



Ryarsh PC Chairman's report May 2022 – May 2023

What a year this has been, just after my last report we celebrated the Platinum Jubilee of HM the Queen Elizabeth 2nd and most recently The Coronation of King Charles. Both events provided the opportunity to demonstrate how well the people of Ryarsh work together! A raffle at the Coronation event raised money to go towards the Christmas tree and fireworks. We have an excellent community spirit here.

This year has seen a number of changes in the village. A review by the Boundary Commission has seen a reduction in the number of Borough Councillors for Tonbridge and Malling and changes to the electoral wards. After years of working with Birling we are now also joined with Leybourne. In the Church, since 1st August 2022 the **BART** Group of four Parishes has joined the Parishes of West Malling, Offham, and Leybourne to form the new United Benefice of "**Kent Downs and Malling Team**"

KCC and TMBC are facing shortfalls in funding for the year, we are grateful to County Councillor Sarah Hohler and Borough Councillors Kemp and Montague for keeping us informed and passing on our views on the topic to the discussions. Sadly we have lost Anne K who has retired and Piers M who has moved. As a result of the recent election we will have two new Borough Councillors. We continue to have Sarah Hohler as our KCC representative who has made such a contribution to the village over the years.

On the Council we are sorry to lose two of our longstanding and hand working members, after 33 years, Ivor Emson has decided to retire and after 8 years Mel Barton is leaving us to spend more time travelling the world. Speaking of Mel, the Play Area continues to improve and we now need to find a new volunteer who will regularly inspect it..

As your Parish council we continue to maintain and repair streetlights, contribute to grass cutting in the Churchyard and the Recreation Ground. We have made donations to support local charities.

Work continues on the Highways improvement Plan, KCC have recently carried out traffic measurements of Roughetts and Woodgate Road. This is in response to recent accidents and concerns about speed in the village. The results will be discussed and possible actions considered with our KCC contact.

I am happy that we were able to erect a new village notice board in Ryarsh Park and hope that it is of interest and use to all. I am grateful to Trinity for their help in the erection of the board.

The number of planning applications for the village continues to decrease during the year but planning continues to be a topic of major importance. The new Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan has been considered and TMBC are back to the next round of proposals.

On the transport front, we have worked with other local councils to provide a solution for the cancellation of the number 58. We will now have one return service a week on Fridays, I would encourage everyone to use this service so that we do not lose it. .

Refuse has been a continuing major issue with some improvement in the service this year, we are recycling more than was ever anticipated. The new centre off the A20 on the outskirts of Maidstone has opened and is reported as a success. Pre-booking is required but this can be done on the day.

We have had many examples of fly-tipping over the last year. TMBC has been working with the Rural Police and some successful prosecutions have resulted. New signs have been erected and cameras will be installed.

We are disappointed that the Policing review has resulted in the loss of our village related PCSO, in the last year we have had excellent service from them with regular reports and response to our concerns. The new structure has been described in a series of presentations. We intend to monitor the new service and will report to the Police and Crime Commissioner and Senior Police contacts.

This year the Remembrance Day Service was held and we were able to place a wreath from the PC on the War Memorial.

My final item is to thank all the Ryarsh Councillors for their support and hard work. We are all willing to help in the village. Our names can be found on the Village website, Please have a look.

Mary McKinlay

Chairman Ryarsh PC May 2023

