

Chairman's Announcements Full Council Meeting 20th April 2020.

Welcome everyone.....who would have thought that from our meeting in March, the world would have altered in such a way no one would have ever imagined and it's continuing to change on a daily basis in a way that never was predicted.

The Parish Council has been forced to change routines and habits, just like every other organisation and business and has to adapt. The wellbeing and duty of care of our staff is a priority and consequently the office and Centre are closed and contact is by phone or email, no personal callers please. We have a discussion about this duty of care in confidential session tonight.

I would like to congratulate Cllrs Cree and Campbell on the swift way they prepared and set up this video conferencing system. This is our third meeting.....yes, okay like anything new, there have been minor 'teething' issues. I would like to thank most residents and the majority of councillors for supporting the Council in these early days of creating a completely new way of holding our meetings.

The Council's website is updated on a daily basis with advice and news for residents on this Covid-19 crisis from both WSCC and HDC. Other items are also displayed, such an update on the Neighbourhood Wardens' duties, an appeal for carers from WSCC and information on sky lanterns and bonfires. It's certainly worth getting into a routine to regularly visit the website to receive current advice and information.

Steyping's Neighbourhood Plan.....I'm pleased to advise that the legal checking process by HDC has been carried out and the plan has passed that.

Unfortunately, the next part of the programme, which is HDC's Regulation 16 consultation, is on hold because of the Covid-19 lock-down. It's a case of now just waiting for HDC.

I want to say something about Freedom of Information Requests.....following an unfortunate backlog of work caused by the Clerk's involvement with the Neighbourhood Plan, all but two of the outstanding requests have now been dealt with.

That has included uploading all the historic requests which ceased under the old Council in 2014.

Because it ceased, serving Councillors at the time and others were able to give false and misleading information about the number of requests. Much of the outgoing Chairman's speech at last year's annual parish meeting devoted to the claim that there had been hundreds of requests including 166 between May 2015 and November 2016.

If you look at the website you will now be able to see that the true number of Fols during that period was 23. Not 166.

You will also see that from October 2014 to November 2019 there have been a total of 43, averaging at 9 per year.

So far during this Council's first eleven months we have had 8 (six have been uploaded and two are pending) so the average has remained consistent for more than five years.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for playing their part in helping to prevent the spread of this disease. The Hub in Beeding and all the volunteers are doing a fantastic job and on behalf of this Council, I would like to thank them.

Keep Well..... Please stay indoors to help the NHS and all the other organisations involved in the fight against Covid-19.