The Parish Council has been through a few changes in the past twelve months – not least an election, which has brought a number of new Councillors. I would like to repeat my thanks from the last PC Meeting to the retiring councillors for their excellent work on behalf of the Parish over the previous years.

Since becoming the Chair of the PC at the very end of 2021, I have tried to encourage agreement on a number of outstanding matters. This has seen us clear some long-standing business, which has included agreement for the first phase of the redevelopment of the Playground – as overseen by Councillor Guy. This work will be started in the next week or so, and will have three great new pieces of play equipment being installed.

We have just organised a fantastic Jubilee Party for the village, again mainly driven by Henry, with the cost largely funded by a Community Grant from the District Council.

Now that we have cleared the decks of outstanding business, we can look forward to a number of things that we are planning to achieve as a council in the future. There will be further phases of development for the Playground and Recreation areas, and this will finally include proper disabled access. We have a funding application in for this, and also towards a bus stop in the village.

Plans are afoot for an upgrade to the Village Car Park, which will again improve disabled parking and disabled access to both the school and Village Hall, which at the moment is sorely lacking. This will also give a number of extra spaces, in order to help to mitigate the traffic issues connected with the school run.

A joking comment following mighty Main Street's crushing victory in the tug-of-war at Saturday's Jubilee Party was that we had brought in ringers from outside the street: the reality though is that the event attracted people who had not been seen at other gatherings in the parish – which is exactly what we should be achieving with community events such as this.

Parishes all over the country are trying to re-establish links and a community spirit following Covid lockdowns. Ash rallied under Covid remarkably well, led by a number of community champions – including our very own Caz Halfhide MBE. But people have moved into Ash in the past two years, and have not been able to become a part of what is an amazing community. Others have just got used to hiding away, and a number of clubs and societies have closed.

Following on from the success of the Ash Jubilee festivities we are planning more community events to try to build a stronger and more united community.

We are always open to suggestions, approaches, offers of help and advice. As we have seen with the recent Jubilee celebrations, parishes such as Ash rely on a vast amount of voluntary help and simple mucking in. Ash is lucky to have a number of people who regularly step forward to help with events and all sorts of things around the parish, but there is always room for more. To paraphrase JFK, “Ask not what Ash can do for you – ask what you can do for Ash,” and there will be no limit on what we can achieve moving forwards.

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Steve Davey
Ash Parish Council