

Report to the Parish from the Environmental Services Committee 2014-2015.

It has been an exceptionally full and productive year for members of Environmental Services Committee (ESC).

Not only have we brought to fruition a number of larger scale projects but, with the able help of our Clerk, have formed a longer term strategy and plan for investment projects over the next few years. These include a new car-park for Eccles and a revamped village square in Aylesford High Street; together with the on-going project for improved lighting on the Grade 1 listed bridge in Aylesford.

The committee year began with the completion of the new trim trail on the Ferryfield Recreation Ground, together with further improvements to the very popular Multi-Use-Games-Area also located on that site.

Two larger projects then occupied most of our time; namely the replacement of the worn-out skateboard park in Eccles Village and the redevelopment of the derelict tennis courts on the Forstal Road Recreation Ground in Aylesford.

I am delighted to announce that the skateboard park is complete and is being used by the residents of Eccles; and that work is well underway at Forstal Road, with the redevelopment now including a tarmac-surface five-a-side football facility and a tennis court with a fixed net.

In addition considerable funds were spent in maintaining and upgrading our existing children play areas and equipment, as well as a much needed refresh to the youth shelters.

We are exceptionally glad that these facilities and spaces continue to be used by a wide range of individuals and groups: Aylesford AFC, Aylesford RFC, Aylesford Netball League, a 'Bootcamp', St Peter's Primary School and some commercial fun-fairs and circuses.

A less well-known role for us is in the reporting and management of certain aspects of highway and footway provision, together with caring for some parish lighting. This includes the night-time illumination of Aylesford's historic church.

Our maintenance teams, both in-house and contracted, have done an excellent job this year in keeping our paths and bridleways clear as well as managing a perhaps overdue

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survey of the condition of the parish's trees. I am pleased to note that a management plan is now in place; although such extensive tree and woodland work will continue to require significant levels of funding.

We have also planned the expansion of the Christmas lighting next year after the very welcome new setting in the public trees of Blue Bell Hill for December 2014.

Christmas lighting was a particular favourite of the very able Councillor Tiller who was this year the vice-chair of this committee. He steps down from the Council at these elections and I shall miss his input. My thanks go to him and to all other members of this excellent committee.

With best regards,

Michael Base

(Chair, ESC, Aylesford Parish Council.)