



CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024/2025

The Council has been through another busy year during which the Village has again experienced flooding, disruption due to road closures and inconsiderate parking. It has also had several memorable times as mentioned below. As my fifth year as Chairman comes to end, I account to our residents as follows:

Staff and Councillors

Our Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, Julia McClung, has continued to ensure the Council operates effectively and efficiently. The Auditors have commended the financial management of the Council's affairs. Both she and our Deputy Clerk, Karen Young, continue to ensure the Council remains responsive to residents' needs and enquiries. Karen has diligently administered the Planning Committee that continues to receive a significant volume of applications and has been instrumental in seeking resolution to some long-standing flooding issues in the Village.

We were delighted to fill the one Councillor vacancy remaining by welcoming Lucy Moodie meaning we became a complete Council of 11.

Finance

Our precept went up from £97,055 to £105,452 in line with inflation. This has meant we have kept abreast of inflationary pressures and have been able to support a number of community initiatives. Slowly, our submitted requests for Section 106 monies from the major housing developments are beginning to come through although we continue to await reimbursement for funding the refurbishment of the tennis court and for the required improvements to the Village Hall.

With thanks, once again, to Surrey County Councillor Dennis Booth, who helped us with a grant for the new Village Gateway Signs from his Highway Fund and for the new fencing around the Playground from his Your Fund Surrey allocation. The Playground also benefitted from a grant from the Fraser Strong Trust which was received by the Village Hall Management Committee. A new piece of play equipment, also funded through Cllr Booth's Your Fund Surrey fund, is due to be installed later in Spring 2025.

Planning

Our Planning Committee continues to be kept busy. Despite all best efforts, working alongside neighbouring Parish Councils on the Appeal against the Wisley Development and jointly with East Horsley PC as a Rule 6 party, the Appeal was dismissed. This was a great disappointment.

Over the year, the Committee has considered 122 planning applications including 26 associated with 'discharge of conditions', 8 for work with trees and 14 other. 19 were objected on the grounds of non-compliance with policies in our adopted Neighbourhood Plan. To date, Guildford Borough Council has approved 68 applications, refused 11, with 40 still awaiting a decision or in progress.

The outcome of our submission to extend the Surrey Hills National Landscape (previously known as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) is still awaited.

Youth Council

Our Youth Council once again excelled. I am delighted they will be making their own presentation to the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2025 on all their activities over the past twelve months. The highlights have definitely been the Good Neighbour Challenge with The Raleigh School, the Horsley Hustle Family Fun Run, the Clothes Swap and the Halloween Themed Autumn Fair and Movie Night. Their commitment, enthusiasm, creativity and organisational skills are a joy and demonstrate the very best in our village youth.

Initiatives

On 6th June, we commemorated the 80th anniversary of D-Day with a special afternoon tea organised in collaboration with West Horsley Evening WI, Horsley Wheel of Care and Horsley Community Bus. We appreciated the Brockham Bell Ringers rendition of music from 1944, the fascinating talk given by local historian June Davey and the poem read by Adrian and Izzy, two of our young residents.

In October, the Council received on behalf of West Horsley Residents, an oak tree presented by St Martin's Church to honour the community spirit of the Horsley's during the Covid 19 Pandemic. This tree has been planted in the grounds of West Horsley Place. Our thanks to the Trustees of WHP for agreeing to have the tree which is accessible to residents.

Our twice-yearly Litter Picks have been well supported by an increasing number of Volunteers to whom we extend grateful thanks. The very successful West Horsley in Bloom and for children, the Pots in a Pot competition, took place in the summer to much acclaim; our thanks to the organisers and judges for another splendid event. The Teddy Bears' Picnic was very well supported and the Lantern Parade brought much festive fun in the countdown to Christmas.

As we do more with young people, the Council has undergone safeguarding training with most Councillors now holding enhanced DBS certificates.

Finally, A Word of Thanks...

I hope on reading this, residents will feel the Council has listened to and taken on board matters that interest, concern and effect daily living, and have found our channels of communication helpful.

My thanks to the Village Hall Management Committee, its Administrator and Facilities Manager for maintaining the asset to a high standard, to the Community Speed Watch Team for continuing to help make our roads safer and to the Trustees and Staff at West Horsley Place for their collaboration and help in hosting several of our events. The Council and I are most appreciative.

I am indebted to the time, effort and commitment given by fellow Parish Councillors and our Clerks and to our County and Borough Councillors: Dennis, Catherine, Dawn and Ruth. Thank you.

Cllr Elaine Best, Chairman, April 2025