

Letter from the Chairman of Rogate Parish Council – August 2020

During August we held our delayed Annual Parish Council Meeting and as a result we have some changes to announce. Ann Arnold, Elizabeth Brown and Val Farren have resigned from the Council due to retirement and family commitments. They have all worked hard on the Council for many years and will be sadly missed. Thank you for all your help and best wishes. The other change is that Steve Williamson has stepped down as Chair, a new name at the bottom of this letter. Steve is staying on as a Councillor and his experience will be invaluable. And again, many thanks for the work you have carried out as Chair.

As for myself I have lived in the village for more than 20 years, helped out on the Parish Council for 8 years and chair the Open Spaces Committee. More recently was a governor at the school for 4 years and represented Rogate in the campaign to retain the village bus service. Feel that Rake and Rogate should retain their village identities.

Several people have mentioned the changes at the Petersfield tip. We understand that contrary to the report in the Petersfield Post, West Sussex County Council do have a reciprocal arrangement with Hampshire and it will be possible for Rogate and Rake residents to use Petersfield tip for free. However, it appears the website will not currently accept bookings from across the border without payment. At present those of us in Sussex need to phone and book a slot.

There has been some progress on the campaign to deal with the real nuisance and danger of excessive noise and speed of motorcycling on the A272. The Parish Council is represented on a group of Parish Councils and community led groups that involves Sussex MPs district and county councillors campaigning for greater police enforcement and the necessary change in the law. The subject dominated the latest Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC-Katy Bourne) in the Performance & Accountability Meeting 'held with the new Chief Constable of Sussex Police, Jo Skinner (these meetings are held monthly and are viewable online*)'. The CC has acknowledged the significance of this issue and committed additional resources to tackling the problem. Operation Downsway has been initiated which specifically targets speeding and antisocial motorcyclists on the A272 and was doing so in Midhurst on Sunday 9th March. She has also committed to researching new technology for detecting illegal motorcycle noise and engaging with local communities as part of Operation Downsway. We have written to both the PCC and CC to ensure they are aware that the problem is equally as acute in our Parish at the western end of the of their area of responsibility for policing the A272 and expressing our keenness to participate in an Operation Downsway engagement session in our locality.

*A link to the to the relevant PCC monthly performance and accountability session is posted on the Parish Council Website as well as details/ addresses of the PCC and CC should you wish to write personally to them.

We have applied for the necessary permits and licences to operate a 'Speed Indicator Sign (SID)' that the Parish Council has agreed to purchase. The sign will be mounted on posts in one of seven different locations for 2 weeks at time (2 on the A272 in Rogate, 2 on the B2070 in Rake, 1 on the B2070 in Hillbrow and 1 on the Rogate Road near Durford Wood entrance). Although not a solution to the problem of speeding vehicles, experience has shown they do have a positive impact on driver behaviour.

Good progress has been made towards the construction and installation of an open-air gym on Rogate's recreation ground. It will comprise eight stations, each designed to exercise a different set of muscles. These stations will be set apart to accommodate concerns about distancing in this Covid time. The parish council is very conscious that, while gyms are popular and healthy places, they can be expensive and have an air of exclusivity about them. The Rogate open air gym will, in contrast, be free to use, easily accessible and hopefully, fun! We are very aware of the benefits that this will bring, not least with growing concerns over obesity. The council is giving its full backing and has decided to contribute half the overall construction and installation cost. A working party

(including members outside of the Parish Council) has been established and they are now seeking additional support from the local community – both individuals and businesses - and so far the response has been encouraging. The initial goal is to fund and install eight stations, but if sufficient funds are raised to include two stations for disabled or wheel-chair bound users. To view the sort of equipment we are envisaging visit the website of our providers: www.freshairfitness.com. Anyone interested in supporting the project should contact either of two of Rogate parish councillors: Elena McCloskey (mccloskey.elena@gmail.com, phone 07720347 877); Gerard McCloskey (Gerard.mccloskey@merlin.uk.com, phone 01730 890472).

From the comments above it will come of no surprise that we have a few vacancies on the Parish Council. We have had some interest but we are still likely to have a couple of vacancies to fill. So if you feel able to support the community please contact me or our clerk Debbie. Our villages need you!