

News from St Martha Parish Council

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During the last year as Chair of St Martha Parish Council I have been well supported by all councillors and in particular our clerk Anne Tait who is an important and knowledgeable member of the parish council.

As a tiny parish, representing some 600 residents, we actually have few 'assets' that we are directly responsible for. Many parishes have village greens, village halls, recreation grounds and war memorials. We do have responsibility for the village war memorial which I am sure you will agree always looks neat, tidy and well-tended and I would like to thank our reliable local contractor for cutting the grass as well as Councillor Mrs Allen who also pays particular attention to this area.

We are often approached by residents concerned with overgrown vegetation on footpaths, pavements. The stretch of the Dorking Road from Lockner Farm towards Albury Mill is a case in point. Surrey County Council are directly responsible for keeping vegetation under control and whilst we can report and send photos getting a response is frustratingly slow with little chance of anything happening. This stretch of pavement was eventually cleared. We are now looking into employing a contractor to maintain this section of pavement. The section of road from Lockner Farm to Albury Mill is also as many of you will know 'tricky'. There are several 'pinch points' which means caution is needed when a wide vehicle such as a bus or an eight-wheeler lorry pass. Vehicles are generally going too fast, and it is not unusual to see a vehicle mount the pavement. A meeting was held last July with a representative from Surrey Highways, councillors and residents. Discussions took place with the aim of installing a VAS (vehicle activated sign) to alert drivers to their speed. At the time of writing no update. Recently a resident wrote to say it was coming up for the anniversary of an unresolved complaint regarding a 'manhole' cover which is considered a potential hazard as it is raised above the pavement. Usually an anniversary is something to celebrate!

It is pleasing to note that Chilworth Railway station is looking neat and tidy with new planters and posters. The South East Community Rail Partnership and the North Downs Steering committee, of which the parish council is a member, work together to maintain and improve the appearance of the station and platform area.

Some of you will have noticed the 'For Sale' sign at West Lodge. Over a number of years, the parish council have endeavoured to work with Guildford Borough Council, who own the lodge and the Gunpowder Mills site, to repurpose the building but to no avail. We shall have to wait and see what happens. Particular concern has to be vehicle access. We recently had a meeting with the countryside warden from Guildford Borough Council to discuss the Gunpowder Mills site as a whole and highlighting issues on how to enhance the biodiversity of the site.

On a positive note, Blacksmith Lane and all of Halfpenny Lane is being recommended as a 20mph zone. Surrey County Council undertook a review of many rural roads earlier in the year and undertook speed surveys recognising the discrepancies in speed limits throughout the area. It is unlikely to be actioned until next year.

We have looked at the section of footpath that cuts down Halfpenny Lane onto Blacksmith Lane at the bottom end which is needing some improvements.

One of our responsibilities is to look at planning applications and we always endeavour to notify nearest neighbours to keep you informed. A new Noticeboard will be shortly installed to replace the one at the end of Old Manor Lane.

And we are pleased to report that we have a new Tree Warden for the Parish who reports at our PC meetings.

If you are interested in becoming a parish councillor you would be warmly welcomed. Please do get in touch to discuss.

Councillors:

Patricia Allen (Vice Chair) - allen.p@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Graham Brown – brown.g@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

John Peake - peake.j@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Clare Price - (Chair) price.c@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Jean-Pierre Pugh - pugh.jp@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Clerk: Anne Tait - clerk@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk