

PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Village Meeting was held at Pulborough Village Hall
on Thursday, 11th May 2017 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Parish: Cllrs Qusted (Chairman), Clarke, Court, C Esdaile, J Esdaile, Hare, Henly, Kipp, Lawson, Reddin, Tilbrook and Wallace
District: Cllr B Donnelly (NB Cllr Clarke is also a District Cllr)
County: Cllr P Arculus
Public: 13 members of the public

In Attendance: Heather Knight (Clerk)
Carol Boniface (Neighbourhood Warden) *(part of meeting)*
Vanessa Green (Neighbourhood Warden) *(part of meeting)*
Neil Worth (HDC Community Safety Officer) *(part of meeting)*
Richard Keatley (Chairman Pulborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) *(part of meeting)*

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION BY CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chairman and Members of the Council introduced themselves to residents.

2. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING HELD ON 12TH MAY 2016

Copies of the Minutes from the meeting held on 12th May 2016 were circulated for all. These were noted and approved as a true record.

3. TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL, INCLUDING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2017

The Chairman referred all those present to the Annual Report which was circulated to all and is attached as Appendix 1, and gave a summary of the report. This included reports from the Chairman of each Committee plus the Income & Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2017.

Following query by a member of the public, the Chairman clarified that the Council is currently going through a process of appointing professional construction management advice to guide the sports pavilion rebuild project: It is hoped to incorporate the Youth Club into the plans but costs are as yet unknown.

The Chairman of the Planning & Services Committee, Cllr Tilbrook, gave his report from the Annual Report. Commenting on progress and timelines for Pulborough Neighbourhood Plan, advising that public will be formally consulted twice in due course before reaching Referendum stage in approximately a year's time.

A member of public queried why such a high percentage of new houses are financially unattainable for people of ordinary means, and why smaller houses aren't being built. Cllr Tilbrook explained that the parish council has no control over this but that a Community Land Trust arrangement is being explored which could help to address this.

A member of public asked what was happening with the planning application for housing on the other side of the railway. Cllr Tilbrook advised that planning permission was granted but there are some difficulties in providing access to the car park, which was delaying matters.

Following a question from the floor over the relationship between the anticipated 20% population increase and housing numbers, Cllr Tilbrook clarified this.

The Chairman of the Recreation & Open Spaces Committee, Cllr Henly referred to her report in the Annual Report, especially the recent volunteer work and progress at Pocket Park. She highlighted that the Neighbourhood Wardens had recently come across some youngsters litter clearing, who had said "We live locally, we want it tidy".

A member of the public queried responsibility for footpath clearing and this was clarified as being County Council in most cases.

The Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee, Cllr Clarke, presented his report, emphasising that the Council has two major projects currently, viz the Neighbourhood Wardens two year pilot scheme and the Sports Pavilion Rebuild. If residents wish the Neighbourhood Warden scheme to continue following the second year, there will need to be a considerable precept increase to fund it. He explained that the reason for the Council's large reserves was twofold: Firstly to cover unexpected or additional projects like the Neighbourhood Wardens, and secondly it will fund the Sports Pavilion project.

A member of the public raised a query regarding the increase in staff costs and it was confirmed this was related to the Neighbourhood Wardens.

A member of the public asked whether the Council had any plans to provide public toilets in the village, as only Storrington and Pulborough don't have any? It was confirmed that this was not in the Council's plans, and had not been raised previously by residents. It was noted that some time ago a survey undertaken showed that the Pulborough facility was not used in over a year, which resulted in it being closed down.

4. PRESENTATION BY PULBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

Neighbourhood Wardens Vanessa Green and Carol Boniface gave a presentation on their first year of work since appointment on 4th July 2016, and included some case studies. Examples of their role included producing polite parking notices; link alarm referrals; neighbour nuisance/Good Neighbour Scheme; supporting dementia awareness (via Caring Cafe/Age UK); dog fouling issues.

HDC Community Safety Officer, Neil Worth, advised the meeting that Pulborough was the first parish council to be involved directly with the District Council in setting up a neighbourhood warden scheme.

The Chairman of Council asked the public audience whether residents were happy with the Neighbourhood Warden scheme, to which general assent was received.

A member of public asked whether it is illegal to park partially on footpaths and road. The Neighbourhood Wardens confirmed that strictly speaking it is, however only the police can enforce, however the police will only do so if they see the obstruction.

