

ASHELDHAM RESIDENTS GROUP ("ARG")

Report for the Annual Parish Assembly

15th May 2024

The current subscription year for members is 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024 and has 68 paid up members

The ARG committee consists of Keeley Pond, Secretary and Rik Pond Treasurer and myself as Chairman.

Since this time last year ARG has organised a successful Winter Litter Pick in conjunction with MDC Councillor, Ward Member for Southminster and Dengie resident Adrian Fluker.

The Yellow Salt Bin is now monitored by ARG member Dave Henson and our thanks to him.

Ann and Shaun Barnard of Brook Lane continue to keep planted and maintain in an attractive way the original planter opposite Sandlings as do Jo and Rebecca Griffiths and family of Hall Road the 6 more recent planters. Last year Sharon Thick of Sandlings kindly made an instant water supply available and a watering regime operated by Sharon, Ann, Shaun, Keeley and myself on an ad hoc basis came into being. My wife Bernie continued to look after the planter at the base of the Asheldham Village Sign outside the Animal Sanctuary. Tony Locke of Endway Cottages continues to offer a back up water supply if ever necessary.

As usual, in November last ARG positioned the wooden Tommy next to the Asheldham Village Sign and attached artificial poppies to various items of street furniture in order to commemorate the Remembrance period.

ARG was for a long time concerned about the non replacement of the broken down village name signage for Asheldham between Cornfields and Broomfield in Southminster Road and for Dengie in Tillingham Road opposite The Haven. MDC Councillor Matthew Neall successfully persuaded MDC to recently replace these signs notwithstanding that place name signs such as this as opposed to street name signs are usually an ECC remit. Our thanks to Matthew for his assistance.

As ever, ARG has spent much time and effort with concerns over the everlasting failure of ECC and Essex Highways ("EH") to properly deal with such matters as the Asheldham Bends, Asheldham Brook Bridge, the erosion of verges by HGVs and the like and flooding caused by blocked drains. EH claim that they clear drains/gullies twice a year but there is little if any evidence of that. ARG is of the view that blocked drains caused by eroded verges will continue to be an issue unless and until EH grasp the nettle and install high kerbing in strategic positions as a deterrence.

ARG has noted with incredulity EHs decision not to do anything about the Asheldham Bends problem after all the time and money spent of feasibility studies over the years.

Despite requests by the PC, at the time of writing the latest EH Report on Asheldham Brook Bridge has still not been received. Originally EH decided that the bridge needed replacing rather than renovated/repared but then discovered the possible existence of a foul sewer in the vicinity of the bridge. It therefore carried out a further inspection under a weekend road closure about 18 months ago but still no report to hand. In the meantime HGVs of anything between 25 and 40 tonnes weight continue to use the bridge. ARG's Treasurer in his private capacity made a FOI request about the

survey works and the weight restriction and the reply was to the effect that the bridge was looked at every 3 months and was last classified as being capable to carry 40 tonnes. Our Treasurer has requested EH to confirm those statements believing them to be inaccurate and still awaits a reply.

ARG is aware that several members in their private capacities have made representations to the authorities about various proposals which are likely to cause even more traffic through the village, such as the Soler Farm in Keelings Road, the application by the owners of Asheldham Quarry for a time extension and area expansion and by the development of 200 new houses on the Homefield site in Southminster.

Colin Cooper

Chairman