

GREAT YELDHAM PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20



Chairman's Report

We are in the midst of a global health emergency which has changed everyone's way of life, at least for a while. In between, a great deal has happened and it is heartening to know that, from the work that has been done in the last twelve months, there is much to look forward to when the current restrictions can be eased. We are very fortunate; we live in an attractive rural location and we live in a community which cares and which has an abundance of goodwill and talent. This has been exemplified by the Support Group set up by the Parish Council which is providing, much needed help and comfort for elderly and vulnerable residents during the present health crisis. The work of the volunteers has been rightly applauded as an exemplar of how best a community can respond to an emergency situation and the volunteers can be very proud of what they have achieved and what they are doing.

There are other people to thank as well for their contribution to the life of Gt Yeldham during this past year - our County and District Councillor, all those who run the various clubs and societies that cater for a range of interests and activities; those residents who help out at the village events especially the Christmas Tree and seasonal events; and this year the Parish Council said goodbye to a long standing Parish Councillor, Pat Slimming, who retired having served 33 years. I am sure that all will join me in looking forward to when we can get back to full community life and to helping to shape its future. In the meantime, the most important thing is for all to keep well and stay safe.

Burial Ground. Work continues on improvements to the burial grounds. Repairs were made to the entrance brick pier and a contractor has been selected to install much needed car parking facilities at the grounds but due to COVID 19 plans have been put on hold.

Emergency Plan is updated each year; our thanks go to volunteers who willing donate their time to help clear the footpaths of ice/snow when required. Thankfully there were no incidents requiring the use of the Community Defibrillator.

Events this past year have been well attended by the community,

- The Easter Egg Hunt was attended by 40 children, after decorating ceramic egg cups and crafts they all set off to Bowtells Meadow where the hunt began, returning to the Reading Room to collect their Easter eggs.
- A Tea Dance was hosted in October for the older generation with musical entertainment from Graham, a founding member of The Redwood Band.

Parish Councillors 2020/21

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- A Halloween party for the children in the village was held and everyone dressed for the occasion, there were party games, arts and crafts, plenty to eat and drink and was enjoyed by all.
- Supported the weekly I-Tea Initiative, an introductory computer session for the 50+ to help improve skills in using the internet and digital technology.
- In December, members of the Parish Council visited St Andrew's School to help the children decorate Christmas Tree Decorations for the village Christmas Tree. The Christmas Tree Service was opened with the children from St Andrews singing carols; followed by a visit from Santa and his grotto; the children enjoyed jumping around in the inflatable snowman and reindeer dash. A Christmas market was held in the Reading room where families and friends from the village gathered to enjoy light refreshments and a dance performance by students of Sophia Movement & Exercise.
- A Community Defibrillator Awareness Cardiac Arrest Response Seminar had been organised for mid-March but unfortunately was cancelled due to the Covid19 pandemic.

Highways. Our Speed Watch Team continue to work towards reducing speeding through the village. The Parish Council continues to work with ECC in identifying suitable locations for Vehicle Activated Signs for the High Street. Liaised with ECC on road/bridge defects, pot holes, damaged signs and public, footpaths.

Sports Ground. The Parish Council have been working in partnership with the Sports Ground Management Committee in refurbishing the site. The much anticipated Zip Wire was installed last spring and plans are progressing with the installation of outdoor exercise equipment.

Planning. Discussed and commented on 16 planning applications affecting the village and attended Braintree District Council Planning Committee meetings to represent the village, as necessary.

Projects and Working Groups continue to work on their activities around the village, helping to solve any issues that may occur and working on the environment for all to enjoy working within a set budget. Projects have included: purchasing additional signage 'we're watching you' to discourage dog fouling around the village; continue to progress the installation of a Public Information Display Board on the old railway site which will outline a brief history of the railway station; working with developers and BDC to produce a piece of public art equipment and information board for the Strawberry Fields development site; adopted the telephone kiosk located outside the Reading Room, it is planned to use the kiosk as an information platform; provided a grant to the Reading Room village hall for the development of a new website www.greatyeldhamreadingroom.org.uk; under the United Charities £2439 in grants were awarded to 7 local organisations/groups and the Education Foundation, provided £1560 in small grants to 22 local applicants towards the purchase of school uniform for those children leaving primary school to attend secondary education .

Web Site and Facebook. The old website provided free by Essex Infonet ceased on 31/03/20 and a new website www.greatyeldhampc.co.uk has been developed and continues to keep residents up to date with current information, forthcoming events and legal requirements.

Welcome Pack has been updated and gratefully received by newcomers into the village and includes information on the village, details of local clubs, societies and services with useful contact information. A copy is available on the website.



Village Magazine. The magazine continues to produce an interesting and valued magazine, with 10 editions produced per annum which is posted to every house hold in the village with thanks to our editor and volunteers. Editions are available to view on the Parish Council website.

