

## **CHAIRMANS REPORT – JOHN COLEMAN**

### **ST HELENS PARISH COUNCIL - APM– PROJECTS COMPLETED DURING THIS TERM (4 YRS)**

**The Parish Council currently operates a “Lead” Councillor Policy which basically means individual Councillors identify projects which with the agreement of the PC they take forward, reporting on progress at subsequent Parish Council meetings**

- **St Helens Beach – Lead – John Coleman**

The Isle of Wight Council decided to close the Toilet Facility on the Beach at St Helen’s; the Parish Council subsequently purchased the facility from the IWC.

After a full refurbishment programme the facility was re-opened to the Public and has remained open since; the accessible toilet 24/7 and the Ladies/Gents during the Holiday season. This facility is now on our asset list and currently valued @ £160,000. Part of the refurbishment programme was the re-installation of the outside tap and we have also put in place an annual planned maintenance schedule. Another addition to the facility was the installation of a De-Fib unit which is another first for our Beach. We increased the capacity of the litter bins replacing the old ones with double capacity units allowing for recycled and general waste to be kept separate, the units are now emptied on a daily basis during the holiday season plus more frequently if required at the discretion of our contractor; this new arrangement works well. Again during High Season we have arranged for the Beach to be mechanically cleaned, it was already hand litter picked but the mechanical grading certainly adds to the cleanliness of our Beach. We also engaged with Nodes Point Holiday Park who provided manual litter picking on a daily basis around the Old Church area in the Summer Season. All the above measures resulted in St Helen’s Beach being awarded the prestigious Blue Flag Beach award for 2020.

**\*We have just received notification that we have been successful again for 2021.**

- **General Maintenance within the Village – Lead – Joost Spit**

Joost has put in place a comprehensive maintenance programme for the Village, this has included the refurbishment of all the Benches within the village . The PC has been working with the Community Payback Team on this which is an extremely cost effective arrangement; the work is ongoing with several projects in the pipeline including working with the Church on the renovation of the Lyche Gate/Church yard and the old Church Green furniture.

- **Village Greens – Leads- Victoria Duckett & Kevin Tutton**

Our Village greens now have in place a plan for their upkeep and protection going forward. We have agreed a comprehensive maintenance programme with our Contractor which is reviewed annually. We have also successfully negotiated a revised contract with them whereby the pricing structure in place will roll over for another 3 year period. Having also negotiated an annual grant from IWC towards our maintenance costs. Protection of our greens going forward is an extremely important issue; again we are taking expert advice on this with measures being put in place to take this project forward. The PC has “ring-fenced”

funds to cover the anticipated expenditure for this in the operating budget 2021/22. A new drainage system has also been installed in Station Road around the Bus Stop area this has solved the slimy pavement problem, which had been around for several years.

- **Village School – Lead – Richard Priest ( Clerk). + John/Joost/Victoria**

We have been actively engaging with the Village School on several projects including the 100 year anniversary of the ending of the Great War. As part of this project the Children designed a mug with the winning design distributed to all the pupils and staff. Members of the St Helens Historical Society gave a presentation followed by lunch with the Children. The Children also designed a garden for Armistice Day planting flowers at the Community Centre in the form of a Cross and a shrub in the School Grounds. The Project 'on the go' at the moment is a Village Heritage Trail, which was paused during Covid but will start up again once guidance allows. Funding for this project was achieved via an outside source hence had no impact on the PC's reserves. The PC also contributed to the Hampers4Families initiative at Christmas by providing 35 off Hampers for Families of pupils attending our school, whilst on the surface the Village may look reasonably affluent there are still families that need a helping hand.

- **Finance – Lead – John Coleman/Richard Priest**

By diligently managing our funds we managed not to increase the Community Precept for the third year running, whilst also building up our reserves which now stand at £25k approx. These reserves will assist the PC in undertaking its planned projects going forward plus facilitate any new projects that come to light.

- **Planning - Lead – Kevin Tutton/Victoria Duckett.**

We have put in place a template which allows for individual Councillors to respond to our Lead(s) on Planning, they then gather the data before forwarding onto the Clerk for onward transmission to the Planning Officer if required. We have also robustly responded on several planning initiatives to the appropriate Authorities, including the Guildford Park Development and the IWC Planning Strategy Document. We are, to our knowledge, one of the few local authorities that have been invited in to meet with the Planning officers to discuss our comments, being that we are one of the smaller authorities on the Island this is quite an achievement!

- **Website – Lead – Joost Spit**

Joost has completely refurbished our Parish website; it is now extremely user friendly, with updates being added on a regular basis. When our Heritage Trail Project with the School is completed, the relevant data will also be added. Previous agendas/minutes for PC meetings plus Public Notices and Planning Applications/comments etc. are also on the site.

- **Parking Strategy Consultation – Lead – Kevin Tutton**

Kevin undertook a comprehensive study of the Parking arrangements for the village residents, he instruct an outside expert to formulate the options. The cost of this was partially funded via a grant, several options have been explored and will be taken forward once the current Covid guidance allows.

## **SUMMARY**

I would like to conclude by thanking my fellow Lead Councillors for their efforts over the last term, many hours of personal time have been given to support me but more importantly the Village. I would also to thank our Clerk (Richard Priest ) for his guidance without which I would have definitely struggled even more ! Richard has also just been awarded the Queens Award for his services to the Community during the Covid Crisis, this complements the OBE he previously received for his Community work. I will not be standing for re-election to the position of Chair of the next PC, this is due to Family Health issues, the election of a new Chair will take place in the PC meeting which follows this meeting, I have enjoyed my tenure, there have been several “distractions”, however despite these it’s been a Privilege to serve the Village. – John Coleman