

West Meon Parish Council Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting, April 24th 2019

The last twelve months have been a most productive time for the WMPC. I should like to thank my fellow Councillors and our Clerk for their commitment and hard work, also our maintenance team of Mac Edwards and Dayle Westwood and Martin Cowell for footpaths. I would also like to thank those many parishioners who volunteer in our community in so many different ways. We have also been supported by our City and County Councillors and the Lengthsman scheme. We set a reasonable and responsible precept again this year. We are continuing to improve our communications through considering revisions to the website, ensuring detail in our reports in the parish news and will revive the Listening Post held in the West Meon café. We also post regularly and thoughtfully on *We Are West Meon* Facebook site. Our noticeboard has space for WMPC and village enterprise notices as does the website so please do make use of these. In the last twelve months we have:

- Strongly supported the community shop and its management committee
- Made substantial grants in the community and supported a whole range of village institutions and enterprises
- Continued to improve the finances at WMPC
- Completed the draft of the revised VDS and Landscape Character assessment and held the first consultation, including developing a new parish illustration
- Continued to improve the amenities in the community with repairs to the bus shelter and sign boards, the benches at the recreation ground and the pathway down to the church and installed a new bench at the Cross
- Mapped the fire hydrants in West Meon to improve community safety
- Requested a study into creating a new pavement from Sheepbridge to West Meon along the A32
- Continued to promote the re-development of West Meon old station as the MVT trail head and the establishment of a nature reserve within station yard.

Many more mundane and everyday issues and matters have also occupied the Council over the past year. We still struggle with car parking in the High Street and on Church Lane. We monitor the sustainability of our village shops and clubs. We try to support parishioners when they face challenges.

We still have to complete the revised VDS and Landscape Character Assessment. This is vital to having a West Meon voice in wider planning and development decisions. Communities must respond to changing demands but have a say in what happens in the parish and around it. This does not guarantee that our voice is dominant or that we always get what we want, but it does ensure we are heard and that what we say reflects positively on the community of West Meon.

WMPC is however in need of new members and new voices. A parish will only be as strong and vibrant as its Parish Council. We should have 9 members but are currently under strength by one third. It is important that we improve this. A community should not rely on the same voices to represent it year after year. New ideas and thoughts are always welcome, especially from those keen to be part of a team that works hard but cares about the future of West Meon. If you have missed your chance to stand in the elections in May then please consider being co-opted to join the Parish Council. Give the Clerk your name and consider finding that small amount of time each month to help take West Meon forward. Though there are many challenges ahead, we believe that having a strong PC is a sign of a strong and successful community. Our ambition is to ensure that we continue to have both.