

SPROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING

REPORT ON SPROUGHTON MILLENNIUM GREEN

Parishioners will probably recall my item in the local *In Touch* magazine last year, which was an honest assessment at that time of the future of Sproughton Millennium Green Limited (SMGLtd), the not-for-profit management company which looks after the green on your behalf.

The (then) few Directors of SMGLtd agreed with my proposal to publish a blunt warning that without new blood there would have to be a new way of managing our Millennium Green as there were too few of us to manage the green effectively. We had tried for a long time to boost our numbers without success. Added to that, we were concerned about looming costs for necessary repair and replacement works on the green and were mindful that another tree condition survey was due that could have significant costs attached. For over two years because of Covid, with the single exception of our monthly 100 Club draw, we had not been able to run any fund raising events, and had not had any income from other village events like the fete or fireworks. Things looked bleak.

Fast forward to our AGM for 2021, which was held in January of this year. At that AGM, we appointed 4 new Directors, which almost doubled our number! We now have a new Chairman, Darren Smith, and a much stronger team of local Directors with an active interest in the green and new ideas on how to take the green forward as we emerge from the pandemic. We're probably in the best place now that we've been for a number of years.

Our funding concerns, too, have been significantly addressed. A generous grant from Sproughton Parish Council paid in full for the replacement of the steps and handrails leading down to the green from the bridge. Our recent tree condition survey revealed, as we expected, a considerable amount of work is necessary on the big trees along the riverbank, but through one of new Directors we have had an extremely generous offer from UK Power Networks to carry out the necessary work this summer for us free of charge.

In the space of just under a year, our fortunes have been completely turned around. The green is safe in the hands of the new larger team, who I know will use their experience and skills to keep it in tip-top condition for us all to enjoy.

If the pandemic taught us anything, it is that in the past we perhaps took for granted what was right here on our doorstep. The green has provided that haven of peace so vital during lockdown, living up to its designation when it was founded in 1998 as a "breathing space" for free public recreation. It has proved to be an enormous community asset, and one we should continue to cherish and defend. Let's all continue to use and support it. You can play your part by joining our 100 Club and

giving just £1 a month to us to help keep everything safe, clean and pleasant for us all to enjoy.

The success of the campaign to recruit more Directors means that I have decided to step down as Chairman after many years in that role, and to retire later this year as a Director to pursue new challenges in the volunteering world. I wish my successors all the very best as the Millennium Green enters a new chapter in its history, and I'd like to thank all those former Trustees, Directors and others over the years who've given up their time to help manage the green. Their legacy lives on.

Ken Seager

Vice-Chairman
Sproughton Millennium Green Limited

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