

## **Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting**

I start by thanking my fellow Councillors for the work and support they give to Chailey beyond strict attendance at our meetings, including our County Councillor who lends an ear and advice at Full Council, at our meetings with Highways, and who ensured the County continue to support the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, and to our District Councillor.

Residents will have noted that, during the year and over the heads of protest from our District Councillor and the Parish Council, the Boundary Commission forced Chailey into an electoral marriage with Barcombe and Hamsey, divorcing our long-standing link with Wivelsfield.

But more especially I want to thank our residents who volunteer to serve Chailey in so many different ways which go to make a vibrant life – any list will be invidious but I name a few: the Church, the Bonfire Society, the Guides, the Commons Society, the Friends of the Windmill, the Horticultural Society, the Painting Group, the newly-created Allotments Association, the Sports Club. All these societies depend on the dynamism of members and I am sad to note that the Chailey Youth Group became moribund during the year, but delighted to mention the Chailey Litter-Pickers who have returned our lanes and highways to their natural condition. I am confident that our Neighbourhood Plan, when you read the draft this autumn, will show the many ways in which residents contribute to, and help each other to build, Chailey as a society.

The Parish Council is accountable for the Local Tax we raise from you, residents of Chailey – during the year under review £51,000. The greatest part of that sum is already committed – in effect, it keeps the wheels turning! – for example, insurance of Parish assets, but you will want to note that our insurers at no extra cost took under their wing the Chailey Litter-Pickers while on the job; and for further examples, the mowing of the Sports Ground and our various green spaces; the maintenance of our various buildings including the Windmill, bus shelters and the allotments; and administration, that is, keeping us legal and ensuring these commitments are made to best advantage. The lesser part of our Precept enables Councillors to identify and fund projects which we believe will benefit the village and our society, and residents may not have noticed the Red Oak planted on Cllr Avery's initiative to mark the Queen's Ninetieth Birthday. Each year we make Small Grants to Chailey societies and groupings for their own projects and administration, but Councillors also spend on larger projects, which may be dependent on outside contributions also: over the last 18 months the Council has been working with the Sports Club to refurbish our decrepit Sports Pavilion; in the end, and despite the Football Association dangling bait – but on terms which place the worm always out of reach – this project will be funded from the Council's reserves, from private generosity and from funds raised by the Club, but it will be completed for the new football season. Similarly, I have every hope that the draft of our Neighbourhood Plan will meet its completion schedule with a referendum during the late winter. I wish I could be as sanguine about the long-running project to construct a footpath along Warrs Hill for the convenience of residents of the New Heritage. This project is funded from a developer contribution, long since paid into the kitty of our parent Councils but leaving it subject to staffing and co-ordination problems within.

For the coming year two projects are being planned: installation of 3 - 4 defibrillators at key and identifiable spots in our village; and installation of litter-bins with, possibly, an increase in dog-bins: the problem with this project is, as you may imagine, not purchase of the bin but purchase of the long-term service to empty it!

I conclude by thanking our Clerk who has brought a new and refreshing standard to the Clerk's job. I am certain that Chailey now has the best Clerk in Sussex and his care and attention to our finances and administration is exemplary.

Mark EVANS Chair

May 12<sup>th</sup> 2017