

PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Parish Meeting was held at Pulborough Village Hall,
on Tuesday 10th May 2022 at 7.00pm

Present:-

- Parish:** Cllrs I Hare (Chairman), J Campbell, P Clarke, R Court, J Esdaile, E Henly, E Hunt, E Kipp and A Lawson
- District:** Cllr P Clarke is also a District Councillor
- Public:** 35 members of the public (including representatives of local community organisations)
- In Attendance:** Heather Knight (Parish Clerk)
Mr Ross Phillips (Pulborough Neighbourhood Warden)

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS BY CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman of Council, and of the meeting, Cllr Hare, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new Pulborough Neighbourhood Warden, Ross Phillips, and committee chairmen to all.

2. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 13TH MAY 2021**

The Minutes of the online Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th May 2021 were available on the Parish Council website and at this meeting. Following proposal and seconding, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes as a true record and that the Chairman of the Council sign them.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL, INCLUDING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022**

The Chairman referred all to the Annual Report, attached as Appendix 1, noting that his own report is an overview, followed by short committee reports and financial statement. Two big issues for the Council were the Neighbourhood Plan and the Sports Pavilion project, both of which had been held up by the Water Neutrality issue following Natural England's Position Statement last September. This had raised concerns relating to water distribution at Hardham and resulting impact on a rare snail. As a consequence, water neutrality had to be thoroughly investigated by Horsham District Council to ensure that any development increasing the footprint of a building, or new building, does not use additional water. Frustratingly, the Neighbourhood Plan had been on the point of going to public referendum in the November. The Council was now hopeful of moving forward later this year but is awaiting Horsham DC advice.

The Sports Pavilion project was awaiting planning permission and has similarly been held up by the water neutrality issue.

Other things being looked at included the MUGA (multi-use games area). It was unclear currently whether this would be a complete refurbishment or a repair of the existing facility.

Both Pulborough's Neighbourhood Wardens moved on last year and a recruitment process has been gone through. The Chairman was pleased to advise that Ross Phillips, who started in March, was getting himself really well established in the community, and was able to be here this evening. Our second Neighbourhood Warden, Louisa Hull, had now also been appointed and was undertaking initial induction training.

He concluded by thanking all councillors for their commitment and time given in the past year, with special thanks to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for steering the council through a

particularly difficult period of lockdowns etc. He advised that questions could be taken at each committee report if residents wished to raise anything.

The Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee presented his report, advising that the financial figures were draft at this stage until final audits and year end closedown have taken place. As detailed in the appended report, there had been frustrations over further delay in delivering the sports pavilion project, which was out of the Council's hands; Significant costs had been incurred in repairs/maintenance of playground equipment and the shortfall in budgeted funds had been met from general reserves and other earmarked monies.

The Chairman of the Planning & Services Committee presented her report, as detailed in the appendix. Of note were repairs being undertaken to the Millennium Clock, which had been out of order for a time, and the provision of a new bus shelter in New Place Road. In addition, she highlighted ongoing discussions around the issues of HGV and other heavy traffic impacts on the A29 and Swan Corner.

The Chairman of the Recreation & Open Spaces Committee presented her report, as detailed in the appendix. Points highlighted included the planting of new trees to replace some lost to disease or damage, a planned tree planted under the Queen's Green Canopy scheme, the maintenance of play area facilities and appreciation to volunteers who help looking after various green spaces.

The Chairman of the Council invited questions from residents on the reports. Below are questions put by members of the public and responses given:

Why hasn't Cousins Way recreation field been mowed lately? The Clerk advised that there had been delays whilst issues with the mowing equipment were dealt with.

For the Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee: *Are the developer contributions funds (\$106 / Community Infrastructure Levy monies held by District Council on behalf of parishes) known?* The committee chairman advised that these were in the region of £380,000, which the Parish Council hoped would be available for the sports pavilion project. This did not include WSCC Highways funds held.

For the Chairman of the Planning & Services Committee: *How much had been spent on repairing the clock?* The Committee Chairman advised that from recollection it was in the region of £2,000.

