

# **MENDHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Chairman's report 2019 – 2021**

This is the first AGM that we have held for two years, due to the Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdown. Business has been sporadic, and no meetings were held between January 2020 and the autumn, when virtual meetings via the Zoom system began.

Before the pandemic, we were able to comment on the District Council's Local Plan which designated approved areas for development in all settlements. The only addition for our Parish was the field opposite the school, the site of previously unsuccessful applications for housing. Another application duly arrived, and approved for six dwellings by the local planners. This is a significant addition to Mendham.

Other planning issues centred around conversion of former agricultural buildings, some straight forward, but another where the applicant is trying to push the boundaries of what is allowable. The Council has visited and commented on most application sites. An application in Withersdale for two new dwellings went to appeal on refusal, but the appeal was dismissed.

It has been as difficult as ever to get any significant work done by the County Council in repairing roads and combatting flooding issues. Reporting problems often leads to total frustration, and the condition of our lanes causes serious concern.

We were able to support the main village organisations with grant aid, and have encouraged the activities of the Speedwatch team at Withersdale. Presently we are purchasing a vehicle activated sign to place on the B1123 which is plagued by speeding.

Perhaps our most significant event was the appointment of a new Parish Clerk. We were lucky enough to find Liz Frere-Smith, a resident of the parish and a very competent and experienced administrator.

Thank you to all colleagues for your unstinting support and encouragement all through a very difficult time. I think our communities have proved steadfast and strong during this most stressful period of recent times.

Denis Pye

May, 2021