

Annual Report – Chair East Farleigh Parish Council Cllr Alexandra Fullwood.

It has been an absolute pleasure to be your Chairwoman this year. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with every member of this team.

We have achieved our goal of refurbishing the playground. And despite the hefty expenditure, we have managed to decrease the precept over last year in real terms. I believe this expenditure will give joy for many years to the local children and those attending East Farleigh school. We are mindful that costs are going up for everybody in the village and I am proud that while most councils are increasing tax, we have not had to. Our reserves are healthy and there is still room to spend on the various initiatives in the coming year.

These initiatives include mostly highways projects: -

- Further speed projects to limit speed around the village (namely workhouse lane and heath road where we are currently investigating costs of limiting the speed limit from its current levels.)
- Trying to get weight restrictions on Dean Street to combat the HGV traffic.
- And in general, reducing HGV traffic and speed around the village. This is a challenge considering the exponential growth of housing in the surrounding areas.

I would like to thank the highways working group for all their invaluable contributions.

I am pleased our councillors were able to help kick off the Bull working group. A new tenancy looks set to be a positive for the village. I do hope this working group will continue and that they find further initiatives in the village to progress.

Thanks to Gina, we have been able to relaunch a newsletter to take the place of the beloved Grapevine. We hope the postal delivery will reach those who are not connected to the Council on social media where we are very active now.

There are still numerous problems in the village that need work which we need to focus on for the remainder of 2024 including: - Drainage - Potholes - The container on the rec ground - The continuous litter deluge - Potential risks to the village of developments As a byproduct of being more flexible on meeting attendance and timing of volunteer work, we have been able to become a much more diverse council in both age and gender and locations in village. This was very important to me in my time as Chairwoman so that we had a mixture of different voices in the community. I hope the new council will continue to be flexible. It is the quality of the work that is important not the quantity or the hours, although believe me many hours of volunteering go into this job no matter what the role!

A special thank you to our other volunteers , and former councillors, Glyn, Peter and Perry who continue to volunteer their time to make our village a better place.

A special thank you to Adam who has given a lot of his time as my Vice Chairman this year and Head of the East Farleigh Fete Working Group. We couldn't have had so much success without his hard work.

And a huge thank you to Nina who has settled into the role of Clerk seamlessly and improved many of our policies and banking procedures.

As we look into 2024 and beyond, I hope that the council and our volunteers continue to grow in diversity and strength. We have had a full council for the most part this year and that in itself is an accomplishment. As we go into elections now, we anticipate a few councillors will not be running and I hope others will step up to take forward these existing initiatives and new ones. I must at this point relay that I will be standing down as chairwoman and as councillor, but I hope to continue my work on the highways working committee. After 5 years on the council, I need to put my family and work first but I have been so grateful to all who have mentored me and assisted me in my role. I hope that I have set an example that you don't have to be retired to do this job. Every person who gives their time to this Council is truly amazing and inspiring. Thank you to all!