What is the proportion split of the Sports Pavilion Project between rebuild and refurbishment costs? What will happen to the Sports & Social Club whilst that is being done? How long will this take?

The Finance & Policy Committee Chairman responded that the refurbishment element is the changing rooms, and the replacement element is the social club area. The Council did not have clearly defined answers to the questions as the project is moving one step at a time. A Member of the council is very keen to assist with fundraising and thinks they have good contacts for potential funding sources.

Had lottery funding had been looked at? Response was given that this had been looked at initially and would be visited again. The Council may have to also borrow funds. The Chairman of Council added that the process is: Get planning application approved, then review the costings so that the Council knows what it is dealing with in terms of funding needed.

Can you not rethink the whole thing? Changing rooms can be done quite cheaply. £1m is a lot of spend on this. Response given was that this (entire rebuild) was not necessarily the view of the social club, which serves as a vehicle to support the various clubs. The original design had been for a cost of c£2m but had been rethought due to funding issues.

Was that £2m for a completely new building? Isn't that a better deal than trying to retrofit an existing building that is not so sustainable?

Response given was that it was for an entirely new building, however it is not necessarily the case that the current project was not sustainable, as the new part will be modern equipment.

Most of the allotments are well used but there are a small number that are not being tended. The Clerk advised that where untended or non-cultivated plots are identified, liaison is undertaken firstly to establish if there is a genuine reason before the step of terminating an Agreement. Unfortunately, this can sometimes take some time to establish.

Some of the conifer trees are getting too tall and need topping. Response was given that it is not general policy to reduce trees unless for health and safety reasons, and if specific reports are passed to the parish office these would be considered.

We have had an increase in vandalism and antisocial behaviour of late. Where are we in terms of identifying the youths responsible? Are you stepping up patrols?

The Neighbourhood Warden attending was asked to give a perspective on this. He advised that this is very much in the hands of the police. Most local issues were down to a small minority. When questioned, he advised that he couldn't comment on individuals or specifics, and that liaison was undertaken where possible and appropriate.

The Chairman commented that the recent four month period without Neighbourhood Wardens had not helped. The Neighbourhood Warden added that the flow of information between wardens and police was in place. He urged residents to report things to the police, which helps the police in building up a picture of where to direct policing, and to also let him know. All were advised how to contact the Neighbourhood Wardens and that the contact details for them were unchanged from previous post holders.

4. TO CONSIDER RESOLUTIONS OF WHICH WRITTEN NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

None had been received.

5. INTRODUCING THE NEW PULBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

Ross Phillips was formally introduced again, having interacted in the previous item. Louisa Hull was very new in post and currently involved in Horsham DC induction training and would be joining Ross on regular shifts and patrols very shortly.

6. COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN PULBOROUGH – WHAT'S ON OFFER FOR RESIDENTS

Attendees had had an opportunity to see various community organisation stands in the hall and there would be time to meet representatives after the meeting. He would give a quick resume and introduction of those groups at the end of the formal meeting (Appendix 2)

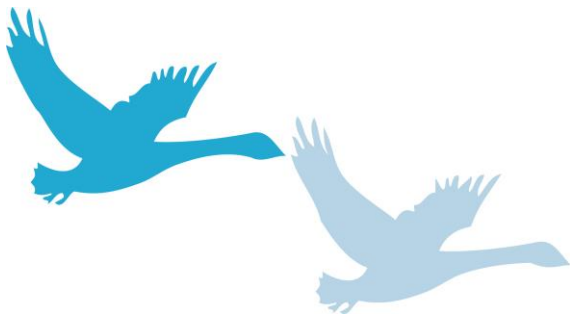
7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, INCLUDING PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no other questions or business. The Chairman thanked all volunteers representing community groups for attending, and Cllr Hunt for co-ordinating their exhibition. All residents were invited to join Councillors and community groups for informal chats over Fairtrade light refreshments.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm

..... **Chairman**

..... **Date**



PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2021 to March 2022

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This has been a more normal year than last year. Although we started the year in lock down, we were able to resume face-to-face meetings on a distanced basis in the summer of 2021. In addition, our Clerk and Deputy Clerk recommenced partial working in the office. As I write this report it seems likely that, in the coming year, we should be able to operate normally in the same way we operated before the pandemic.

