a written report and from the general public. We suspect that the reason was related to the fact that it came just a week after the two public meetings on the Shared Space Traffic Scheme for Rogate and the Neighbourhood Plan. Next year we will look again at the timing of the Annual Parish Meeting and how it is programmed and advertised as it is an important part of the Parish Council's accountability. As the meeting was so poorly attended I thought I would take this space to provide a shortened version of my report of the Parish Council's activities last year.

**Council Land:** The Parish owns four parcels of land:

**1 Fyning Recreation Ground**

**2 Rake Recreation Ground**

Both of these are registered as Village Greens

**3 Terwick Woodland** and

**4 Oliver's Piece** (the viewpoint on London Road between Rake and Hillbrow).

Wooden **Name-plates** have been erected at each site showing the name of the area and its parish ownership. Fallen trees and branches, and undergrowth have been cleared from Terwick Woodland and Fyning Recreation Ground. A **Woodland Management Plan** has been developed and lodged with the Forestry Commission. The Plan defines maintenance schedules for each area in order that they can be properly managed to ensure their safe enjoyment and to benefit the flora and fauna.

**Finance:** The Council set its budget for the 2017/18 financial year at £30,980 which is an increase of just £64 on last year's. Savings were made during last year and about £4000 has been added to the reserves. **Discretionary grants** were given to Petersfield Citizens Advice Bureau (£250) and Home Start (£350). **Other funds** were given to Rogate Parochial Church Council for its Burial grounds (£2600), Terwick Parochial Church Council for its Burial grounds (£275), Rogate Youth Club for its Youth Leader (£480) and R&T News (£125). **Purchases** during the year include three new grit bins and new play equipment for Hugo Platt Playground (£4700 part-funded by CDC and WSCC). **Other Expenditure** included the cleaning of the four Bus Shelters (£360), Hugo Platt Playground repairs (£480), all the playground equipment has been inspected (£176) and the playground bins have been emptied (£180) and the grass cut (£332)

**Planning:** During the last twelve months 58 planning applications have been dealt with by the Committee. The two most significant have been **Dangstein Woodland Conservancy's** application to provide tourist facilities and overnight accommodation – we objected and SDNPA refused the application, and **The Garages Site, Parsonage** – Hyde Martlett's application to build on the existing garages – we objected but CDC approved the plans for three units which was less than the five originally proposed.

**RATA and the Shared Space Traffic Scheme for Rogate:** WSCC has approved its Highways Dept. scheme for construction this financial year (17/18). The scheme was explained to a large public meeting on 20 April. The Parish Council has accumulated some money (about £10k) to contribute to street furniture and planting and it is hoped that SDNPA will also contribute with ideas and cash. The scheme will provide the backbone on which we can add additional features.

**Operation Watershed:** The parish council has successfully obtained grants from WSCC to tackle problems at Slade Lane, Sandhill Farm and Sandilands Farm on Habin Hill and the lane to St Peters Church, Terwick.

**Garbetts Steps:** Steps that provide access from Habin Hill to Garbett's Wood on one side and Rogate primary school on the other side have been installed. The project was funded by SDNPA and developed in conjunction with the Woodland Trust who own the woods.

**Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday:** Finally, we helped organise celebrations for the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday with the help of a grant from CDC. The profits went towards the cost of new equipment at Hugo Platt Playground.

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