

**Sweffling Parish Council
Annual Report for APM 9.5.23**

The work of the Parish Council (PC) can sometimes be seen as trivial, dealing as it must with issues regarding access to footpaths or dog fouling. However, the PC is the first and lowest tier of local government and as such has an important role. PCs were created by an Act of Parliament back in 1894 and hence the name of Sweffling Parish Council with just one f.

The PC is a statutory consultee on planning applications, not a planning authority, and should endeavour to support local groups, manage assets and whenever necessary campaign for better services and facilities for all the people of the village.

Meeting these responsibilities during the recent pandemic was difficult. It is my assessment that the last couple of years, since coming out of lockdown, have been even more challenging.

It is often easy to find individuals to criticise the PC, or who think they know how the PC should work, but it is not so easy to find people to stand up and take on the responsibility of serving the community. Like so many other PCs we have found it difficult to find someone with the aptitude, skills and time to serve as Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

After almost eight years on the PC, most of them as Chairman, and more recently as Chairman without a Clerk I decided to stand down. It has been a pleasure to serve and in my time we have accomplished many things including, among others, the successful campaign to extend the 30 mph zone along the B1119 as it runs through Sweffling and continuing to maintain and improve the assets around our village. Three other Parish Councillors have also taken the decision to step back. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Jude Chin, Councillor Julia Kinsey and Councillor Audrey Lummis for all their support and for the work they have carried out on behalf of the people of Sweffling over the years.

I am pleased to hear that the PC may have found someone to be Clerk and I wish them well in the future.

Cllr. John Stanley
Chairman Sweffling Parish Council,
Fairways, Holden's Lane.