Both our Neighbourhood Plan and sports pavilion rebuild project have been held up frustratingly by the issue of water neutrality. Natural England advised Horsham District Council in September that it had concerns about the impact of new development on water abstraction and the effect that this is having on protected habitats. The consequence is that new development must keep the level of water abstraction to the same or lower level as existing rates. This has impacted on our Neighbourhood Plan and the Horsham District Local Plan while consideration is given as to how to integrate this requirement into the plan. The timing was particularly unfortunate because our plan has passed through the public examiner and a referendum date had been set for November. This will be rescheduled in the coming year when full consideration on water neutrality has been built into the plan.

The sports pavilion project therefore needed to consider water neutrality in the same way that any other planning application which is increasing the footprint of a building also needs to consider water neutrality. This was also frustrating because we had applied for planning permission which will be re-activated as soon as we have the water neutrality calculations worked through in an acceptable way for the application.

Resurfacing the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on the recreation ground is also being considered. It will involve new fencing and floodlights in addition to a complete resurface providing we are successful in raising the funds. If we fail to raise the appropriate funds, we will have to reconsider the position with the possibility that short term repairs will be made.

Both our Neighbourhood Wardens resigned in November because independently they had good opportunities for advancement. I would like to welcome their successors who started with us in March and May 2022.

I would like to thank all councillors for their commitment in the past year and extend special thanks to our Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their hard work in ensuring the smooth running of our parish.

Ian Hare

Chairman

PLANNING & SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

Planning applications have been affected by the Position Statement from Natural England. Horsham District Council has to consider which planning applications require a water neutrality statement before sending them to us, the Parish Council, to comment on as a consultee. Therefore, we have received a reduced number of planning applications. Some of the approved planning applications will also require a water neutrality statement.

After listening to residents, we have recently arranged for a new bus shelter to be installed in New Place Road. The millennium clock on Lower Street is also going to be repaired very shortly.

We are continuing our work with WSCC Highways to try and alleviate the issues of non-local HGVs using the A29 and A283, which is having a major impact on the safety of Swan Corner, Church Hill as well as Lower Street and Station Road. We understand that local businesses need HGVs but we are concerned about the large number which use the A283 and A29 as a way of avoiding using the A27. We joined forces with other similarly affected parish councils with a common aim of trying to convince Highways that something must be done. A meeting with Coldwaltham parish councillors and our local MP Andrew Griffith was held to discuss this point.

Cllr E Kipp (Chairman - Planning & Services Committee)

RECREATION & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE REPORT

The main Recreation Ground at Rectory Close has been planted with some new trees to replace ones that have been felled because of decaying branches etc. The recreation ground will be home to the Picnic on the Green event on Friday 3rd June for the Jubilee Celebration, being arranged by Pulborough Community Partnership and the Sports & Social Club, when families can bring picnics or buy food/drinks from the Social Club BBQ between 12noon-6pm (sorry, no private BBQs).

The children's play area has had a major overhaul, at a great cost, to ensure safety and performance, and it is nice to see the children enjoying themselves.

The allotments are well used and there is currently a small waiting list for available plots.

The memorial garden is looking lovely and being maintained by willing helpers, many thanks to them.

The primary school has been allocated a corner in Pocket Park to be able to carry out their Forest School activities. Funding from the 'Tesco Bags of Help' scheme has enabled the Parish Council to purchase bird feeders, insect hotels, an interactive notice board, benches and gardening equipment for the children.

The Parish Council is still working within the five year management plan at Rivermead to encourage the wildlife there.

Nutbourne Common lost one tree during the last storm, but the Parish Council is looking to replace it with a specimen tree being donated from Horsham District Council as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Cousins Way Recreation Ground is a popular area for dog walking. As a polite reminder to all, would you please clear up after your dog.