5. PULBOROUGH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Chairman of Pulborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Richard Keatley, gave an overview of what the Neighbourhood Plan was, explaining the history that the group had been ready to move the Neighbourhood Plan to examination in early 2015 but due to changes of policies at HDC level had had to revert to Regulation 14 stage. The group had started to look at the evidence for sites most suitable for development, applying new HDC methodology. The Steering Group had decided to conduct another call for sites alongside utilising previous evidence obtained.

Cllr Tilbrook explained the relevance of Community Land Trusts, which were completely independent of parish councils and neighbourhood plans, but could deliver affordable housing.

In response to a query about the Harwood group possibly moving outside the parish, Mr Keatley explained that this was one of the sites on the Steering Group's list, and that wherever there could be development, one of the principles the group tries to embrace is whether that development in its own right is a benefit to Pulborough.

A member of the public asked about builders (nationally) having a backlog of houses not built. In response, it was noted that the new Government White Paper on Housing was trying to address the issue of developers 'land banking'. Comment was also made that this affects the housing needs assessment.

Comments were made from the floor about the need to have the right infrastructure in place and as part of the planning process. County Cllr Arculus advised that Southern Water cannot refuse a developer rights to join new development on to the existing water/sewerage system.

Following brief discussion on consulting residents, a suggestion was made from the floor that a public meeting could be arranged by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group / Parish Council to go through the evidence the group already had and seek any new input from public that should be considered. All agreed this was a sensible idea and would be taken back for discussion by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

6. LOWER STREET REGENERATION

Cllr Tilbrook reported that after a prolonged history, matters were moving forward at last following recent discussions with WSCC. He drew attention to the enlarged map displayed around the room detailing proposals following recent meetings. People were encouraged to have a look at this and he was happy to chat to individuals in more detail after the formal meeting. It was acknowledged that the whole area needs some more major work, transport issues being one concern, however this plan was a good way of getting things started and getting affordable elements of work achieved.

7. HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CAR PARK CHARGING SCHEME

District Cllr Clarke briefed the meeting on the HDC car park charging scheme and the reasons behind the initiative, which would be reviewed by HDC after a year.

The Chairman of Council asked residents how many of them had purchased a parking disk. The straw poll showed that quite a few had.

Comment was made from the floor and Councillors present about the issue of not having a free parking period such as was in place in other authorities and not being able to pay cash for the new disks. District Cllr B Donnelly advised that it was a question of being able to balance the books, eg if not receiving income from car parks, Council Tax would have had to increase. The season ticket scheme had already been oversubscribed and for the pay and display HDC was taking in around £500 per day.

Some discussion took place about the impact on local trade, and the pressure businesses were under nationally with changing purchase habits due to internet shopping. Comment was also made about the need to assist new/young businesses with starter business units.

8. REPORTS FROM COUNTY / DISTRICT COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE

As District and County Cllrs present had interacted with comments from the floor, it was felt that his item had been addressed.

9. QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL FROM RESIDENTS

The Chairman asked if there were any other questions from the floor. None were put forward and the Chairman closed the meeting with an invitation for those present to join the Parish Councillors for Fairtrade tea and coffee, reflecting the Parish Council's support of the village Fairtrade status.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

..... **Chairman**

..... **Date**

PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT April 2016 to March 2017

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The past year has been somewhat disappointing in that we have been unable, due to issues beyond our control, to make any headway with the Neighbourhood Plan. The current situation is that we have returned to Regulation 14 Stage to review our site allocations and to ascertain from property owners if any changes need to be made to the status of any land available for development. We will also be asking for any further sites that may have come available since our last call for sites. Then we will be able to move on with the assistance of a new Neighbourhood Planning Officer appointed by the District Council.

On the plus side I am glad to say that the experiment to employ Neighbourhood Wardens seems to have had a profound effect on the village as a whole from within all age groups. Not only are residents seeing and reporting the benefit of their presence, but the Wardens themselves have said how much they are enjoying their roles within the community. Their main area of concern however is the indiscriminate parking of cars that brings me on to the next subject of my report.

The new parking arrangements have not met with approval from a number of quarters, not least from Council members.

Whilst the annual pass, which can be used in a number of villages, has some merit, our Council has concerns with the District Council over the necessity to charge for the first hour parking and over the large increase in the cost for those annual all-day permit holders. There is concern that the changes may lead to an increase in indiscriminate and careless on-street parking which we are anxious to avoid.

