

STEDHAM WITH IPING PARISH COUNCIL

SIPC Meeting 19th September 2018 - Agenda Item 6 - Chairman's Report

It's been a busy time for the Parish Council since our last meeting. We are welcoming 3 new Parish Councillors to fill our vacancies. We now have a full complement of 9 councillors.

I have asked Diane Walkington, a Minsted resident who has previously worked for WWF, to be our representative with regard to the Commons. Also Ruth Cooper, a long-term resident of Stedham and member of the Horticultural Society, to help create more areas of wildflowers in the villages.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted to SDNPA who are currently performing validation checks.

WSSC and SDNPA have agreed to jointly fund and organise the re-surfacing of the bridleway between Iping Lane and Rotherhill Nurseries track, for which the PC needs to contribute a token amount of £200.

I have met with Sussex Wildlife Trust and British Horse Society representatives on Iping Common to discuss the timing of closing as well as the ease of opening of the gates. We also discussed having a trial two way opening gate on Stedham Common where there was a recent accident.

Our new Clerk, Morag and our new Responsible Financial Officer, Catherine have been in post for another month and the administration and financial controls are working very well under them. We have applied for a new bank account which allows online payment and access.

The most serious issue to arise since our last meeting is the situation in regard to Stedham Primary School, which is threatened by the new Schools Strategy of West Sussex County Council. This broadly aims to improve the cost effectiveness of schools by imposing minimum numbers of 210 pupils. A summary of the situation in June this year, when we responded to the Strategy, is on our website. In order for the Parish Council to give as much support to our school as possible the governors have requested one of our councillors should become a School Governor, and I am hoping we can find someone who can commit to this.