

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

We had our usual monthly Council meeting on 8th April followed by the Annual Parish Meeting on 11th April. The monthly meeting dealt with our usual business and reports updating progress on a number of projects. In addition, we discussed ways to help Rake Village Hall with its project to install a children's playground having won a substantial grant from Biffa Waste Services and we heard about the initiative to reduce speed limits and provide traffic calming measure in Rake and Hillbrow.

I am happy to report that we had a very successful Annual Parish Meeting. We had over 20 members of the public plus speakers, parish councillors and our county and district councillor Kate O'Kelly. We received 22 reports from local organisations and clubs (a record!) which were extremely informative and demonstrated the wide and varied interests and activities that can be found around the parish. Draft minutes will be posted on our website and notice boards so please have a look if you were not able to attend.

This is the year when all the parish councillors have to resign and stand again if they wish to continue. New candidates can also be nominated. Our Council consist of 13 members and 8 put their names forward to stand again and there will be one new candidate. That makes 9 candidates and as this is less than the 13 we need, all 9 were appointed councillors without an election. However, that leaves 4 vacancies that need to be filled as soon as possible. If you or someone you know is interested in joining the Council please get in touch with Debbie, our Clerk before 10 May or at the latest 7 June.

Consequently, there are 5 councillors that have resigned: Paddy Walker, Nic Lobbenberg, Sue May, Rita Harrison-Roach and Fred Fosberry. I wish to thank them, and the remaining councillors, for their hard work and support.

During the past year we have undertaken general maintenance of Fyning Recreation Ground, Rake Recreation Ground, Terwick Woodland and Oliver's Piece which included hedge trimming, dealing with fallen trees and branches and clearing undergrowth. In Terwick Woodland we coppiced the hazel which was long overdue and removed some holly trees. In Rake Recreation Ground we removed the very old swing frame.

The Council set its budget for this financial year 2019/20 at £30,925 which is the same as last year's. Last year we used about £4000 of our reserves for two un-budgeted items— a replacement swing for Hugo Platt Playground and support for the Youth Worker in the Youth Club.

We gave grants to Rogate and Terwick Parochial Church Councils for their Burial grounds, Petersfield Citizens Advice Bureau, Midhurst Food Bank, Little Angels, Rogate Youth Club, Petersfield Museum, R&T News, and Rake and Hillbrow Speedwatch Group.

Hugo Platt and Rogate Recreation Ground playgrounds have been repaired and maintained including a new swing, the equipment has been checked and inspected, bins have been emptied and grass has been cut. Rake Recreation Ground has also had its grass and hedges cut and the old swing frame removed. We removed the redundant bus shelter in Hillbrow and holly trees from Terwick Woodland. The beech hedge at Rogate Cemetery has been cut back. The Council continued to clean the four bus shelters and we have ordered four new ones that will be delivered this year. We have also taken a pro-active role in the fight to keep the few bus services serving Rogate, against major financial cuts proposed by WSCC.

We refurbished and renewed three of our black and white finger post direction road signs.

During the last twelve months 49 planning applications have been dealt with compared with 52 the year before.

Steve Williamson 18 April 2019 01730 890225 or steve@thestepsrake.co.uk