We are still continuing to look at ways to improve or replace the Sports Pavilion. The Council have taken the decision to advertise for a Contracts Manager in order to cost and design a project, which we will then put before the parish for consultation. We have funds set aside already and there is more available from Section 106 monies which are contributions provided by developers over the years to assist with local projects. The proposed new development on the A29 opposite Sopers Cottages is one of those developments which, although approved is not yet started. Section 106 monies from that development are set aside specifically for the Sports and Social Club.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all residents for their support particularly the many volunteers that we have within the village who give up their own time to help others. Our village is constantly being singled out as an example of volunteering and that is something of which I am very proud.

The Council's staff are continuing to keep up to date with all the various issues that arise daily within the village; they perform admirably and their support is also invaluable.

The Council will continue to work to make Pulborough a pleasant place in which to live and work and I hope that will continue for many years to come.

Ray Qusted
Chairman

PLANNING & SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

Over the last year few new planning permissions have been granted. This report will therefore focus on prospects for the future. The most important ongoing activity is undoubtedly the neighbourhood plan, but the process that we now have to go through is unlikely to bring the plan to a public vote before the middle of next year. If the plan is voted for, then a key advantage to the parish will be to secure a greater share of the CIL (community infrastructure levy) which the parish can then invest in improving services and amenities in the village. This is particularly important during a time when both county and district councils are receiving less funding from central government.

A number of developments have been approved over the last 5 years where no houses have yet been built. These currently number around 150 dwellings. We hope that the various issues affecting the commencement of these developments are resolved soon, as the risk to us is that other developments, not currently featuring in our draft neighbourhood plan could more easily be forced upon us.

The main challenges to the provision of village services arise from the changing demographic of the village. Central government forecast an overall increase of around 1000 people in Pulborough over the next 15 years, and within the total population we are likely to have an increase of around 50% in the number of people aged over 65. The proportion of middle aged people (between 40 and 65) in the village, a valuable source of community volunteers, is decreasing. Pulborough is very typical of all communities in the rural South of England in this respect. A contributory reason for these changes is that property rental and purchase prices are rising much faster than wage increases, so younger people doing valuable work within our community are less and less able to live here.

Other concerns regarding infrastructure have been increasing congestion on our roads, and active support to infrastructure improvements such as the proposed improvements to the A27 around Arundel and Worthing from as many people as possible will be very important. Problems to our sewerage and drainage system have continued in several parts of the village, most frequently occurring in times of normal heavy rain - too much drainage water appears to flow into our sewerage system, leading to backflow in this essential part of our infrastructure. On the plus side, some improvements have been made to the road intersection at Swan Corner, and a first step towards improving traffic and pedestrian access along Lower Street should be made in the next few months.

Suggestions from parish residents on how all these issues can be addressed are always most welcome.

Cllr A Tilbrook (Chairman - Planning & Services Committee)

RECREATION & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE REPORT

During the autumn we installed the outside gym equipment on the main recreation ground, near the children's play area, which quickly became popular and well used by all. Pocket Park is having a tidy up, with the help and generosity of the local Tesco Community Officer and managers as one of their community projects and also with the help of volunteers, Neighbourhood Wardens and councillors. This has made an excellent start to the programme. Things will seem to slow a little to encourage nesting birds, but there are plans to install bird and bat boxes and hopefully one or two seats for people to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere and birdsong. It's hoped that the previous 'school corner' will be a project that will involve St Mary's School community. Nutbourne Common plans are slowly moving forward, work so far includes increasing the heathers and managing trees. At the time of writing the bluebells are in bloom and looking lovely. Thanks are due once again to the volunteers who gave up their time to help with the work. The Rivermead land is a work in progress and plans to better manage and improve this area are in early stages. We hope to encourage water voles, water birds and native wildflowers such as kingcups and others.

The Council continues to plan for a rebuild of the Sports Pavilion and the Social Club there is now under new management, who are giving it a freshen up. The Neighbourhood Wardens are doing sterling work keeping their eyes and ears on the village, with a particular focus on vulnerable folk, including the young and the elderly. They've already made a difference to the village and have had an impact on nuisance issues like dog fouling. The Youth Club is growing, with more younger children joining - good luck to Youth Worker Ben Sheldon and helpers.

Cllr E Henly (Vice Chairman - Recreation & Open Spaces Committee)

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 2017 increased in monetary terms from £210,641 to £220,325. There were no one off grants in the year for the Neighbourhood Plan or the Memorial Garden, however the external gym equipment was funded by Section 106 monies at a cost of £18,028.

The increase for each band D property for the past financial year compared to 2015/16 was 1% per annum or 73p per annum. Other income was similar to prior years with various rents increased with inflation. Staff costs saw an increase of 58.75% this year from £74,495 to £118,264, principally due to the funding of 2 x Neighbourhood Warden posts.

