



**South Wonston Parish Council**  
**Chair's Annual Report 2022/2023**

**15<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

It is my pleasure to present the Chair's annual report of the Parish Council, always a time to reflect.

2022/23 has been one of mixed emotions. We had the joy of celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June last year, followed by the sadness of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's funeral in September, and the accession to the throne of His Majesty King Charles III.

**Village Events**

We celebrated the late Queen's Platinum jubilee, organised by Nicky Leyton, Rachael Jones and willing volunteers which brought the community together at a time when everyone were still slowly emerging from the restrictions of the COVID pandemic, it was a truly joyous occasion.

The bonfire and fireworks event was also very successful and enjoyed by one and all, thanks to Rachael Jones and Nicky Leyton and once again willing volunteers who made this a night to remember.

I would like to express our sincere thanks for the fantastic efforts of everyone involved in the arrangement of these events and by doing so gave up many hours of their time.

The cost of living challenges have certainly, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future have their impact on every community.

As winter approached it was decided to hold a Warm Hub Café in the Pavilion on a weekly lunch-time basis.

This new cafe encouraged residents out of their houses to have a free tea, coffee, biscuit and a chat, it's so heartening to see the numbers increase week to week, everyone is enjoying their time together and I am pleased to say it's still going strong.

Sincere thanks to the clerk and all the volunteers who once again lend their support to make this a happy event, Jenny Webb's amazing soup has proved to so popular and regularly she's asked for her recipes.

We successfully co-opted two new Councillors during the year, Cllr. Sam Jordan and Cllr. Grish Lohani, the Parish Council has now filled all vacancy places.

## **Parish Council**

I would like to at this point thank the clerk and my fellow Councillors for all the hours spent to ensure that the Parish Council operates in accordance to the requirements of our standing orders and goes the extra mile to be there for our community. We take part in important meetings, be there to field and respond to the community's requests for action and follow up.

We also work closely with our colleagues in Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council and outside agencies when needed.

My thanks to Cllr. Peal for reviewing and when needed re-writing the Parish Council policies which are numerous, this I know took many hours of reviewing detailed documentation.

My thanks to Cllr. Grish Lohani who has documented the defects in our road system and pedestrian walkways to enable Hampshire County Council to work to a plan to renew bad patches, resurface pavements and pot holes where needed. Cllr. Lohani and Cllr. Berry have also been able to advise us on highway matters which cause the village concern.

It is a pleasure to report that Cllr. David Selby received the Mayor's award for public services.

## **Litter Picking**

My thanks to Cllr. Frank Street and volunteers who have cleared litter from around the village and also Christmas hill.

The amount of litter collected has been staggering and many, many plastic sacks have been filled. Sadly, it's a big problem everywhere, but our village does benefit from all the efforts made by one and all.

## **Planning and Development**

The Local Plan dominated much of the year and I would like to give thanks to all those involved from a Parish Council perspective.

Cllr. Berry worked with resident groups to formulate the initial response to the proposed SHELAA housing numbers thus ensuring that our resident's voices were heard and all resident's points of view had been documented and considered in our final submission required for the REG 18 stage.

The Parish Council also employed a planning consultant who gave good advice, enhanced what had been written and before submission reviewed the document which opposed to the allocation for additional housing numbers in the village. As part of the process local Chair's set up a group which gave everyone the opportunity to sound out other Parishes, this also proved to be very helpful.

## **South Wonston Sustainability**

Having declared a climate emergency and in response to the need to increase

focus on this area, The South Wonston Sustainability group was formed in April 2022. Nickey Turner, Cllr Phil Oram and Cllr. Sam Jordan have been leading the work to formulate action plans and hold meetings, spending time on various topics to help people understand the impact of climate change and what is happening in the environment today, and importantly how actions can be taken to improve our communities.

There are now five smaller action groups focusing on – Energy, Biodiversity, The Circular Economy, Travel and Food. They also organise events and information for our community.

### **Facilities**

The Pavilion is still well supported and it's great to see things back to normal with all our groups operating as they were before the pandemic and also see the private hires increase in popularity as the year went by.

My thanks to the Pavilion Committee, Ann Peal, Frank Street, David Selby and Rachael Jones for meeting regularly to review the facility and when needed have maintenance work carried out to keep the building in good overall condition.

### **The Play Park Project**

Over the years the play park has become overgrown and in the winter looks a little sad. New equipment has been installed now and again but we recognised that it is in need of a new overall plan to improve the layout, invest in new equipment and retain its rural setting.

As this was a big undertaking, we engaged the services of a consultant who could formulate a new plan based on a composite redesign of the area that we can roll out over the next 5 years or so.

To-date a new hedge has been planted on 2 thirds of the perimeter by the fence to act as a shield and also a first step in the naturalisation of the area.

### **Recreation Ground Management**

Three new shelters and the small wooden pavilion have been installed which prove very popular with all ages.

The overall condition of the recreation ground is still of concern, chafer grubs and crows returned with a vengeance, laying waste to significant areas of grass. Various methods of dealing with this problem have been undertaken, however to date, we still have to find an overall resolution and further investigation is underway.