

CHAIRMANS REPORT – COUNCILLOR PADDY RIORDAN

During the last year the Parish Council has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for residents.

This was the last year on the Parish Council of Joan Buller, her knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed. We will so, so, miss her.

We are delighted to have our Clerk, Richard who joined us last July, and all the team Jean, Deborah and Paul, who have helped to improve the whole running of our parish office, assisting councillors and residents and helping us press forward with projects which we hope will be a huge benefit to our community.

We constantly engage with the Police, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council, various utility services and authorities to help with the everyday running the village.

We organise a twice a year community litter pick, which I am delighted to say is well attended by our parishioners to try and keep our village clean.

We regularly work with the Community Payback Team to make various improvements, such as painting, cutting hedges, working on the telephone box cleaning paths and driveways cleaning gutters working at Surrenden field, the Jubilee field and throughout the village.

The Parish Council Greener Staplehurst group, do some fabulous work around the village, maintaining flower planters, planting wildflower areas and trees.

I'm delighted to say we now have some allotments on one of the new developments which the parish council are taking control of.

We work in partnership with all stakeholders to enhance facilities around the village working with play price to find a safe and enjoyable environment for the three week summer long playscheme, we work with the Jubilee Field Management Committee and football clubs to enhance facilities at our sports field, we maintain the skate park

This year we have taken ownership of the Youth Club building and I'm delighted to say the facility is being enjoyed by many of our young people in the village.

We enjoyed supporting the Women's Institute celebrate their hundred year anniversary, we brighten up the village every year at Christmas time with Christmas motifs and a Christmas tree & lights at the parade, we support the village Remembrance Day parade, we constantly attempt to improve communication with our residents via our website, social media and village update magazine.

We have various projects in the pipeline at the moment. Many of you will be aware of a 3G all-sports pitch we are looking into at the Jubilee Field. We want to improve the damaged brickwork at the parade area and install bicycle racks at there. We have agreed to install an outdoor adult gym at Surrenden Field, due to open in summer 2023.

The Road Safety Group are constantly looking to improve the road and pavement network, which I'm sure you would appreciate it's quite a difficult job at the moment

We are constantly heavily engaged in planning matters. We are regularly reviewing our neighbourhood plan policy and we are engaging with Maidstone Borough Council in relation to the local plan for the area

We also run our yearly volunteer, merit awards and further to the award that Christine Ralph has already received from us. We have another fabulous award from the Kent Association of local councils to present to her.