

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The meeting in November agreed a number of new initiatives and projects. Following the summer cut-back of the beech hedge at the cemetery in Rogate, it was agreed that the adjacent hedge and trees would be cut back to improve visibility. In addition, the Rogate village signs and planters will be erected on the main road approaches. A local supplier of logs will be coppicing the chestnut in Terwick Woodland as part of the woodland management plan. The trees have not been coppiced for over 10 years and any resultant brush will not be burnt but piled and left for wildlife habitats. The council considered a proposal for a Forest School on Fyning Common and after a lot of discussion of the pros and cons it was decided to allow a trial run in the Easter holidays and to monitor its use and impact.

The Rake and Hillbrow Community Speedwatch group has now been established and will begin work shortly. The council agreed to fund the necessary high visibility clothing. There was also interest in expanding the group to include the A272 through Rogate, especially as there have been further complaints about the speed and noise of traffic – especially motorbikes. Such a scheme relies on volunteers and so if anyone is interested in volunteering please get in touch with Debbie Harknett our Clerk on 01730 300576 or clerk@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk. The scheme is supervised by the Police and volunteers will be trained.

It has been decided that the wooden bus shelter in Rogate village is beyond repair and the purchase of a new one will be pursued. The council decided to support the Rake Playground Project by providing up to £5,000 out of this and next year's budgets to purchase a piece of equipment. Also on the finances, we received a request from Rogate School for help to purchase a new school sign for the beginning of School Lane, and agreed a sum of £300 subject to agreement on the design.

Finally, the council considered next year's budget and decided not to increase the parish's part of the council tax precept. However, this was on the assumption that the parish council would not need additional funds to support our local bus services. As I have written before, there appears to be a significant threat to some or all of the bus routes that serve Rogate. It is possible, perhaps likely, that WSCC will look to district and parish councils and SDNPA for contributions to the financial support of these bus services. An alternative would be for us to set up a Community Bus scheme on the axed routes, using local volunteer drivers. I would be interested to know what support there is for a Community Bus scheme. Could we find enough committed volunteers to run a service twice or four times a day for two or three days a week? If you have any views or thoughts, please let me know.

Lastly, may I wish everyone a very happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Steve Williamson 19 November 2018 01730 890225 or steve@thestepsrake.co.uk