We hope all residents will continue to enjoy the open spaces.

Cllr E Henly (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 to date 31 March was £280,028 compared to £273,588 for 2020-2021. Part of this income is from a cleansing grant (£6,462). Your Council has seen delays to its key project, the Sports Pavilion, due to ongoing COVID effects now complicated by the Water Neutrality issues affecting the District. This has added delay to the planning process with more delay to the Sports Pavilion project as mitigation to the planning constraints is unclear.

The Council received CIL monies both from HDC and also SDNPA to be held for projects within the village (£2,667). The Finances of the Council were adversely affected both due to lower income and unexpected repair costs to infrastructure. The loss of income seen in the finance year 2021-2022 was less than that seen in 2020-2021.

Higher expenditure was incurred in part this year due to the success of our playgrounds. The popularity of playgrounds during the COVID period led to heavy use of them. This led to an increase in wear and tear and hence increased repairs and replacement items. The budget of £3,000 was overspent with a cost, so far, in the region of £30,458. As a result, £28,807 was moved from reserves and contingencies much depleting these. The largest part of our costs remains staff salaries. The total costs of the wardens will be under budget this year as both our wardens moved on and there is a gap in bringing on board two new wardens.

The precept for the period 2022-2023 was set at £257,362 a 2.5% increase on a band D property. The band D property rate was set at £99.23 an increase of £0.05 a week.

The project work associated with the refurbishment of the Sports and Social Club Pavilion continues slowly. Preplanning advice sought from HDC was fed back to the architects. The processes to secure a planning permission have moved on with work carried out to enable the permission to go through. That said we have been hit by another delay to the process. We cannot secure a planning permission until the impact of water neutrality and all that that entails has been understood. This has cost us so far another near six month delay by early April.

The council view continues to be that with a full planning application, securing additional funding might be easier. The main sourcing of funds so far for the project are Parish Council earmarked reserves, S106 funds, possibly other third party funding as well grants and the shortfall remains around £500,000+. The cost will be reassessed once permission is secured as the ongoing effects of COVID, Brexit and the Ukraine war remain un-quantified.

Another project that will need working on this coming year is the replacement or refurbishment of the existing MUGA

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

(Awaiting Audit)

Yr ended 31 st March 2021		Current Yr ended 31 st March 2022
	Income Summary	
234,655	Precept	243,663
234,655	Sub Total	243,663
	Operating Income	
23,002	Administration	2,749
0	Capital Grants	0
488	Loans and Finance	161
722	MSF	1,285
5,990	Discretionary	6,462
400	Highways	10,220
1825	Allotments	1,618
6,476	Other Recreation	13,871
273,558	Total Income	280,028
	Running Costs	
21,099	Administration	23,150
0	Advertising & Publicity	0
372	MSF	43
167,354	Staff Costs	153,610
5,033	Discretionary	9,202
5,494	Highways	16,207
5,050	Street Lighting	5,121
1,236	Allotments	881
622	Bowling Club	689
12,025	Grounds Maintenance	9,128
7,858	Pavilion	5,754
20,005	Other Recreation	49,629
246,148	Total Expenditure	273,412
	General Fund Analysis	
69,299	Opening Balance	83,146
273,558	Plus : Income for Year	280,028
342,858		363,174
246,148	Less : Expenditure	273,412
96,709		89,762
13,563	Transfers to/from Reserves	(2,899)
83,146	Closing Balance	92,662

**COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS ATTENDING
AND DISPLAYING AT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

An introduction and resume of each organisations' activities was given by the Chairman:-

Pulborough Community Partnership

Pulborough and District Community Care Association

St Mary's Church, Pulborough

The Mary Howe Trust

Scouts: 1st Pulborough and West Chiltington Scout Group and Beaver Scouts

Pulborough United Reformed Church, including Fairtrade scheme

Sussex Wildlife Trust / Wild Pulborough group and SWT Storrington & Arun Valley regional group

South Downs Light Railway

The Pulborough Society

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