

COUNCILLOR IAN CLARKE

40 YEARS OF ADVOCATING FOR OUR PARISH



Councillor Ian Clarke marks his 40th year as a Shinfield Parish Councillor and to recognise his service he was presented with an award at Full Council in December 2025. Ian is well known in the parish and is particularly recognised for his hands-on involvement in initiatives that enhance local facilities, sports and services, demonstrating both leadership and a collaborative spirit. His deep-rooted passion for Shinfield Parish is evident in the time and energy he invests in making the parish a better place for everyone.



What inspired you to become a parish councillor 40 years ago?

I had lived in Ryeish Green for 25 years when I applied to be a parish councillor, offering to help in the community with a specific interest in sports. I was co-opted by council in 1985. I was then elected as chairman in 2003 and stepped down in 2012 and remained a councillor.

How did you feel at your very first council meeting?

My first council meeting was at Ryeish Green Pavilion. At the time it was a new, very modern building, without the the yellow locked access gate! The chairman welcomed me but informed me not to be controversial!!

What has kept you motivated to serve for so long?

The challenge to improve sports facilities in the parish. I feel proud of the part I have played for over 40 years in establishing the facilities we have in Shinfield Parish today.

A huge amount has been achieved in sport. For example; Ryeish Green Sports Hub - grass pitches and 3g pitches.

We have gym and a MUGA at Spencers Wood Recreation Ground. Manor Ground for Cricket and under 9's Football. High Copse with full size grass pitches and cricket! Our plans for Millworth Recreation Ground will turn this into an area for all the community to enjoy.

Can you share what really stands out from your time on the council?

Early in 2000, the parish office was established, the Clerk, Jacqui Barnes, had moved from working from home to have her own office at the parish hall to run council business. The parish council was nominated to attend the Queen's Garden Party. As chairman at the time, I was proud to be invited to attend with my wife Dawn - pictured above.



In 2012, a panel of residents worked together and applied to Berkshire Association of Local Councils for the status of 'Quality Council'.

Another highlight, was project managing the rebuild of Spencers Wood Pavilion back in 2020, which I was assisted by a superb committee. I'll never forget the moment when the modular sections were being delivered from Wakefield and installed by a large crane; as the fourth section was about to be lifted, a thunder and lightning storm blew up, the frightened crane driver left it in mid air and exited the crane very quickly, it was just hanging there - it soon passed and sections 4 & 5 were put in place, job done!



How has Shinfield changed during your time on the council?

The growth of the parish! When I first moved to Ryeish Green in 1960, there was four butcher shops, a bakery, a grocery shop and a sweet shop, and Hyde End Lane was a dirt track. You did not have to get in your car to go to the supermarket as you could walk or they delivered to your door for free!!

How has the role of a parish councillor changed over the years?

The core responsibilities of parish councillors has not changed significantly over the years but the workload has increased due to parish growth, leading to more committees and working parties for us volunteer councillors to attend. It is great that we do now have some younger members who bring fresh enthusiasm and ideas.

What advice would you give to someone considering becoming a parish councillor?

All my years as a parish councillor and as a community resident, I have tried to help to improve our facilities and it is my wish that anyone contemplating becoming a parish councillor in the future, puts the parish first.

What do you hope for the future of the Parish in the future?

I would like see another secondary school built with a sixth form and a 3g pitch at High Copse.

'Pride in our Parish was created several years ago, I organised the planting of thousands of daffodils in the Parish to welcome spring'—

Ian Clarke