

CHAIRMANS REPORT

RIVERHEAD
PARISH COUNCIL

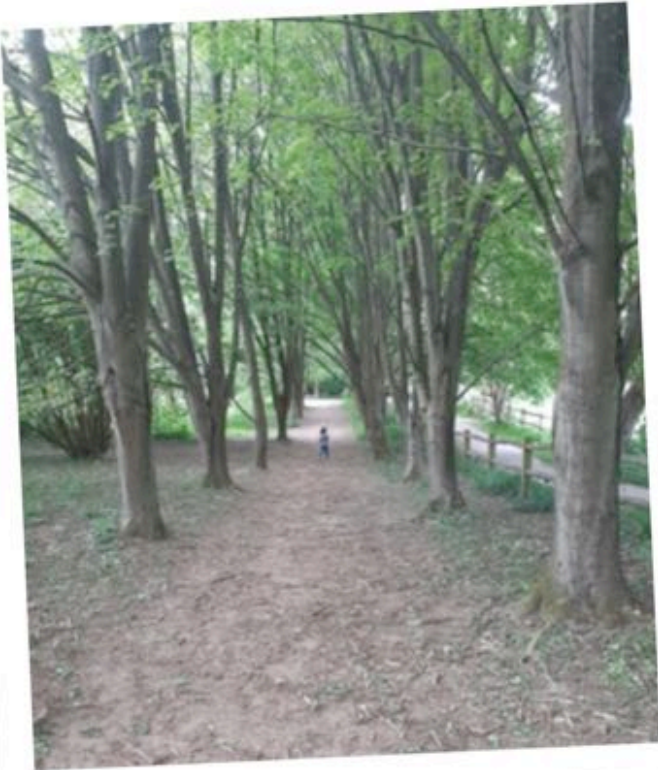
Courtesy of the Coronavirus pandemic, Riverhead Parish Council is unable to hold the Annual Parish Meeting this year, so this letter is the best way to let you know what has been going on in Riverhead. It is therefore a little longer than usual, but I hope you are able to take the time to read it.

This year has been a busy year for Riverhead Parish Council (RPC) and many improvements and much maintenance has happened. We continue to work alongside, and with, local businesses, voluntary organisations, Sevenoaks District and Kent County Councils to serve our community as best we can especially during the Pandemic. RPC hope you are all keeping safe and well and thank our many volunteers who are assisting the community in a myriad of ways. Below is a snapshot of what has been achieved.

Discover what we are creating in the Parkland

Thanks to a grant from Enover Community Trust, donations from Riverhead residents and with Parish Council funding, you may have noticed Parkland improvements. This includes removal of brambles, the planting of an orchard of apple trees, more wood chipping in the Dell area and the de-silting of the stream. We thank those who contributed to the cost. What is less visible is the aeration of soil around 3 massive trees near the serpent sculpture, which de-compacted the earth and injected nutrients to boost growth and extend their

lives. If the next grant application is successful, you will see a big project later in the year to support and improve wildlife habitats, especially for birds, bees and butterflies. Do let us know if you wish to be involved in the ongoing work parties and projects in the Parkland.



Speedwatch in Riverhead.



You may have seen the RPC Speedwatch team out and about in Riverhead wearing their distinctive hi-vis vests, promoting road safety in the village. They monitor the speed of cars, displayed on the portable screen if a car is speeding, and a letter from Kent Police could be sent reminding/outlining the consequences of exceeding the speed limit. If you could spare 1 hour a month we would love to welcome you to our team. The Speed Indicator Device has also been purchased with 50% of the cost being funded from the KCC Members Funds. This can be moved to 3 fixed locations around the village and has been another reminder for traffic to slow down.

Highways

Riverhead puts great emphasis on road safety and thus pedestrian crossings, street lighting, railings repairs are maintained and improved, often liaising with Kent Highways.



Our village is renowned for the beautiful flower baskets and during the next year RPC hope to add some to the dual carriageway on Aisher Way.

Many of the old damaged road name plates have been replaced by smart new ones - see if you can spot them. In addition, the latest village gateway has been installed on London Road to remind drivers they are entering a residential village.

