**BEAUMONT PARISH COUNCIL**

Heer are some excerpts from my recent Annual Report of the Council for the year 2022/2023. This year has once again been a busy one for our Parish Council, dealing with our regular on-going business and addressing new issues as and when they arose.

We secured the assistance of Dan Land, our District Councillor to continue to lobby the Highways Committee for the full review we were promised of the signage along the A1414 with a view to replacing and repairing the damaged and missing road signs. We requested that the 30mph sign be moved further round beyond Oak Corner towards Harwich and the introduction of a 40mph ‘buffer’ zone beyond that. We continue to press for the speed restriction on Chapel Road to be reduced from 40mph to 30mph as vehicles speeding along there pose a real threat to pedestrians.

We are responsible for the maintenance of the Play Park and Playing field. This year the high winds damaged the basketball backboard but thanks to the efforts of Rus, Richard and Leah, this was replaced, and new nets fitted. Thanks to David Day, the Boules Court was

re-established and is now in use.

We supported Charlie Thorpe in setting up the Beaumont Wildlife Club, designed to offer sessions on pond dipping, bug hunting, bird watching etc. The group made a good start with a very well attended first meeting, attracting many children and families. The club ran generally on a fortnightly basis. On a similar theme, the decision was taken to improve access to the pond in Coles Wood, with the help of Conservation Volunteers. As you are probably aware, the pond, together with the woodland area it sits in, was gifted to the Parish Council by the late Bob Cole. The picnic area is now more accessible, vistas to the pond have been opened, benches refurbished and some of the dead trees and invasive weeds choking up the pond removed. I’m sure that he would have approved of the area being used for nature conservation and study as well as picnics and woodland walks.

Together with the Village Hall Committee, we supported the installation of a defibrillator in a heated cabinet on the side wall of the Village Hall close to the main entrance. Fund-raising efforts and assistance from a London Heart Charity made it possible to install this potentially lifesaving equipment in the village. Two well attended training sessions in the use of this equipment and general first aid was completed.

As part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, the Village Hall Committee, supported by the Parish Council distributed almost 100 sapling trees to anyone in the village who wished to plant one. There were wild cherry, oak, silver birch and rowan trees on offer. It will be wonderful to see them grow and hopefully flourish in the village in the years to come.

The Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee organised a highly successful event as part of our contributions to the Jubilee Celebrations. On Friday 3rd June we held our Jubilee Tea Party to which the whole village was invited to join at no cost. There was tea, sandwiches, and a superb special Jubilee cake for all. A highlight of the afternoon was the planting of a fine specimen silver birch tree on the playing field by two of Beaumont’s most senior citizens, officiated by our former Chair of the Parish Council, Geoff Macey who gave an official address and led the loyal toast. As you are probably aware, he was awarded the BEM by Her Majesty for services to our local community.

Bank Holiday Weekend saw the culmination of weeks of preparation by the fete committee and helpers for our Annual Village Fete. The event matched our best attended ever, with over 700 visitors coming through the gates, some having travelled many miles to attend. The event was highly successful raising a record sum just short of £6,500 for our local Church and the Parish Council to spend on activities for the benefit of parishioners and residents.

We were pleased that our continuing efforts to secure repairs and renovations at Beaumont Quay bore fruit. The replacement and securing of the Quay stones was completed and the carpark upgraded with a new solid base. The work was commissioned by Historic England and carried out by Essex County Council who are the owners and custodians of this historic local site. The Lime Kiln has also been restored for posterity and we were pleased that this work had been undertaken to a high standard.

We were delighted to report that we have been able to secure grant funding to paint the equipment in the playpark, to renovate and update the slide, renew the safety surface, replace some of the fencing and install a new piece of equipment, which is likely to be a train. It is hoped that work will commence early in the new financial year.

One of the thorny issues that we dealt with at several meetings was that of planning consent. The Parish Council continue to be frustrated at the lack of influence we now seem to have over planning in our area, since the regulations changed. Increasingly we received plans which we were told were for ‘information only’, especially those related to the change of use of agricultural buildings to residential dwellings. It is worrying that District Councils appear to be less interested in the knowledge and the views of the locals on the ground than they have been in the past.

The Parish Council continued to support Jon Wiseman and his team of volunteers who are doing their best to keep our village tidy and free from litter. We continue to be amazed and disappointed at the number of bags of assorted rubbish, not to mention car parts, rusted street furniture and tyres we collect all from the verges and ditches of Beaumont.

I am very grateful to all members of the Parish Council and to Kathy our Clerk for the support that they have given me this year and for the sterling work they do on behalf of the village.

Thank you.

Alan Roebuck

Chairman