

Reports for Annual Village Meeting 27 May 2025

2. Clapps Mead Working Group Volunteers

Our Country has a proud heritage of helping one another and "Volunteers" have been the backbone of much of our Village life for as long as I can remember.

Villagers who voluntarily give their time and efforts into the good of the community. Not seeking remuneration or even praise they have freely given their time and efforts into keeping our Village "looking good". And over the years they have been very successful at this.

It has kept the costs to the Parish Council to a minimum with Volunteers often having a few scraps materials they can use or even purchasing some small item themselves. I have been involved in our Village Volunteers since retiring 8 years ago. We have carried out minor works always completely with our levels of competency. For example replacing a few slats on the Pay Area Perimeter Fence; locally cutting back overgrown brambles etc; strengthening loose fence posts; annually painting the play area fence and picnic tables; oiling squeaky play area equipment; annually applying wood preservative to the play equipment; re-fixing / replacing warning or advice signage; regularly emptying the 2 litter bins in Clapps Mead etc etc. The list goes on and volunteers have always been happy to "rock up" with paint brush or screw driver or pair of secateurs to carry out some minor repair works.

However since this new Parish Council took over in May 2024 this goodwill voluntary practice has been forced to stop,

WHY??

I'm sorry to say that it is as a result of the Parish Council's formalised Volunteer Policy as published on their website.

Please have a read.

I personally consider to be disgraceful and an insult to the good intentions of any public spirited Villager who would consider volunteering for small remedial works to keep maintenance costs down and therefore be less of a drain on the Parish Precept. Especially when this new Policy contains a vast level of

bureaucracy / Risk Assessments / direction from a Parish Council supervisor etc etc. I DON'T THINK SO.

But I'm afraid that the "over-reach" of this Policy is breathtaking and I for one will not countenance going through the totally unnecessary process being imposed by this Council.

I previously asked every Cllr to carefully consider the ramifications of implementing this policy before voting Yes to its adoption because I truly believe that you will not get volunteers which will then lead to unnecessary additional costs for the Council and therefore for all Village Residents.

Sadly the PC took no heed of my request and simply nodded their policy through totally unchanged.