Pyecombe Parish Council – Annual Report 2014/2015
Tuesday 19th May, 2015

Looking back at the past twelve months, we have seen the village gaining some additional facilities in completion of the kitchen extension at Pyecombe Church, a resounding success in making the new structure within this 12th century old building, to blend so delicately together, in that the result being a building of great prominence that will serve the community for years to come.
The other being here, Wayfield Park Farm Shop, an excellent facility with home produced goods together with refreshments and meals served on six days a week, for the local as well as the wider community. The photographs on display of years gone by, showing how the area has been changed, are also a fitting reminder of the days when the thriving Pyecombe Post Office and Tea Room, adjacent to the old A23 road, functioning from what is now Pyecombe House, until its closure, almost exactly opposite the site we are now in.
Perhaps that is a reminder that these facilities, together with our existing shops and pub, are there for us all to make use of, in order that they continue to succeed in the years ahead.
The A23 road of course has long since been widened and improved, but your Parish Council has continued to lobby for the noise pollution to be addressed, by combining with neighbouring parishes, the result of which it is believed that this will now happen on an ad-hoc basis, by replacing stretches of tarmacking, as and when repairs are required.
Peter Griffiths, our West Sussex County Councillor representative, has assisted us with various issues, including this one, throughout the year, and I take this opportunity to thank Peter for his continuing support to the Parish Council.

Another of these ongoing issues has been the flooding that persistently occurs at the bottom of Pyecombe Street. Having received the relevant funding of nearly £3000.00 the previous year, under Operation Watershed, the quoted work was finally carried out in August last year, which involved removing the silt to allow the collecting water to disperse, as well as a camera inspection beneath the surface. It was not long before further rainfall saw the drains once again seemingly incapable of dispersing any substantial water. Despite consistently asking for a copy of the detailed report from the work carried out in August, it was finally received in January this year. The report claimed that the drainage system in place was inadequate and incapable of taking the volume of surface water being collected at the site. This then led to a meeting with West Sussex County Council officers during a site visit in February, who immediately agreed that further substantial work involving a larger soak away and pump would possibly need to be carried out. Richard Speller, one of those officers present, has since indicated that although we have now missed the deadline for this year's funding under Operation Watershed, under a recent restructure he has been made the Highway Area Manager for Mid Sussex, which he hopes will lead him to getting the issue resolved, by possibly seeking clarification on what funding is available as area manager. Your Parish Council will continue to monitor this issue in the months ahead.

The recent election resulted in Colin Trumble remaining as one of our Mid Sussex District Councillors, and I take this opportunity to thank him and Jack Callaghan for their support on various issues in the past year, in particular the grant towards the Church Extension, which it is hoped will be our polling station in the village for future elections.

Mid Sussex District Council are the relevant local authority that is delegated by the South Downs National Park to deal with any planning application in our parish, although the National Park retains the option of calling in any application should they feel necessary. In the past year there were thirteen planning applications, nine of which were duly approved, two were refused, and two are currently being considered.
Land off Church Lane, which was owned by Homes & Communities, has just recently been sold to a developer, and it is expected that a planning application will soon be upon us for additional housing development in the village, which may then include the scrutiny of the South Downs National Park.
Currently out for review is the District Plan by Mid Sussex District Council, which is now hopeful to be fully implemented by this time next year. The threat of the Mayfield development to the north of us is still in the balance, despite all relevant local authorities being unsupportive towards this initial scheme, and your Parish Council continues to support the local campaign against this proposal, which would have a big impact on us all should it be granted approval.

With regard to any potential development taking place on Land off Church Lane, the consistent parking by Lorries close to the junction at the bottom of Church Lane has been highlighted by the Council as potentially hazardous for moving local traffic in the area, which could see even more traffic in the years ahead, and although we have continued to address this with both Highways and West Sussex District Council, we are still currently frustrated at the lack of response to help alleviate the problem.

The condition of the Children's Play Area in The Wyshe was brought to the council's attention, to which, following discussions with Mid Sussex District Council, an immediate overhaul was undertaken. Although there is currently no funding available to update the equipment, it is hoped that this may be addressed in the year ahead.

Neighbourhood Watch is fully supported and encouraged by the Parish Council, and I take this opportunity to thank our current Village Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator over the past year, David Hunt, for his valuable contribution. It does, of course, remain the responsibility of us all to be vigilant and alert against any sort of unwelcome criminal activity in our village, no matter how small.

Meeting the demands of an open form of local government, making information openly available and transparent, is duly met with the Parish Council website, www.pyecombe.org.uk , which is constantly maintained, and together with fifteen minutes set aside at the beginning of each Parish Council meeting for any member of the public to address councillors on issues of a village nature. This communication is also addressed in the Village Newsletter, sponsored by the Parish Council, and indeed my thanks to the editor, Vicky Clapperton, for her contribution during the past year, as I am sure she should continue to be encouraged by us all, with this excellent service.

No Parish Council can continue to function well, if at all, without the pivotal role of a Parish Clerk, and I would like take this opportunity to thank Dawn Langston, for her hard work and total dedication shown towards us all over the past year.

My thanks also, to my fellow councillors for their contribution and assistance in the past year, as we welcome all new residents to Pyecombe, and if they or any other residents wish to raise any issue of village nature, please feel free to contact myself or any other councillor to discuss further. Your Parish Council meets on a regular basis, every other month, where the meetings are held alternately both here, and in Pyecombe Church, as a public meeting that remains open to you all.

David Wilson

Chairman, Pyecombe Parish Council