

Chairman's Annual Report 2017/18

This has been a year of steady work by the Parish Council. The major achievement has been the completion of work to restore the Memorial Grounds as a fitting testament to the servicemen with a local connection who lost their lives in the Great War. In October of last year a moving service of rededication of the war memorial and of reopening of the Grounds was held on a sunny Sunday afternoon 95 years to the day after the original dedication. I want to thank again Cllr Ward and her small group of helpers who have made this possible and also to thank the Parish Clerk who organised the event as a volunteer giving his own time to us.

Work has also continued to improve the cemetery with councillors and others volunteering to help and in the playground at Lea. Plans to improve the facilities at the playground have had to be postponed when we were not successful with a grant application to fund those improvements.

Five members of the council and a group of residents have worked hard all year in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan, when complete and approved at a referendum of our residents will form the first level of planning guidance for any development that is proposed in the parish.

This year the parish precept (that's the bit of council tax that comes to the Parish Council) has been increased by 2%. This is the first increase that we have requested for several years. The increase will mean that for a typical (band D) residence the increase will be less than £1 per annum, but it will give the parish council an extra £433.

The taxes charged by the county council and the borough council have also been increased, but it has become clear that those councils are finding it increasingly difficult to meet anything other than the most essential parts of their duties. The Parish Council may therefore have to consider funding some works themselves and as all our maintenance items are increasing already; a modest increase in the precept was necessary to plan prudently.

I conclude by thanking members of the council for their work and support throughout the year and our clerk and the parish warden for their services this year.

Ian Hooker

Chairman of the Parish Council