



Annual Parish Meeting – Monday 4th April 2022

Assets & Services Committee

Chair's Report from Cllr Richard Freeman

Our remit is to oversee the Town Council Assets; these include the playing fields at the AAPF, Herberts Farm and Crabtrees, the playgrounds at the Common, the AAPF and Golden Acre, the Cemetery, Battle Ditches, Bridge End Gardens, The Common, Town Hall, allotments and many more assets to the town and its residents.

The Covid pandemic has significantly impacted upon the Council's activities, but nevertheless many social events have been progressed with the relevant Covid-prevention measures in place.

In addition we provided services which included one-off events (such as those around Christmas) and a massive lantern parade of families and children from St Mary's Church down the High Street and into the Market Place, in advance of the annual switch-on of the Christmas Lights by the Mayor

Despite Covid, there are several memorable milestones from the past year.

- We finally received full control of the Lime Avenue football pitches at the end of February 2022. They comprise two junior pitches and areas of open space. They are part of the s106 benefits for the Persimmon Homes development, most of which is in Tudor Park (opposite De Vigier Avenue, off the Ashdon Road). The pitches are now excellent and will be a great asset to the town. The delay has been down to a lack of urgency on the part of the developer, and several attempts to make us accept short-cuts and incomplete delivery of the s106 deliverables. The final delivery, despite all the difficulties, is down to the diligence of the Council and its indefatigable Town Clerk.

The changing facilities, without which the playing fields would be much less usable, were eventually provided.

The town now has two excellent new football pitches, located near to the town centre, with on-site parking and changing facilities.

- We completed the refurbishment of the Golden Acre playground in May 2021. Looking forward, we plan to refurbish the children's playground in the Anglo-American Memorial Playing Fields. This will be the third and final 'dry' playground which we refurbish. This will be done to the same very high standard as the playgrounds on The Common and at Golden Acre.
- We also plan to install a 'wet' children's water play park. These are somewhat seasonal, but they are extremely popular in hot weather. We must minimise

water usage, and this means that the support of the local water authority is critical to our plans. There are several such parks in the East of England, and they are very well received by their constituents.

- One of the “benefits” of Covid, if such is possible, has been the experience we gained by pedestrianising parts of our town centre. Some very real benefits became apparent, and we have conducted two thorough surveys, designed, and monitored by specialists, involving detailed engagement with the public. The results of these surveys are clear and compelling and will be made public in the near future.
- We have planted lots of trees and hedgerows on property under Town Council control, They look lovely, will have a positive environmental impact and we intend to continue planting throughout 2022 and beyond.