

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2024/2025**

Over the past year it has been an absolute honour and privilege to have been the Chairman of such a forward thinking council through its 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the current administration.

We have increased public communication via social media and made the council more accessible and approachable throughout the process.

This year I have concentrated on expanding and building our reputation and relationships with our other local parishes, authorities and organisations. I believe this has enabled us to strengthen our bonds and increased partnership working.

### **Planning Committee – Chair Glen Hewlett, Vice Chair Graham Page**

Under the direction of Cllr Glen Hewlett the planning committee has continued to scrutinise planning applications through the parish ensuring that any plans are in keeping with our beautiful village and not detrimental to the wonderful street scene we have.

Glen and Vice Chair Cllr Graham Page make a formidable team who have worked tirelessly to ensure that Felpham Parishioner's views are voiced at various meetings across the year.

### **Allotments and Open Spaces – Chair Russ Marsden-Sear, Vice Chair Bob Budd**

The A&OS committee have continued over the year to manage our wonderful allotments spaces with Felpham (St Michaels's and FAGS). We have continued to improve security at St Michaels meaning that once again unauthorised access and crime has been drastically reduced.

The committee also oversaw the planting of new trees along residential verges in the parish. This planting scheme also included a Cherry Tree being planted in the heart of the village to commemorate VE80.

### **Finance Committee – Chair Glen Hewlett, Vice Chair Russ Marsden-Sear**

Under the guidance of Cllr Hewlett the Finance committee has continued to show due diligence and good practices when dealing with parishioner's precept. During a difficult year with high costs hitting our precepts from ADC for past elections and a recent by-election Glen has been able to make changes to various budgets to ensure that we continue to be financially responsible. The committee has made savings and cuts to some budgets this year without affecting delivery or quality of service. We have managed to continue to make small grants to local charities and clubs to ensure that they can continue to serve our wonderful community. The grants committee continue to meet quarterly meaning that grants are made throughout the year rather than annually giving those clubs and community projects access to funding sooner rather than later.

Nearly half of the councillors, including myself, still decline to take any councillor allowances. This means that we have been able to donate our allowances to good causes throughout Felpham including support for Breast Cancer patients, a Christmas Day lunch for vulnerable people, Bonding blankets for our local Neonatal unit, and many more.

### **Projects and Community Involvement Committee – Chair Kirsty Halls, Vice Chair Emma Aylward**

This committee has worked tirelessly to bring events and projects to the residents of Felpham. The 'Fun On The Prom' event continues to be the biggest annual event in Felpham attracting residents and visitors to the area in the thousands. Once again in conjunction with public feedback and a 'greener' future we will continue to use Laser displays rather than fireworks. This year we also took the approach of asking residents what entertainment they would like to see by using an interactive poll and have accordingly booked those acts.

October once again saw our unique 'FREAKY FELPHAM' event. The event has proved so popular that we have had to split the day in to two separate sessions. Because of this, tickets were introduced. These were available to residents free of charge. A total of 400 tickets were collected within just 5 days. This year saw hundreds of people, adults and children, dress up and walk through our wonderful village celebrating Halloween. Children were asked to collect and solve clues on their route finally leading them to a wonderful themed party at the end. Thanks to many volunteers and Councillor Involvement this event remains a free event. The feedback again was humbling and it now seems the wish of residents this is now cemented as an annual event in Felpham's calendar. Freaky Felpham will take place again this coming year to support families and children throughout the parish, creating a safe, fun, and free organised event.

In April an annual award ceremony to celebrate the achievements of local residents took place. Our parish is based on those that live here and everyday unbeknown to most of us parishioners go about their day trying to make our wonderful village even better. As a council we feel that we should continue to recognise those 'Heroes' amongst us. It was an absolute delight and honour to host the Gala Evening this year to celebrate those people. With winners ranging from Life savers, Charity fund raisers to Scout Leaders and Lollipop Ladies, it was truly a wonderful evening and a humbling example of what the people of this wonderful parish do.

Once again, thank you Felpham for being the most amazing, caring and thoughtful parish. A wonderful place to live

It has been an honour to serve you for a second year

Russ Marsden-Sear

Chairman of Felpham Parish Council