



Churt Annual Parish Meeting: 17th April 2024

Chairman's Report

This is Churt Parish Council's report for the prior year, and I want to start with people.

I want to welcome and thank three new Councillors who joined us this year.

- Stephen Wright joined in May and is currently serving on the Planning sub-committee.
- Mike Shorthose joined in July and has taken on a new Portfolio of Village Strategy, taking a longer-term view of our activities.
- Pippa Harrison joined in September and is now leading on the Village Centre Portfolio.

As well as welcoming new Councillors, we also awarded three long serving residents the Freedom of the Parish. The Local Government Act allows Parish councils to grant the title of Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of a Parish in recognition of the eminent services rendered by an individual to the community.

This honour is purely symbolic but is our way of saying "thank you" to very worthy recipients. Those recipients were Simon Fraser, Richard Bourne and John Brain and the Awards were made in June at the Fete.

We have invited nominations for award this year; if you would you like to nominate someone who is truly an unsung hero of the village, please speak to any one of our Councillors, or contact our Clerk Dawn. Nominations close on the 30th April.

Next I will talk about notable consultation responses.

Firstly, Farnborough Airport. In June we discussed our response to the Post Implementation Review (PIR) submitted to the Civil Aviation Authority by Farnborough Airport. Churt is directly under one of the new flight paths and consequently suffers from a significant increase in low-flying aircraft, and associated noise and pollution as a result. We do not believe that a

comprehensive PIR has been undertaken and we have called upon the CAA to create a more sympathetic and less disruptive change.

In September, Farnborough Airport launched a public consultation to gather feedback on the Airport's future growth plans. This includes an increase in the number of annual flights from today's cap of 50,000 flights per year to 70,000, and a doubling of movements at the weekend. We made a formal submission objecting to their proposals.

More recently Surrey County Council sought input to inform their **Rights of Way Improvement Plan**. In responding we asked for better linking of footpaths and bridleways, specific improvements to address the severe erosion on several bridle and footways and removal of fallen trees on two other footpaths. Thank you to Cllr Myra Johnson who led on our response.

We also recently submitted a response to **Waverley's consultation on their draft Economic Development Strategy 2024 to 2032**. In our response we welcomed the theme of promoting economic growth whilst ensuring a society based on social equality working with, and not against, our environment. Thank you to Cllr Mike Shorthose who led on our response. He will now develop a Churt specific document which sets out our intended approach to implementing the local aspects of the plan.

Turning next to Roads and Safety...

Last April, we were delighted to see the A287 between Pond Lane and close to Jumps Road finally being re-surfaced and thank Cllr David Harmer for his efforts to prioritise that within SCC.

Road safety in the village centre, and particularly outside the school, is very important to us. In January we were grateful to be asked by Waverley if we would like to introduce a 20mph speed limit in the village – I should emphasise that they were asking all Parish Councils the same question and it is not something we can expect to happen quickly. Given the direct effect it would have on everyone travelling through the village, we decided to undertake a survey to gather your views. We were delighted to receive over 100 responses, from which it was clear that 4 in 5 respondents supported a 20mph signed area or zone. The majority of respondents chose an option of between Quinettes and Old Kiln Lane, from four options of where it should be.

Improving Services

We were successful in our application to a small grant scheme run by the Surrey Climate Commission to purchase a number of tools needed in support of the work which Churt's scout groups and residents do to enhance biodiversity in Wicket Wood. Thank you to Cllr Myra Johnson for making the grant application.

In the Playground, we were sorry to take away the popular tyre swing which had been in place for 20 years. This followed our RoSPA inspection, where a concern was flagged about the stability of the frame. A replacement has been ordered and will be in place later this summer.

We also ordered a new replacement picnic table and seating which will have been setup in the area outside of the playground.

We have also been working to enable more houses in the village to have the option of connecting to a full fibre (i.e. faster) broadband connection. Gigaclear has been installing fibre in the denser parts of the village, and we have been working closely with them to try and enable more households to be included. Thank you to Cllr Johnson and Cllr Morgan who have talked to residents in areas not included in Gigaclear's original scope of works, in the hope of identifying rerouting options to reach more residents.

I will finish by looking forward briefly...

- The council is in strong financial health with reserves at the end of the year of £35,000. When we set our budget for this year, we agreed to target building our reserves to a minimum level of £20,000 to provide a safety net for unplanned costs, and are pleased to start the year in this position.
- We are currently reviewing and improving our website www.churt.org. Cllr Morgan is collating feedback and we be discussing specific improvements at our meeting in May. If you have suggestions of what you'd like to see on the website (or not see) please let one of us know.
- In March I let the Council know that I will be standing down as Chair at our May meeting when we next elect a Chair and Vice Chair of the Council. In turn I will stand down from the Council once we can elect a new Councillor to join us. Please get in touch with myself, one of my fellow Councillors or Dawn if you are interested in joining the Council - we're happy to explain more about what we do, or come along to one of our meetings.
- I want to finish by expressing my very sincere thanks to my fellow Councillors, each of whom give their time freely to support our activities – ensuring that we respond to various asks from Surrey and Waverley, but most importantly help make Churt a great place to live. My last vote of thanks must go to Dawn Barrow, our long standing Clerk, who demonstrates exceptional commitment and truly goes above and beyond in her role. Thank you to every one of you.

Lisa Martin

17th April 2024