

Mickleham Parish Council

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Chairman's Annual Report 2021

My Annual Report this year covers two years, as that for 2020 had to be cancelled due to the initial lock down at the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic in the spring of 2020.

I therefore ask for some understanding if items which you considered significant are forgotten, not because they were unimportant but because your chairman finds it difficult to remember what happened to him only weeks earlier in his own life.

Some of the issues which did take up a considerable amount of Councillors' time in the past two years include the increasing problem of noise, speed and volume of traffic caused in part by the average speed cameras, tempting road users to 'cut through', using the Old London Road and partly because of the vastly increased volume of traffic visiting the area over the last year. Various attempts have been made to address the problems caused, including the formation of a local Community Speed Watch team, the Joint Action Group bringing together a number of local organisations and the proposal of increased parking restrictions in the Old London Road.

The Emergency Plan which Parish Councils are required to prepare was reviewed and improved and, at the outbreak of the pandemic, the WhatsApp group formed for this purpose was extended to provide a forum for those offering and requiring assistance of various kinds during periods of lockdown in particular.

The Local Green Belt Review was prepared and then shelved but two possible developments, one on land owned by Hall Farm and the other on Burmester Field owned by Box Hill School, were proposed as sites for small scale developments.

National Heritage Day, on the weekend 21/22 September 2019 was planned and executed by the late James Riches and his band of helpers with the support of the Church and Box Hill School.

Plans were approved for the change of the Frascati Restaurant to a Café and Eatery, with the support of the Parish Council. The original purchaser withdrew as a result of the pandemic but new owners are currently working on the premises and hope to open for business in the late summer of 2021.

The re-development and improvement of the Norbury Park site was put in hand in 2020, as a result of SCC taking back responsibility for much of the area from Surrey Wildlife Trust. The intention is to have a process of public consultation when initial proposals are ready but there have been a number of

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delays, in part caused by the closure of Norbury Park Saw Mill. Dr John Lowes has kindly taken on responsibility for this area and keeps the Parish Council fully informed of any progress made.

'Your Fund', an initiative by Surrey County Council to fund capital projects across the county, is being explored by the Parish Council, which has set up a Working Party under the leadership of Councillor Kayleigh Hunter and several projects are being explored, including additional play equipment in the Recreation Field and plans to provide safer use of footpaths and bridle paths for pedestrians and cyclists.

The plan to erect a bus shelter at the Mickleham Church bus stop, outside the Rectory, finally gained approval from Surrey County Council after months of negotiation and the bus shelter was installed in November 2020. It is greatly valued and much used. Our thanks go to a number of local donors who made this project possible and to Councillor Will Dennis for his determination to see the project succeed.

The increased number of visitors to this area, as a result of the severely restricted travel regulations in 2020 – 21, has caused a huge problem in terms of litter left behind. It is estimated that over 100,000 people visited the Box Hill area over the late May bank holiday weekend in 2020. A remarkably dedicated team of litter pickers has endeavoured to address the problem and our sincere thanks go to them for their hard work and dedication.

During the past six months we have had a change of Parish Clerk, as a result of the resignation of Trevor Haylett, whose work has been greatly valued over recent years. Feena Graham has taken over the role and we are delighted to have found such a competent replacement.

Judy Kinloch retired as Parish Councillor after many years of dedicated service but remains available as an invaluable source of information to the Parish Council. Sadly one of our past councillors, James Riches, died very suddenly in March 2021.

Your Parish Council continues to be very grateful to the community for its encouragement and support, especially over the recent most challenging of periods, and remains committed to its well-being and stability.

David Ireland

Chair of Mickleham Parish Council