



## **Chairman's Annual Report 2020 - 2021**

These have truly been unprecedented times when face masks became the norm and words such as lockdown and social distancing fell into common use. A parish council meeting even went viral catapulting its locum clerk Jackie Weaver to overnight fame and shining a light on local council matters!

Amid all the chaos, normal life continued here as far as possible. Bills were paid, accounts maintained and the precept agreed for 2021-2022. Temporary legislation also allowed our meetings to take place remotely until 6 May 2021 with many residents joining us either to speak during the public session or even just to observe proceedings. We also bade farewell to Paul Wilkinson and long-serving Chairman Niki Adamson who had both worked so hard on behalf of Slindon.

Access to allotments was one of the very few things that continued without interruption during the pandemic and, whilst the 10 year lease with the National Trust to provide the land expired in 2020, the Parish Council anticipate that a new lease should be in place shortly.

The agreement with the Slindon Sports Association to use the Recreation Ground also came up for review in 2020 and we are now just a matter of weeks from signing the new licence allowing sporting traditions to continue alongside residents' enjoyment of the area. The pavilion has undergone a total transformation, both inside and out!

The new Parish Council website went live in September 2020 to meet legislative requirements regarding accessibility for all. It is now so much easier for everyone to navigate and find information.

Over the winter, we engaged with West Sussex County Council to help those affected by flooding in Reynolds Lane, with further work subject to spending priorities across the county. The Council continues to work on an application under 'Operation Watershed' to address localised flooding on Church Hill and enhance the biodiversity of the pond, having secured the financial backing of Arun District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority to undertake preliminary works. The pond was last de-silted over 20 years ago so this is a very important aspect of the application too.

Although the Council had to restrict access to the adult gym and children's play area from time to time during various lockdowns, the facilities have remained as popular as ever. We are waiting to hear whether a grant application in February 2021 to replace some ageing play equipment on the Top Field has been successful. Fingers crossed!

As well as making grant applications, the Parish Council also contributed towards the restoration of the Coronation Hall, made two small charitable donations to the Royal British Legion and Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance and helped to fund prizes for the village scarecrow event.

May 2021 saw the County Council elections and, with a decision by Councillor Derek Whittington not to stand for re-election, we wish him well for the future and thank him for his commitment to the Parish over the years - he will be greatly missed. Councillor Trevor Bence has now been elected to represent the Fontwell division and he will join us at our next meeting in June.

So as lockdown eases, we look forward to a return to more normal times, of face to face contact and to welcoming residents to our meetings, even perhaps as new Councillors!

*Jan Rees*

Chairman, May 2021