



## Chairman's Report



Since my report last year, I am pleased to say that we have undertaken, or are about to undertake, a number of projects within the Parish that we hope will improve the well-being of all our parishioners.

The Memorial Garden is now complete, has been officially opened, and provides a small haven for quiet contemplation within the centre of the village overlooking the South Downs.

The re-orientation of the cricket square is also now complete and, for the first time ever, the side batting second will not all have to wear sunglasses!

We have had 2 meetings recently with members of the public, particularly those within the immediate vicinity of Cousins Way Recreation Ground, with a view to erecting a Trim Trail on the recreation ground. I am glad to report that the majority of people who attended the last meeting were in favour of the process in principle, subject to the Council giving assurances on certain issues and being able to re-site some or all of the equipment.

By the time that you read this Report I hope that at long last the hanging basket brackets will have been fixed to the new lighting units in Lower Street. This will enable us to fill the baskets well in time for the summer period and to brighten up the Lower Street shopping area for the first time in 5 years.

Despite Horsham District Council's reluctance to support financially our plans for a new Sports Pavilion,

we are nevertheless determined to press ahead with improvements. To that end, we are currently accepting quotations for the complete overhaul of the whole of the changing rooms and anticipate commencing on the work later this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you that completed the Household Survey last year. The results have been a major source of evidence as to how you see the Parish progressing over the next 15 years. The number of completed replies exceeded not only our expectations but also those of people who are well-versed in this process. It was an excellent achievement on everybody's part.

The Neighbourhood Plan is well under way; it is a long process and all parishioners will very soon be asked to view and hopefully endorse and pass the final Plan. My thanks go to Richard Keatley and to all the members of the Steering Group for the work that they are undertaking.

Finally, I would like to thank not only my fellow Councillors who have supported me throughout the last year, particularly in attending meetings on some pretty awful nights, but also all the hard-working parish staff particularly my clerks and ground staff without whom this Parish could not function as well as it does.

**Ray Qusted, *Chairman of the Council***

## Planning & Services Committee Report

Areas of concern that have been highlighted through the Neighbourhood Plan include provisions for our elderly population. The number of over 65's will rise from the current figure of 1 in 5 to 1 in 3 by 2031 which combined with the projected increase in the overall population of 20%, results in around 800 more people aged over 65 in the village by 2031. Nationally, this age group is dominated by individuals with an income of less than £10,000 per annum. Although Pulborough

is probably better off than the national average, it may not be by that much. So, the majority of our over 65's are unlikely to be able to afford services that cost much more than the minimum wage, and with continuing cutbacks in government services it is likely that more services will be privately, rather than state provided. A key question for the Neighbourhood Plan is what we can do locally to ensure that our aging population is supported sufficiently well.

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I would also like to commend Willowmead developments who are proposing a development west of the railway station on the northern side of the Stopham Road. Although their proposal is yet to be decided by Horsham District Council (HDC), I would like to note that Willowmead have engaged actively with the local residents, the Parish Council and with HDC. It has been most helpful to have this level of engagement prior to the submission of an application.

Although Pulborough is undoubtedly a very good place to live, we continue to see significant issues with our service infrastructure i.e. poor maintenance of ditches result in flooding, the lack of bus services for commuters and the ever increasing use of our local roads by vehicles, especially HGV's which directly impacts on air quality and safety. However, rather than report on historic planning decisions, I have used this report to seek to make you think about the future of Pulborough, and your thoughts and help will be most welcome as we continue to develop our Neighbourhood Plan over the next year.

## Recreation & Open Spaces Committee Report

Your committee has been busy maintaining our green spaces. We received a glowing report from the South Downs National Park Authority about Nutbourne Common Recreation Ground who commented that the clearing has become a very important new heath site within West Sussex, part of a cluster of heath sites within the area. Thanks must go to Councillors Lawson and Quested for their work in clearing the silver birch seedlings. Pocket Park is about to have some major work so that the water will flow freely through the culvert and not flood so readily. Self seeded trees blocking the flow of the stream are to be removed but there will still be old trunks enough to satisfy the most fastidious of bugs. The councillors will then be moving in with secateurs and rubbish bags to make the paths a pleasure to walk in. As the Chairman mentioned in

his report, work to provide a trim trail at Cousins Way Recreation Ground is ongoing and it is hoped to have this installed before the Winter.

All our allotments are taken and work on clearing and planting has begun. The ditch alongside them has been excavated and all growth along the length has been cleared out. It looks wonderful and will reduce the risk of flooding in the future. The area has been mown with overhanging trees trimmed back. Our groundsman has done a sterling job. Our many footpaths and rights of way make this area a delight. Please use them sensibly and make sure you have your dogs under control at all times. Those who own the land we use by ancient tradition are beginning to try to block off these paths because of the nuisance value of people unsure of the country code. Please don't be the one to make this happen.

## Finance & Policy Committee Report

Following this written report is the draft Income and Expenditure account of your council for the last financial year.

As in previous years, these figures are subject to a final audit. The income for the year ended 31st March 2015 increased in monetary terms from £192,656 to £234,436 as a result of an increase in the amount paid by each household combined with receipt of several substantial grants towards the costs incurred for the Neighbourhood Plan (£8,950) and the Memorial Garden (£24,445). The increase for each band D property for the past financial year compared to 2013/14 was 2% per annum or £1.40 per annum. Other income was similar to prior years with various rents increased with inflation. Staff costs saw an increase of 7% this year from £62,753 to £67,089. This was due to reduced costs in 2013/14 as a result of the resignation of the Assistant Clerk in November 2013, who was not replaced for several months, combined with the appointment of an additional weekend litter warden to help the groundsman keep the main recreation ground clear of litter.