Miller and Carter continue to help reduce parking problems by giving 10 free parking permits to staff of Riverhead businesses.

We hope you keep an eye on our phone box, - children particularly love the displays that are changed regularly during the year to reflect current events and occasions.

Thank you to everyone who helps during the twice yearly village clean up

sessions. Please come and join us, without the support of volunteers we would not be able to keep our village as lovely as it is. We keep social media and our Notice boards updated with the dates. Special thanks also go to David, a Riverhead resident who keeps The Heights clean and tidy for the Parish Council and is often seen cleaning elsewhere in the Village.



Planning Committee.

This is a busy committee of 3 councillors who sit up to twice a month to consider planning applications which have been submitted for decision to SDC. They are trained in local planning procedures and ensure that planning applications meet with the local government criteria set, and are consistent with the standard of design acceptable, particularly within our Conservation Areas in Riverhead.

Allotments and Open Spaces



Seniors Coffee Morning.

RPC are supporting the very popular new monthly coffee mornings in The Bullfinch for our senior residents. This is held on the last Thursday of each month between 10 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. It is a great place to catch up on local news, meet friends and has welcomed several new Riverhead residents and helped them settle in. Our grateful thanks to The Bullfinch for hosting these meetings which will resume as soon as it is safe to do so. Please join us, you will be made most welcome.



The 2 allotment sites are fully subscribed and have thriving, supportive communities, and we now have an apiary run by trained enthusiasts. There is a tree safety program in hand and plot holders band together to improve any neglected areas on the sites. Open spaces have been planted with seasonal bulbs and are a colourful addition to our village. Alison's Garden and The Heights continue to be lovely areas to sit in. Look out for the next project to refurbish the fountain with plants and lights rather than running water, which has proved difficult to maintain.

Village Hall

Our village hall has been repainted and the floor sanded and re-varnished. A leak in one of the rooflights has been repaired by a local builder. We are lucky to have a large number of regular hirers. The hall is a village asset and well equipped and maintained to a very high standard -please consider using it for your events.

To commemorate VE Day the memorial stone has been moved to the other side of the Village Hall gardens. This will ensure there will be enough room for the Remembrance service in November and make it more prominent. You will also notice that our flags are flown at special times throughout the year.



Finance

Due to fundraising and hall income, the share of your council tax charge that goes to the Parish Council has not been increased for 2nd year in a row. Details of the budget and the Annual Returns are available on the Parish Council website or from the Parish Clerk.

Events

It is always a pleasure to meet villagers at our local events and although we have had to cancel some due to the Coronavirus Pandemic we have previously enjoyed many fun and important events – these include work parties, carol singing and switching on the Christmas Lights, Retailers Christmas Window Competition, the Riverhead Carnival, the Festival of Christmas Trees and the Remembrance Celebration. We look forward to seeing you at the next event.



Communications

We take internet safety and how we communicate very seriously and our procedures are reviewed regularly. We are in the midst of updating our website to be compliant with new accessibility requirements. We continue to keep people updated via social media, mainly Facebook, Twitter and our website. Social media has become particularly pertinent recently during the pandemic, providing information during an evolving and fast moving situation. This includes details about support for vulnerable residents, how to volunteer to help the community and coping with the impact on mental health during lockdown. Using Facebook and Twitter also enables us to alert people quickly to scams that have become more prevalent, with fraudsters attempting to exploit the current situation. To help raise spirits, we launched our virtual 'Riverhead Lockdown Art' exhibition on Facebook. This idea developed following a suggestion from one of our residents to encourage people to submit a picture of something they can see from their window, on their daily exercise or whatever they feel inspired by at this time. This idea has really taken off with adults and children alike, and I encourage you to take a look at our website and Facebook page to see some of the wonderful art created by our residents.



Volunteers

We welcome volunteers to help in a number of ways, including some of those mentioned above. If you would like to help, please contact Caroline our clerk at:

clerk@riverheadparishcouncil.org.uk



Councillors

Recently, due to work commitments, we have seen the resignations of two of our parish councillors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Martin Denton and Ross Carmichael for all their hard work and dedication, they will be missed greatly.

Best wishes to you all

Irene Collins

Irene Collins

Chairman of Riverhead Parish Council

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