The project work associated with the refurbishment of the Sports and Social Pavilion continues slowly whilst trying to secure funding and seek grants and better project scope. Allocated reserves at the year end of £139,457.07 are earmarked for this project out of a total reserves figure of £242,685.79. Several other projects are planned by your council, for which funds have been specifically earmarked, including improvements to our open spaces such as Pocket Park and Rivermead and future costs associated with the provision of the village wardens. Following a two year trial period, the village will need to decide whether to continue to fund Neighbourhood Wardens or not. This may lead to a larger than historically seen precept increase but the community will decide on this. Another project the Council supports is a replacement Youth Club. The lease on the present building has been renewed and will lapse in 2020, so a replacement is needed. This may now be included in the envelope of the newly designed sports pavilion.

Cllr P Clarke (Chairman - Finance & Policy Committee)

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT (Awaiting Audit)

Current Yr ended 31 st March 2016		Current Yr ended 31 st March 2017
	Income Summary	
175,018	Precept	180,010
175,018	Sub Total	180,010
	Operating Income	
7,359	Administration	4,481
8,763	Capital Grants	0
388	Loans and Finance	320
1,645	MSF	1,496
5,496	Discretionary	5,583
0	Highways	330
1,323	Allotments	1,299
10,649	Other Recreation	26,805
210,641	Total Income	220,325
	Running Costs	
19,674	Administration	19,912
527	Advertising & Publicity	546
63	MSF	950
74,495	Staff Costs	118,264
27,957	Discretionary	10,108
4,934	Highways	5,535
4,111	Street Lighting	3,988
1,017	Allotments	1,193
249	Bowling Club	286
8,202	Grounds Maintenance	10,372
16,453	Pavilion	10,651
28,905	Other Recreation	41,587
186,585	Total Expenditure	223,392
	General Fund Analysis	
326,593	Opening Balance	350,649
210,641	Plus : Income for Year	220,325
186,585	Less : Expenditure	223,392
350,649	Closing Balance	347,582

COUNCIL MEMBERS (as at 31st March 2017)

Chairman Mr Ray Queded	“Greenford”, Batts Lane, Pulborough, RH20 2ED Email: rayqueded@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) Recreation & Open Spaces
Councillors		
Mrs R Court	7 Rectory Close, Pulborough, RH20 2AJ Email : ruthcourt123@btinternet.com Tel : 01798 874421	Recreation & Open Spaces
Mr C Esdaile	30 Rectory Close, Pulborough, RH20 2AJ Email : christopher.esdaile@gmail.com Tel : 01798 874209	Planning & Services Committee
Mrs J Esdaile	30 Rectory Close, Pulborough, RH20 2AJ Email : jwhitmanperkins@gmail.com Tel : 07932 152279	Planning & Services Committee
Mr I Hare	Middlemare, West Mare Lane, RH20 2EA Email : lan-hare@lineone.net Tel : 07850 364601	Recreation & Open Spaces
Mrs E Henly	70 Stane Street Close, Pulborough, RH20 1FR Email: e.henly38@btinternet.com Tel : 01798 872599	Planning & Services Recreation & Open Spaces (C) Finance & Policy
Mrs B Kay	11 Masons, Way, Pulborough, RH20 2DZ Email : barbaraannkay@btinternet.com Tel : 01798 875545	Planning & Services
Mrs E Kipp	1 Laurel Mount, Pulborough, RH20 2PE Email: elaine.kipp@googlemail.com Tel : 01798 875451	Finance & Policy (VC) Planning & Services
Mrs A Lawson	Mill Farm, Stream Lane, Nutbourne RH20 2HG Tel : 01798 813746	Planning & Services Recreation & Open Spaces
Mr G Reddin	Manor Farm, Broomers Hill Lane, Pulborough RH20 2DU Email: gavin.reddin@btinternet.com Tel : 07973 273136	Finance & Policy
Dr A Tilbrook	Milton, Church Place, Pulborough, RH20 1AF Email : andytilbrook@gmail.com Tel : 01798 875350	Finance & Policy Planning & Services (C)
Mr J Wallace	25 Carpenters Meadow Pulborough RH20 2HQ Email : biz@ptoc.cc Tel : 01798 872734	Planning & Services (VC)
Mrs V Wilson	15 Little Dippers, Pulborough, RH20 2DB Email: valeriewilson22@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 01798 669434	Planning & Services Recreation & Open Spaces
1 x Vacancy		

OFFICERS

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