

## Chairman's Report 2015/16

The Parish Council has been exceptionally busy since last May, where has the year has gone? We have:

1. Undertaken a complete review and overhaul of the various Committees and Working Parties, to ensure they are all fully compliant.
2. We have also reviewed the Parish Council's Standing Orders, and the Parish Council's Risk Assessment and Assets Schedule; and
3. Members have undertaken training, including "New Councillor" training courses which all newly elected Councillors are legally required to do within six months of being elected;
4. On 7 April, our brand new Playground was officially opened. The previous Playground equipment was well past it's sell by date, and thanks to a very generous £100,000 donation by Vattenfall to Thanet District Council, half of which was allocated to Cliffsend Playground, and following a consultation with residents (and the important young of our village) the equipment was chosen by residents. I see plenty of evidence of the new equipment being used, and by the looks of it, it has been a welcome addition to the village.

In addition to the positives, sadly there is always a negative to report. Two memorial trees in the Meadow have been damaged during the last year, one by an animal – source unknown, and one by a human. The Memorial Trees in the Meadow have been planted in memory of a loved one, and it is very distressing to think they are being damaged like this. Please, if you do see any activity which is damaging the Memorial Trees, please report it to the Parish Council using the contact information on the website. I must stress the two trees affected are still healthy and continue to grow, so no trees have been lost.

So a very busy last 12 months, what of the future? There are still many things to be worked on, and hopefully achieved, by the Parish Council including:

- a. The Neighbourhood Plan which is still in progress. This is particularly important for the future of our village. Questionnaires have been circulated and replied to by residents, the replies are still being collated and sorted, and once all the information is to hand, and the Plan is finalised, it will be submitted to the relevant department and once it has been accepted it can then be published and we would expect to make it available on the website.
- b. The Parish Website is undergoing changes as required by the host of the website, so you may notice a few changes or amendments from time to time, which may mean certain documents or information are unavailable for short periods of time or their location is moved. We are assured that the new updated website should be clearer, more user friendly and perhaps more interesting!
- c. We have three new working parties: Memorial WP– hopefully so we can have a memorial here in the village, the Transparency WP– to ensure the Council is fully compliant with the Localism Act and the Emergency Plan WP which is tasked with putting into place a plan to which would be put into operation if the event of an emergency affect the village, or part it, such things as flooding, explosion and earthquakes – who would have thought Cliffsend would have an earthquake?

We work closely with our partners, Kent County Council and Thanet District Council, and we are very fortunate to have the support of our County Councillor, the Mayor of Ramsgate, and the District Councillors Brenda Rogers and John Townend, who have all frequently attended Parish Council meetings and give their support not only to the parish council but to residents also.

Parish Councils play an important role, and whilst some would say we are at the bottom of the hierarchy, I say we are at the important end – we are at the grass roots end! What happens here in your village, now and in the future, is important to you and the Parish Council. Whilst not all parish Councillors will always agree everything all of the time, it is important that we remember we have all been voted on to the Parish Council by you, the residents of Cliffsend. Differences aside all Councillors must work together as a team for the benefit of the entire village; if we can do that, then I am sure many great things can be achieved here in Cliffsend.

I would like to thank my Vice-Chairman, Cllr Alexander for being my right-hand man so to speak. As one of the few, if not possibly the first, Chairman of this Parish Council who works full time not getting home until 7pm most days, I have been very fortunate to have a Vice Chairman who has been fully supportive and has attended meetings held during the working day when I have not been able to attend.

Without wishing to turn this into something reminiscent of the Baftas, or the Oscars, with thank you speeches and the obligatory tears, I would say all parish councillors have worked hard throughout the year either on committees or working parties, or other projects, and they all deserve a thank you, as does our Clerk who unfortunately has had three novice councillors, including a novice chairman, to guide in the right direction – not an easy feat I am sure!.

Thank you.