

Aylesford

PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL,
Council Offices, 23 Forstal Road,
Aylesford, Kent ME20 7AU
Telephone: 01622 717084
Email: admin@aylesfordparishcouncil.org.uk
www.aylesfordparishcouncil.org.uk

Chairman's Report 2023/24 including Policy & Resources

Another busy year for the Parish Council.

Mel, as our Clerk and Responsible Officer to the Parish has continued to ensure that every opportunity for securing Grant funding is taken as well as ensuring the Council fulfils its legal requirements and uses community resources wisely, thank you Mel. Of course, no one can do these challenging matters single handed and so a huge thank you to our two part-time members of staff, Claire and Jade for their support. To Lee our Maintenance & Contracts Supervisor who ensures the Community facilities are kept in the best possible condition and for dealing with a number of unpleasant issues in Ferryfield, thank you.

This year we have seen the completion of the 3G football pitch on the Forstal Road recreation ground. From all accounts it is proving a huge success in providing facilities to enjoy sporting activities regardless of weather conditions. The Council is in discussion with the Aylesford Football Club regarding the ancillary facilities, e.g. near-by changing rooms, toilets and adequate car parking.

With tenacious work by Mel the Council secured Grant Funding of £58k from the FCC Communities Foundation for the Ferryfield Play Equipment enhancement project. More recently a grant of circa £5k from TMBC for Solar Panels on the office roof has been secured.

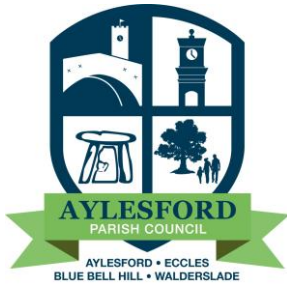
The Council also received £25k for an 'Easement Agreement' which the Council granted to run electrical cables from the new commercial development at Little Preston right the way down and through the far side of the rugby club to the main road on Hall Road. This money was used for new play equipment in the Hollow.

The Council has also agreed with TMBC to make a contribution from S106 monies to manage the Taddington Valley woodland and a start to a tree planting initiative has been made at Tunbury Recreation Ground.

The Christmas Market was once again a huge success with an estimated 3000+ 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. £1,960 was raised and donated to:

Heart of Kent Hospice £500, The Men's Mond Project £200, Aylesford Food Bank £300, Aylesford Village Community Centre £300, Aylesford Community Youth Choir £500 and Aylesford Football Club £160.

My thanks to our staff and organisers for making this incredible event possible.



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The Council land in Aylesford High Street previously leased to TMBC for Public Toilets has reverted back to the Council. TMBC have converted the toilet block to classroom facilities, at its cost, for use by St Peters School. We are in the final stages of amending the existing School lease.

Consideration had been given to extending the Cemetery but after very extensive ground tests the Council concluded that the costs were excessive and could not be justified. It means the Cemetery for new burials will close within the next 6 months.

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. During this Planning year the outline planning application by Trenport for 950 homes to be developed in Eccles was approved by the Inspectorate. As a result, the Council has entered into informal meetings with Trenport to ensure that, where possible, it can influence matters such as Allotment location and local resident amenities. More recently an application for 1,300 homes has been submitted on the East Malling Research Station site which, if approved, will significantly impact traffic movement in Hermitage Lane.

Finally, it has been a busy year and my thanks go to all Councillors for your attendance at meetings and contributing to the discussions. Particular thanks to Tom for representing the Council in, the Climate Change Forum, KALC meetings, the Parish Partnership Panel and Aylesford Station Adoption Group. Last but not least thanks to my Vice Chairman John who is always there for helpful guidance.

Allan Sullivan
Chairman

8th May 2024