

Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2011

This past year has seen the on-going saga of the lease for the allotment land. The Allotments Society is running out of reasons to have meetings as this has now dragged on for well over 18 months. There is now, however, some light at the end of the tunnel.

The annual events, the Garden Safari and the Fun Day, were both successful again this year despite the rain which fell on Fun Day Sunday. The safari saw 17 gardens open and raised £2,392.85, which was shared between Help for Heroes and parish community projects. The Fun Day saw slightly lower crowds than the previous year due entirely to the very wet weather but still, £1,909.43 was raised and it was shared between community projects and the Strode Park Foundation.

The children's Christmas party was held in the Herne Institute Hall where 63 local children tucked in to cakes and ice cream. They were entertained by Pip the Clown, Shout Disco and were able to have a quiet word with Father Christmas. The tour of the parish was postponed because of the snow (Santa's sleigh float got snowbound!)

In staging these events the council has been, yet again, indebted to a large number of local volunteers without whom the events just would not happen.

The Parish was again represented with a float in the Herne Bay Carnival parade. The theme was '700 years of St Martins church and the ecclesiastic parish of Herne', though some said it was a little too subtle.

Our three standing committees have all had a busy year. The Planning and Highways committee under the chairmanship of Cllr. Ann Blatherwick meets most often, about every three weeks and has successfully opposed the unwanted building of a car park on protected open space at the Links development at the entrance to Herne Village, as well as continuing to oppose any building proposals which would be likely to adversely affect the Parish.

The Environment and Leisure committee chaired by Cllr. Jennifer Taylor meets as required, which is usually more than four times a year. It has been the guiding force behind the allotments provision and the workhorse for all the events undertaken by the council.

The Finance and Resources committee is chaired by Cllr. Robert Jones and meets quarterly. It keeps the council on a straight financial course. It also looks after staffing matters.

Our Quality Council Status, which lasts for 4 years, was successfully renewed following a huge amount of work by Monica and Cllr Carol Davis.

On the subject of Monica, it must be said that our Parish continues to be blessed with such a hard working and enthusiastic clerk. It is hard to imagine how many of the events which the council is involved in each year could be possible without her untiring efforts. This is on top of running a very efficient parish office with all the attendant administrative management that a large parish requires.

Parish council surgeries which are held monthly on the Saturday preceding the full Parish Council meeting at Herne Mill from 10.00 to 12.00 have continued throughout the year, though they are not well attended. We could assume everyone is happy with the way the council is working.

I must mention the thriving local clubs and organisations within the parish, some of which are represented here. These associations are a very important part of parish life and all of the organisers deserve tremendous credit for the work they do.

Finally there is the Land which the council is in the process of acquiring for the community. The project has been shrouded in confidentiality so as to prevent any land developers getting wind of the availability of building land and so gazumping us with an offer the seller could not refuse. We are close to completing the land purchase and we will be only too pleased to let everyone know all of the details as soon as we have exchanged contracts.

There will be a thorough public consultation about what the land is to be used for and everyone's views will be listened to.

All council members have contributed to another successful council year and I give them all my thanks for having made my second year in the chair a smooth and very enjoyable experience (and one I would happily repeat).

Cllr Tony Day
Parish Council Chairman