

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Herongate and Ingrave Parish Council – Annual Report 2016-2017

Looking back over the past year it seems the residents of Herongate & Ingrave have had to be very patient, waiting for decisions on the Local Development Plan, Lower Thames Crossing, outcome and effects of a Brexit vote. Still no absolute decisions have been made and the Brexit strategy debate rages on.

Amidst all this the Parish Council continued with their remit of managing a budget for the residents, providing services like grass cutting and pond maintenance - despite stringent financial restraints set by Brentwood Borough Council.

The Parish Council is made up of volunteers, who give their time and energy to attend monthly meetings, following up issues that affect this area, and working with their neighbours to sustain a healthy, pleasant neighbourhood.

THANK YOUs..., GOODBYEs...AND HELLOs...

I would like to personally thank all the Councillors for their dedication and hard work during the year.

In particular, I thank Theresa Grainger, our Parish Clerk, for her work in supporting the Chair and Councillors throughout this year.

Also, special thanks to David Tooke-Kirby, Responsible Financial Officer, for keeping our accounts regulated, producing valuable financial advice, attending over and above the expected number of public meetings for the many years he has been our RFO. David has recently moved away from Ingrave to the south coast, so resigned in April. On behalf of all the Councillors, I wish David and his wife Ann a long and fulfilled life in their new home.

In 2017 our long standing Essex County Councillor, Roger Hirst, stepped down from this office as he is now Police & Crime Commissioner. The Parish Council has been fortunate to have had a committed representative from ECC attending most of our monthly meetings and offering help and advice when called upon. For that we thank him and wish him good luck in his new role.

Cllr Amor resigned too this year, as work and family provided less time for him to give to the Parish Council. We thank Neil for his work and commitment to the Council and the residents, for his IT support and administration of our website.

Sadly, though we had to say goodbye to some, we happily say hello to others.

We welcome Stephanie Robinson, our new RFO. Stephanie is very experienced and understands the need to support best practices for managing PC finances; to provide best value for money from our budget. With the loss of the Local Council Tax grant and reductions in the discretionary grant (which may be phased out next year) it may become ever increasingly

difficult to maintain some of the services that Parish Council provide without making an increase in the local precept.

Louise McKinley, Conservative Councillor and Head of Brentwood Borough council, was elected on 4th May 2017, as our new representative of ECC. The PC look forward to working with Louise at Parish Council meetings as well as at Borough level.

ACHIEVEMENTS...

In summer 2016, funded by a Community Grant, the PC oversaw the installation of an outdoor gym on the school playing fields. The equipment is inspected by 2 of our Councillors regularly to ensure it is kept in good repair and safe. We hope many of you have taken the opportunity of using it as part of your keep fit routine.

2017 will see the installation of 3 defibrillators around the villages. The Parish Council applied for a lottery grant to purchase and install a life-saving defibrillator on St Nicholas Church Hall, St Andrew's Methodist Church Hall and another site within the area to be confirmed.

AIMS...

As always the aim of the Parish Council is to serve the community that incorporates Herongate, Ingrave and Herongate Tye. We are diligent in working towards sustaining a neighbourhood that retains its village ethos, whilst promoting a united community. What strengthens our ability to do so, is to have the continuing support from you, the residents. We hope we do, and we thank you for it. The Parish Council will endeavour to work in partnership with Brentwood Borough and County Representatives, our Police and other supporting organisations within the area.

Still, we are no closer to seeing a final Local Development Plan - or how it will affect us here. We hear the new Thames Crossing has been agreed, but directed away from our village. Will it have an impact on us? Perhaps, we must be a little more patient, vigilant, and proactive to ensure whatever decisions arise during 2017/18, as a community we will work together to do the best for each other.

Cllr and Chair, Alan Kingsford