The project work associated with the refurbishment of the Sports and Social Pavilion continues slowly as we seek finalisation of costs and especially funding. The council received a disappointing response from HDC which will not support the project with a grant based on the new houses the village has acquired in the past years: only a loan. Allocated reserves at the year-end of £127,461 are earmarked for this project out of a total of £198,584. Other projects planned by your council, for which funds have been specifically earmarked, include improvements to the Cousins Way Recreation Ground, improvements to Pocket park, and future costs associated with the Neighbourhood Plan. Another project the Council has decided to support and started planning for is a replacement Youth Club. The lease on the present building has not been renewed and will lapse in 2022, so a replacement is needed. It is anticipated that Horsham Matters Ltd will shortly take over the running of the Youth Club and discussions will ensue with them about the future provision.

# Summary of Accounts

## Income & Expenditure Account (Awaiting External Audit)

Yr ended 31st March 2014		Current Yr ended 31st March 2015
<b>Income Summary</b>		
172,047	Precept	169,522
<b>172,047</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>169,522</b>
<b>Operating Income</b>		
365	Administration	10,457
0	Capital Grants	8,950
422	Loans and Finance	331
2,341	MSF	2,338
5,441	Discretionary	30,318
1,428	Allotments	1,519
10,521	Other Recreation	11,001
<b>192,565</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>234,436</b>
<b>Running Costs</b>		
13,521	Administration	16,229
276	Advertising & Publicity	535
15	MSF	986
62,753	Staff Costs	67,089
19,250	Discretionary	39,176
4,273	Highways	4,594
4,846	Street Lighting	3,147
811	Allotments	1,203
310	Bowling Club	128
4,503	Grounds Maintenance	9,128
9,597	Pavilion	13,311
25,127	Other Recreation	19,869
<b>145,282</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>175,395</b>
<b>General Fund Analysis</b>		
220,269	Opening Balance	267,552
192,565	Plus : Income for Year	234,436
<b>412,834</b>		<b>501,988</b>
145,282	Less : Expenditure	175,395
<b>267,552</b>	<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>326,593</b>

## Council Members (as at 31st March 2015)

### Chairman

#### Mr Ray Quested

"Greenford", Batts Lane, Pulborough RH20 2ED

Email: rayquested@gmail.com

Tel: 01798 874283

*Finance & Policy Committee, Ex Officio All Other Committees*

### Vice Chairman

#### Mr Paul Clarke

9 Riverside, Pulborough RH20 1FJ

Email: amandaandpaul@yahoo.com

Tel: 01798 875645

*Finance & Policy (C), Planning & Services, Recreation & Open Spaces*

### Councillors

#### Mr L Ellis

20 Lyntons, Pulborough, RH20 1AZ

Tel: 01798 874357

*Finance & Policy (VC)*

#### Dr R Gill

14 Aston Rise, Pulborough, RH20 2JA

Email: rachelgill@doctors.org.uk

Tel: 07986 818707

*Recreation & Open Spaces (VC)*

#### Mrs E Henly

70 Stane Street Close, Pulborough, RH20 1FR

Email: e.henly38@btinternet.com

*Recreation & Open Spaces*

#### Mr C Esdaile

30 Rectory Close, Pulborough RH20 2AJ

Email: christopher.esdaile@gmail.com

Tel: 01798 874209

*Planning & Services*

#### Mrs E Kipp

1 Laurel Mount, Pulborough, RH20 2PE

Email: elaine.kipp@googlemail.com

Tel: 01798 875451

*Finance & Policy*

#### Mrs Andrea Lawson

Mill Farm, Stream Lane, Nutbourne RH20 2HG

Tel: 01798 813746

*Planning & Services, Recreation & Open Spaces*

#### Mrs C Mortimer

145 Lower Street, Pulborough, RH20 2BX

Email: tinmortimer@hotmail.com

Tel: 01798 872858

*Planning & Services*

#### Mr G Reddin

Manor Farm, Broomers Hill Lane, Pulborough RH20 2DU

Email: gavin.reddin@libertservices.co.uk

Tel: 07973 273136

*Recreation & Open Spaces*

#### Dr Andy Tilbrook

Milton, Church Place, Pulborough, RH20 1AF

Email: andytilbrook@tiscali.co.uk

Tel: 01798 875350

*Finance & Policy, Planning & Services (C)*

#### Mrs E Wallace

25 Carpenters Meadow Pulborough RH20 2HQ

Email: liz@ptoc.cc

Tel: 01798 872734

*Recreation & Open Spaces (C)*

*Finance & Policy (EO)*

*Planning & Services (EO)*

#### Mr J Wallace

25 Carpenters Meadow Pulborough RH20 2HQ

Email: biz@ptoc.cc

Tel: 01798 872734

*Planning & Services (VC)*

#### Mrs V Wilson

20 Rectory Close, Pulborough RH20 2AJ

Email: valeriewilson22@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: 01798 874378

*Recreation & Open Spaces*

## Officers

**Clerk to the Council:** Mrs Sarah Norman

**Assistant Clerk:** Mrs Lisa Underwood

Parish Council Office, Swan View,  
Lower Street, Pulborough RH20 2BF

**Tel:** 01798 873532

**Email:** clerk@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk

**Web:** www.pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk

**Office Hours:** Monday to Friday 9am to 12.30pm