

# Aylesford

PARISH COUNCIL

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## Chairman's Report 2022/23 including Policy & Resources

My first 12 months as Chairman of Aylesford Parish Council seem to have flown by, an old cliché I know, but it has certainly given me an insight into the workings of the Council.

In late 2021 Mel accepted the appointment of Clerk and Responsible Officer to the Parish. She has been on a massive learning curve ensuring we, as a Council, fulfil our legal requirements and use our community resources wisely. A huge thank you to Mel for taking on the challenge and successfully executing it. Of course, these responsibilities cannot be undertaken single-handedly, and Mel has had the unstinted support of our two part-time members of staff, Claire and Liz for which I am grateful. Last but not least our Maintenance and Contracts Supervisor, Lee, who ensures our outside Community facilities are kept in the best possible condition – thank you Lee.

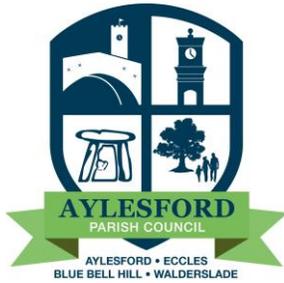
My thanks also to Susan Dorrington for carrying out regular supervisions with the Clerk and Maintenance & Contracts Supervisor.

During the year we have seen the establishment of a 3G football pitch on the Forstal Road recreation ground. This was an initiative of Aylesford Football Club financed by the Club and a significant Grant from the Football Foundation. This has enhanced the leisure facilities in the Parish and made it possible for people of all ages to continue their sporting activities despite the weather!

The Christmas Market was a huge success once again with an estimated 3,000+ visitors over the duration. It provides an opportunity for stall holders to display their wares and for our residents to mingle and soak up the atmosphere. £1,600 was raised for Kent Air Ambulance, £150 donated to Young Minds and £250 to Aylesford Colts Under 7s. My thanks to our staff and organisers for making this incredible event possible.

We now have a car park to be proud of at the entrance to Ferryfield. It is a significant improvement that provides considerable car parking spaces to serve the cemetery, play area and the wider space for recreational purposes. This was provided by Gallagher's at no cost to the Council, a wonderful gesture. The Council intends to replace the remaining old equipment in the Ferryfield play area. Mel has applied for a Grant from the FCC Communities Foundation for this purpose and we should know the outcome in June 2023.

The Council replaced the grass cutting machine with a new mower and the decision was taken to bring the grass cutting requirements for Forstal Road recreation ground back in-house. This has really enhanced the standard of the pitches and the general appearance of the recreation ground.



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Consideration has been given to extending the Cemetery and the Council is currently undertaking various ground tests to see if the land next to the existing cemetery is suitable for this purpose. Mel has managed to secure Section 106 money (that we knew nothing about) to enable the fencing along the Forstal Road to be replaced and a table tennis surface and benches to enhance the recreation ground.

The Council, as a Consultee, has responded to a number of Planning Applications within the Parish and kept a watchful eye on those major applications within and bordering our Parish. I am sure we are all bemused at the total lack of infrastructure in the area to accommodate these applications – Hermitage Lane being a prime example.

The Council has recently agreed a Sub Committee to develop a Climate Change and Environment Strategy. Initial thoughts are to seek costings for the installation of solar panels at the Council offices and the Clerk will establish if Section 106 funding would be available for this project. Other considerations would include tree planting and promoting active travel within the Parish.

At this point my thanks go to Tom for representing the Council in, the Climate Change Forum, KALC meetings, the Parish Partnership Panel and Aylesford Station Adoption Group.

Finally, the Council recently welcomed Gillian Birkbeck for Aylesford South Ward who will be a great asset to the Parish. My thanks to all Councillors for your attendance at meetings and contributing to the discussions and of course to my Vice Chairman, John who is always there for helpful guidance.

Allan Sullivan  
Chairman

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023