

Community Council

I am reporting the Year's events for the Community Council, as Kerry Foster had to stand down as Chair due to work commitments.

The forced shutdown of the Village Hall due to Covid left us in a very difficult situation with all potential income becoming uncertain. After the first wave we were able to open up and ran some successful car boot sales.

By Autumn, it was obvious that keeping the hall open was not going to be sustainable. Luckily we were eligible for a small business grant which we applied for and were granted. Further grants have followed and we have just applied for our last grant.

Whilst the hall has been empty, we have taken advantage and undertaken some improvements. There is a new floor in the men's toilet, individual water heaters for the hot taps removing the large water heater in the loft. The update and replacement of the electrics is an ongoing project and we are planning to replace the windows and front door to allow a more accessible entrance. A new path is being put in place to allow accessibility to the tennis courts.

During this year we have seen an increased use of the cricket pitch , playing field and the tennis courts with coaches taking tennis and football training and teams. The Gillingham cricket team play on.

The Hall was suggested as a vaccination centre but this didn't happen but has since been used by the NHS for the Diabetic eye clinic. A children's group has started and a children's theatre group is using the hall on a Saturday morning. Golden Zumba starts on the 1st June – looking forward to that. The playarea has continued to attract numerous children and families have been enjoying picnics on the playing field.

We have started the car boots again on the first Sunday in each month, the first at the beginning of May – a successful event with 12 pitches

I would like to thank the current Community Councillors Kevin, Mandy, Norman, Suzanne, Claire, Dave and Kay. Also my thanks to Kerry for taking on the Chair at a crucial time and also to Joe who has looked after our finances over the last three years and introduced good financial practices and planning.

Thanks is also due to various people who help and volunteer and make a real difference to events – Rory Sheriff, Maggie Cannell and Caroline Leggett. Trevor Betts was able to help us at short notice and the Gillingham cricket team and parents of the footballers have all turned out to help with the grounds.

We have an excellent facility here and if anyone in the community would like to be involved in all aspects of community life – maintaining the village assets, grounds maintenance, financial aspects, organising events, you would be very welcome and please reach out to one of the Councillors.

Lastly, we are organising a Village get together on the 29th August – all villagers in Ringsfield and Weston are invited for free light refreshments (with cake) as a chance to meet up with friends and neighbours you may have missed over the last year.