



Chairman's Monthly Newsletter December

As the Omicron variant loomed large, the Council met face to face in December to agree the precept for 2022/23. The legislation that had allowed us to meet virtually ended in May 2021, although we are hopeful that the Government will reinstate this as an option, to both protect the health of those who wish to join our meetings and also make them more accessible to those who cannot join in person.

This year's focus has been one of prudent spending and how best to maintain an extensive range of services to a small parish on what is a modest precept. 2021 saw the Council sign an agreement with the Slindon Sports Association to use and help us maintain the Recreation Ground area, secure a substantial grant to restore the pond and improve highways drainage. We have also set up two free CPR and defibrillator training sessions for the community and we plan to continue these in 2022.

Whilst the Council was initially disappointed to have missed out on funding from the South Downs National Park to replace some of the ageing play equipment on the hugely popular Top Field, it is now looking to submit an altogether more ambitious design. Community support will play a key role, so we need as many people as possible to get behind the project either as a donor, fund-raiser or in some other way, including ideas on the design. Sarah, our Clerk, secured substantial funding towards a new play area in her other parish and is keen to do the same for us - the closing date for our expression of interest is February 2022, so we do need to hear from you soon!

Some of you may be aware that there have been concerns over the condition of the pond in recent weeks and of the health of the fish. We have worked closely with various agencies to manage the situation as best we can. Operation Watershed, which will start in the first few weeks of January, will bring welcome relief, enhancing the biodiversity of the pond with the removal of over 20 years' silt accumulation.

As we look to next year, the Parish Council will also be seeking ways to reduce its carbon footprint. We have just made the move to online banking and will be looking at other ways to contribute to carbon reduction – watch this space!

So, as this year draws to a close, we wish you all a very peaceful Christmas and a bright and healthy New Year.

Jan Rees, Chairman, for Slindon Parish Council