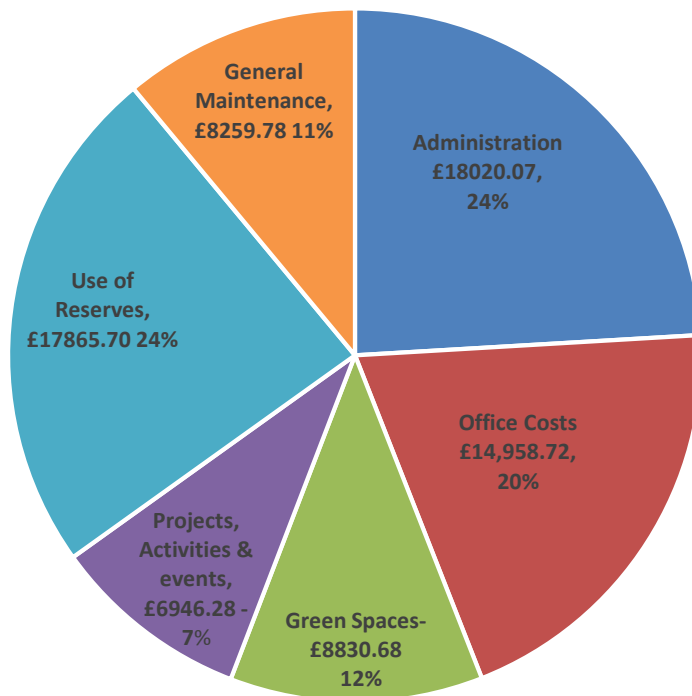
Village Maintenance. Continue to manage the grounds maintenance contractor to ensure that the village green, open spaces, burial grounds, St Andrews church yard and verges look good. The Village Handyman (grant funded until June 2020) continues to undertake general jobs throughout the village including: hedge/tree cutting/pruning, sweeping leaf fall, checking play equipment, general grounds maintenance work. Organised the spring 'Big Tidy Up Day' for the village, providing skips for residents to use. Undertook additional repairs to the Access Road to the Sports and Recreation Ground which hopefully will lessen with the installation of safety bollards. Undertook pest control at the burial grounds and the sports ground. Worked with key partners in keeping waterways clear, reducing flooding in the village, maintaining road surfaces and highways.

Key Actions for 2020/21

- Continue to work with the Sports Ground Management Committee on regenerating the Recreation Ground for the provision of new sporting facilities including outdoor exercise equipment, tennis courts, football pitches, Multi Use Games Area, improving and expanding the Skate Park and BMK track.
- Reviewing the play area/equipment for young children. Providing facilities for Youth activities/Youth Club.
- Investigating provision of Allotments. Improve planting area around the lay-by opposite the post office.
- Continue work to progress the car parking facilities at the Cemetery.
- Working with the Police to recruit 2 Community Special Constables.
- To seek further funding to continue the Handyman Service
- To progress work with the installation of the Railway Station Display Board
- Appropriate signage around the village: speed awareness, road crossing signs, continue to review and maintain street furniture, street scene and open spaces/footpaths.
- Continuing to develop a programme of events for the village including a 75 VE Day Celebration which has been postponed to August 2020 (hopefully!)
- Continue working with Braintree, ECC and other key partners in development opportunities for the village including new housing, employment, health services and recreation facilities.
- Continue to work with the developers for Hunnable Industrial Estate and Nuns Walk.
- To meet the administrative costs of the running of the Parish Council in the discharge of its statutory duties including the cost of employing the Clerk.

How your money was spent in 2019/20

Payments for the year was £74,881.23. Details of how your money was spent are shown below.



Administration: Employee/employer staff and pension costs.

Office Costs: professional fees for legal, payroll and audit requirements; office rent; printing, postage, telephone, internet and stationery; Insurance Premiums; Training and Subscriptions, Room Hire, Elections

Green Spaces: Grounds Maintenance fees for the Cemeteries, St Andrews Churchyard, Whitlock Green, Play Park, Verges, Footpaths and Sports and Recreation Ground

Projects, Activities & Events: Seasonal Events, Tea Dance, Christmas Tree Event, Neighbourhood Plan, community activities including supporting the Youth Club and I-Tea Support, Community Defibrillator, Donations/small grants

General Maintenance & Equipment: Play Park, Skateboard Park, Cemeteries, Big Tidy Up, Handyman Service, Ad Hoc Services

Use of Reserves: Zip Wire, Cemetery Boundary Fence, Election Costs, Sports & Recreation Ground Pest Control, 75 VE Day Celebration, New Website

Income for the year £62,230.58: Precept £44,631 (parish element of Council Tax), C.Tax Surplus £451, Burial Ground Fees £5,650, 4 Villages Magazine £3,723.20, BDC Street Cleaning £1,705.22, Other Income £3,409.06, VAT reclaim £2631.10. Which leaves a reserves balance as at 01/04/20 £80,311.85 of which £17,864.14 allocated to the Burial Grounds, £42,550 allocated for projects i.e. cemetery car park, play park ground resurface, 75 VE Day Celebration, 2 x Community Constables, Sports Ground Equipment and Storage Shed, leaving general reserves of £19,897.71. A detailed breakdown of receipts/payments is available on the parish website www.greatyeldhampc.co.uk

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