

HADLOW PARISH ANNUAL MEETING:

We are pleased to report that the Borough Council has again protected local services we know are valued by our residents, while striving to provide value to the taxpayer.

It is particularly heartening that the Borough Council has protected the level of grants to Parish and Town Councils in the last two years.

It has also recognised the need to find efficiencies in the face of continued reductions in central government grant. In the last four years, these amount to a total of £2.8 million achieved by senior management restructuring, sharing 'back office' staff with other councils and in technological changes.

We have responded to many residents' queries covering a wide range of issues: fly tipping, parking, housing, housing repairs, traffic speed/noise, planning problems and many others.

We were pleased that the tree at the junction of the A26 and Carpenters Lane has been spared so that its leaves can absorb some of the fumes produced by the traffic using the A26 and help to make the air quality in this area more acceptable.

We hope that the proposed pedestrian crossing outside Hadlow College, and related change in the speed limit in that area, will come forward very soon and result in traffic hitting the village at nearer 30mph than the speeds which are currently the norm. We have been working towards this for the past three years and finances have been in place for some time.

Hadlow College is an extremely important part of our community, not only in training future workers in the agricultural and horticultural industries but in providing employment for local people and supporting our local shops and businesses. We look forward to hearing that development has commenced for the permanent site for the Free School. Residents in Ashes Lane have reported a huge increase in traffic at school start and finish times, although when the temporary use commenced at Faulkners Farm they were assured that vehicles would approach from the A26. And unfortunately the drivers don't seem to appreciate that this is a country lane, not a motorway.

We are grateful to the Parish Council for organising the litter pick on the 21st March. Litter is a considerable concern for very many residents and the amount and type of litter collected over a fairly short period on that day was unbelievable. It is grossly insulting on the part of the litterers to just assume that someone else will clean up and to depend on residents being prepared to litter pick in order to keep our village looking tidy.

We appreciate the help of residents who let us know of fly-tipping in various parts of the Parish so that we can arrange for the offending matter to be removed. The annual cost of removing litter within the Borough is some £1.2million - money which could be much better spent on other things.

We were pleased to be able to help with smartening up The Square, including the re-siting of the Cabinet and having the seats re-painted, and also obtaining grants for the summer hanging baskets and other improvements requested by the Parish Council. We were also pleased that the proposal for the new telegraph pole by the Church gate has been dropped, thanks to some meaningful conversations with BT and the contractors.

We would like to thank the Clerk and Parish Councillors for all their hard work over the past four years and we hope to be able to work with the new Parish Council after the elections.