

**HERONGATE AND INGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
HERONGATE AND INGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
TUESDAY, 27TH MAY 2014
AT ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH HALL, INGRAVE, AT 7.00PM**

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As Chairman of Herongate and Ingrave Parish Council I am delighted to provide an overview of the work conducted in the Parish over the last twelve months. I would like to thank all Councillors, both current and retired, for their support and commitment to their community and their councillor roles.

MEETINGS

Since the last Parish Council Assembly in 2013, the council has held 10 meetings all of which included a Public Forum, when residents were invited to bring issues to the attention of the Parish Council.

WORKING PARTIES

Various Working Parties made up from our current Councillors, and some volunteers, have introduced some initiatives into the villages, which we hope will improve the quality of our villages.

One example of our initiatives is an order to make Button Common an even more attractive venue to visit for both residents and visitors. The Council has approved the erection of fencing and hedges to be constructed that will prevent unwanted access by vehicles onto the green whilst creating a natural habitat for wildlife. The new gates will allow easier access for those who are disabled so they may enjoy this beauty spot. To help financially with this project a grant was donated by the Essex County Council Community Initiative Fund. Our thanks go to ECC for this money.

We have continued to be vigilant over planning matters, thanks to the Working Party who have worked closely with the Brentwood Borough Planning Authority.

The Parish Council is introducing Speed Watch - and special thanks go out to those residents who have volunteered to take part in this project. More helpers wanted!

We have agreed to finance the refurbishment of the two village signs, which will be completed by the end of summer.

The Parish Council is working with the War Memorial Trust – with the co-operation of both St Nicholas Church and St Andrews Methodist Church - to restore the War Memorial sited at St. Andrews Methodist Church. We aim to mark the beginning of the First World War with the restoration and by adding all known names of locals who died during all military conflicts. I would especially like to thank Ward Councillor Sheila Murphy for supporting the restoration by granting an allowance from her funds.

Earlier this year, we made a request to Brentwood Borough Council to have our two bus shelters refurbished as the Borough had the maintenance responsibility for them. We were surprised to be told they were beyond repair, unsafe and consequently ordered for immediate removal. The Parish Council has presented a strong case to the Borough for new shelters and is currently pursuing the purchase and erection of like-for-like shelters.

Another Working Party is currently working with the Trustees of the Herongate and Ingrave Heritage Centre with the aim of reaching a decision about its survival and future prospects. Following a recent survey posted to every household to ask how residents feel about supporting the Centre, a decision on its retention will be made soon.

BROADBAND AND WEBSITE NEWS

Unfortunately, after extensive campaigning by Councillors and local residents to upgrade our broadband service in the area our efforts appear to have all been in vein as the exchange will not be up upgraded until 2016.

Brentwood has been chosen as the last Borough in Essex to have its broadband brought up to “superfast” level and the Herongate exchange area is to be the last area in the Brentwood Borough to be upgraded.

The roll-out has specified that work on upgrading the Herongate Exchange and its network, to give Herongate and Ingrave better broadband, will begin in fourth quarter 2015. This makes us 189th priority in the plan! The whole programme is scheduled to commence in second quarter 2014 and to be finished in second quarter 2016.

This is a very disappointing outcome for all the efforts of the broadband users in Herongate and Ingrave who demonstrated the extreme need in this area for a more adequate broadband service.

The website is growing in its content and as more and more information is added and is proving to be a good starting point if you want to know about local amenities, news and events. Go to: <http://www.herongateandingravepc.org.uk/>

DONATIONS

The Council has made a donation to Essex Air Ambulance Service.

VILLAGE HALL

No decision has yet been made regarding the future of The Village Hall as this is now in the hands of Brentwood Borough Council who are the owners of the building.

HELPING HANDS

Parish Councillors are always striving to help the community they live in, but now and then a Councillor will go that extra mile. This was recently demonstrated when one of our Councillors was approached by a local resident who had been made homeless. Brentwood Council Housing had arranged temporary accommodation until a permanent solution could be found. Unfortunately, the accommodation would not take pets. So efforts were made to find a foster home for 6 weeks for the pet but failed.

Our kindly Councillor approached several dog rescue organisations until Wagtails offered a fosterer. The dog is very happy.

Sometimes we are only a phone call away!

THANKS

I would like to thank both our Parish Clerk, Theresa Grainger, for her guidance and assistance since I became Chairman. Theresa has worked conscientiously in her demanding job. Thanks too to our Responsible Financial Officer David Tooke-Kirby for maintaining the accounts and budget information, which has been well received by the external Auditor.

FUTURE SUPPORT

As the Parish Council does not receive additional grants from Brentwood Borough Council, we can only work within the constraints of our current precept. It is important, therefore, to have the support of Herongate and Ingrave residents as we undertake new initiatives that are intended to help provide a safe and pleasing environment for all of us. Looking to the future I hope I can continue to Chair the Council to achieve this aim.

Should you wish to know more about any of the Parish Council work, or would like to join one of the Working Parties, please contact either the Clerk (mob: 07851 214222 or email: clerk@herongateandgravepc.org.uk) or any of the Councillors, contacts on website: www.herongateandgravepc.org.uk We welcome your support.

CLLR ALAN KINGSFORD
CHAIRMAN