



## Chairman's Report 2022

### The Pond

A timeline of the Operation Watershed project can be found on the Parish Council website but its beginning roughly ties in with the last meeting of the Parish, Spring 2019. Two years later in May 2021, after a great deal of paperwork had passed through our clerk's hands, two separate applications for the grant were put forward by the Parish Council, one meant cutting down the willow on the roadside, the other to leave it intact. Due to drainage issues, the former application was successful and in October 2021 the award was made of just over £62000 to de-silt the pond and renew the culverts and pipework. This has been one of the largest amounts of money awarded under Operation Watershed!

The need to intervene became evident just before last Christmas when concerned villagers noticed that fish were on the surface gulping for air. During the course of the work in the first two months of 2022, around 350 cubic metres of silt were removed and stored in the adjacent field.

Fast forward to May 2022 and the silt is drying nicely and turning from wet soggy material into a finer dust. Plans for its disposal are still ongoing. The longer it is in the bund, the easier it will be for removal.

We have had lots of questions about the pond surrounds. We are continuing to follow advice to let the earth settle. The completion of the work was still only three months ago so when the time is right, we will look at some replanting. We need a mixture of some submerged, floating and emergent plants, also to avoid anything invasive! Some marsh marigolds went in last week. The large carp have all gone although it does seem that ducks bring the fish eggs on their feet. Simon Mockford of the South Downs National Park has taken a particular interest in the project and continues to give us advice. We are very grateful for all his help and encouragement. We are also looking at the path beside the pond to find a way of improving the surface.

A number of suggestions have been put forward but it is worth remembering that Slindon volunteers are perhaps rather thinner on the ground than they were 20 years ago, so that any items that involve maintenance may bring costs which we would like to avoid, as it means a higher precept. We are certainly very grateful for those who have volunteered their help.

### The Allotments

The demand for allotments amongst parishioners is low and so many holders are from outside the village. The situation up to this year has been that the Parish Council is the tenant of the National Trust and the Allotment Society is the tenant of the Parish Council.

Both the Society and the Trust are very happy to work together so we have stepped out of that middle position. This has saved hours of work and a fair amount of money on a new lease, the old one having expired in March 2020.

### The Play Park

We missed out on the last round of grants so, undaunted, Sarah has put in a new application for this year. The focus is on accessibility, inclusivity and the use of materials that are more sustainable. The existing items are well used and children have great fun on them, but we do have regular inspections and if anything gets a high risk label it means the spending of money. A small



handle replacement on the hen rocker was an unbelievable £340. Our thanks must go to Derek who does regular repairs and often thinks outside the box in fixing problems! Currently any large machinery used in the playpark comes through from Gaston farm. In the future we intend to install a gate at the entrance as well as swapping the very large bin with a smaller one from the recreation ground.

### The Recreation Ground and Pavilion

A new licence for the Sports Association to use the Recreation Ground was signed in September 2021 This allows sporting traditions to continue alongside residents' enjoyment of the area. The pavilion has undergone a total transformation, both inside and out! There are two new disabled ramps and fire doors have been fitted. Thanks must go to Martin, Veronique and the SSA team for their hard work on the internal face lift. Plumbing and electrics are now in good shape and all other fire requirements have been satisfied. It is now safe and conforms to the new standards on Legionella prevention. We also all now know where the stopcock is!

The building has been valued at just under £250,000.00 but the internal layout is rather old and tired. Although the showers work, they have not been used for years so our clerk..... never one to shy away from a possible grant application.... is considering one to improve things inside the Pavilion.

### Lottery Funding

Sarah has managed to secure some money from The National Lottery Community Fund. This is a good opportunity to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We have used the grant to buy two benches – one to go by the pond and the other on the Recreation Ground. There will be replacement notice boards for the pavilion and Coronation Hall and an accessible picnic table for the Top Field. The benches will have commemorative plaques. We are very grateful to Robert Parfey and Martin Moss who are helping to install these items.

There will also be improved external lighting for the Coronation Hall.

### "Call For Nature Sites"

South Downs National Park has launched a pilot scheme to identify sites in the Park suitable for nature recovery. The Parish Council suggested two possible sites and both of these have been chosen, although the project is in its earliest stages. If successful, we hope to create wildflower meadows at the Recreation Ground and by the John Moor seat.

### Flooding

Climate change is affecting us all with very dry periods interspersed with heavy downpours. In July 2021 heavy rain caused the drains in Reynolds Lane to be overwhelmed. The soakaways were first cleared back in February, which improved the situation. This was followed by the emptying and cleansing of gullies from part way up School Hill back down to the junction with the A29. Further works are now also planned to increase the capacity of the system to alleviate overloading issues in this location. There will be wider concrete aprons to enable more water to access the gullies, again removing excess water from the road surface. The first stage will be to price up the proposed works and we will continue to support delivery of the project in a timely way. If the value of the work is greater than £20000 of committed cost, it will be necessary for West Sussex County Council to tender the project in September 2022.



### Consultation for the A27 Grey Route Arundel Bypass

Slindon is a consultee, represented on the Elected Representatives' Forum and we continue to attend meetings. Although our village is relatively unaffected by the planned route, we are aware that any slight changes in junction layout or traffic flow might alter that situation, so we continue to be vigilant. The nearby village of Walberton is severely affected and understandably the opposition from their Parish Council is very strong. The Statutory Consultation closed on March 8<sup>th</sup> and Slindon villagers were given an opportunity to go to a consultation event in Coronation Hall on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Submission to the DCO (Development Consent Order) is likely to be in the autumn. Highlighted issues for consideration are the mitigation of traffic through Walberton and the provision of a Ford Road junction. The latter is outside the A27 Bypass scheme but Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council are looking at possible ways of dovetailing a local plan into the National Highways project.

The road is considered to be a crucial route through the South East but there are still outstanding concerns from other parishes and also the local councils which will need to be addressed.

### Defibrillators

Both these have now been serviced and our thanks must go to Sally Holmes who has done three excellent presentations to Slindon residents. Sally is a First Responder who has enormous experience in the use of defibrillators and a passionate belief in how they really do save lives. Under her guidance we have learnt not only how to use these rather intimidating machines but how to check for signs of life and carry out effective CPR. We will schedule another course later in the year.

### The Queen's Green Canopy

Thanks to everyone who turned out in March for the planting of two oak trees on the Recreation Ground. This was to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee. We were fortunate to have the attendance of the MP for Arundel and the South Downs, Andrew Griffith and it was lovely to welcome two of our village elders, Annie Foreshew and John Apps to help with the planting (neither looking particularly elder!) Thanks to Gerald Sercombe for all his help on that day.

### Other Consultations

Your clerk and councillors continue to attend Zoom meetings with the West Sussex Association of Local Councils and Arun District Association of Local Councils regarding projects significant to our parish. These have included the resettlement of Ukrainian Refugees, West Sussex Transport Plan, Rampion 2, Big Data, Kerb Connect (West Sussex's Electric Vehicle Strategy) and the new Rural Crime Team.

Do please come along to the Parish Council meetings. The Public Participation element is right at the beginning and we are more than happy for people to leave after they have asked questions or aired their views. We promise not to remove your car keys or chain you to the seats! Thanks are due to Barbara, Derek, Peter and Patrick for their excellent contributions to our meetings and, of course to Sarah who works so hard on Slindon's behalf. She is greatly valued by the Council. We wish the village well for the events planned for next weekend and are delighted to have been able to make a grant of £300 towards various activities. Very warm weather is forecast and we hope that the turnout will be good.