

PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Village Meeting was held Online using MS Teams, on Thursday 13th May 2021 at 7.00pm.

Present:-

Parish: Cllrs I Hare (Chairman), P Clarke, R Court, L Ellis-Brown, J Esdaile, S Harvey, E Henly, E Hunt, B Kay, A Lawson and F Riddle.

District: Cllr P Clarke is also a District Councillor

Public: 8 members of the public

In Attendance: Heather Knight (Parish Clerk)
Carrie Cort, Sussex Green Living (part of meeting).
Richard Black, Landowner Advisor, Wilder Horsham District

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION BY CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman of Council, and of the meeting, Cllr Hare, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He said that this was the first, and hopefully only, time of having to host the meeting virtually due to the Covid-19 current social restrictions.

2. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 9TH MAY 2019**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2019 were available on the Parish Council website and had been sent electronically to those requesting a copy. Following proposal and seconding, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes as a true record and that the Chairman of the Council would sign them at a future point.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL, INCLUDING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021**

The Chairman referred all those present to the Annual Report which was available on the Parish Council website 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 2021 (unaudited).

The Chairman noted that it had been a challenging year for everyone, both individuals and organisations. Like other councils, the Parish Council had had to await new legislation a year ago to enable decisions to be taken at virtual meetings and to set up the technology. This legislation had ended, and all future council/committee meetings now had to revert to being 'face to face'.

The Neighbourhood Plan had progressed during the year but had needed to go through a second Reg.16 public consultation process as a result of points raised by Historic England. This had entailed additional work and time but would hopefully assist smooth transition to the independent examination stage in due course. It was anticipated that Referendum stage would be reached late this year/early 2022.

The Sports Pavilion Development Project had made some progress. The proposals now comprised partial new build/partial refurbishment due to budgetary constraints. The Council had sought pre-planning application advice from the District Council with a view to submitting a full planning application very shortly.

In the absence of the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Planning & Services Committee, who had sent their apologies due to prior commitments, Cllr. Hare gave a verbal outline of the committee report. An update of note was that the retrospective planning application at Brookfields had been turned down by the District Council, and it was anticipated that the developer would now have to address provision of a footpath suitable for all users as per the original conditions.

In concluding, the Chairman reiterated thanks to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Neighbourhood Wardens and Councillors for rising to the challenges of the past year.

The Chairman of the Recreation & Open Spaces Committee, Cllr Henly, presented her report, in particular thanking all volunteers for their invaluable help. She also added thanks to the Neighbourhood Wardens and Council staff for their work and support to the village.

The Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee, Cllr Clarke, presented his report. The Council had received the first of the new CIL monies (Community Infrastructure Levy) from development. Income from clubs and court hire were down due to the pandemic but the Council was fortunate in that most losses were covered by Government financial grants, distributed via the District Council. Cllr Clarke thanked officers for their input with the financial figures and committee members for their work and support at meetings.

The Chairman of Council said that there is a separate item for questions to council but asked if anyone had any questions at this point.

A member of the public asked whether the CIL funds referred to had been earmarked specifically for the sports pavilion project. It was confirmed that it had not, as the amount received so far was only in the region of £3k and was likely to be used towards urgent playground repair works recently identified.

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

None had been received.

5. SUSSEX GREEN LIVING – PRESENTATION BY CARRIE CORT (FOUNDER)

The Chairman of Council brought matters to the items around the theme of greener living/environmental issues and what the parish/residents could do. He welcomed the first speaker, Carrie Cort, founder of Sussex Green Living.

Carrie Cort gave a verbal and slide presentation outlining her background, the establishment of Sussex Green Living in 2012 and new initiatives for the organisation going forwards. The main objective of SGL is the education of public and she wanted to show everyone that small things by individuals can make a difference. The new Inspiration Eco Station was about to be launched and would be visiting schools, and the new Sussex Green Hub event would be taking place on the last Saturday of each month at Horsham United Reformed Church. The past year had seen a move to online events and these would continue on the 3rd Wednesday of each month via Zoom. SGL would welcome working more closely with the Parish Council and Pulborough residents. It was hoped to have a more central drop off location for the hard to recycle/single use plastics, in addition to the Dyke Farm site. SGL now had a new volunteer who had taken on Community Engagement.

Following the presentation, some questions/points were made and responded to:

- It was confirmed that SGL is a ready source of advice for new Repair Cafes starting up, if there is volunteer interest locally (in addition to the existing SGL Horsham Repair Cafe). There was potential for a link with proposals for a Pulborough Men's Shed, which the Neighbourhood Wardens were involved in trying to set up.
- It was agreed that the SGL Community Engagement contact details would be forwarded to the Clerk to put in touch with anyone interested in looking after a recycle point.
- The Lower St Car Park would be a great central village location for a recycling bin point – but first volunteer/s to manage it needed to be found. Advice/training would be provided by SGL.
- One of the biggest issues is the amount of pre-packaging plastic being used: What did SGL think about how to solve this/put pressure on supermarkets etc? Carrie said that people could give plastic packaging back to supermarkets like

Tesco/Sainsbury to raise awareness; some supermarkets are now signing up to Teracycle recycling; Shoppers can choose to use 'green' refill shops that were springing up in many shopping areas.

- What exactly is single use plastic as many people don't really know and councils don't use very clear descriptions or proper marking for ordinary people? Any hard plastic used for food/cleaning materials, of any colour, bigger than a coffee jar lid can go in the ordinary recycling collection bin: Hard to re-use plastics include things like flexible plastics such as food bags/wrap, crisp/biscuit wrappers – these single use plastics can be put in the Teracycle drop off bins such as Dyke Farm.

The Chairman of Council and Members thanked Carrie for her very inspiring presentation.

6. WILDER HORSHAM DISTRICT – PRESENTATION BY RICHARD BLACK

The Chairman of Council welcomed Richard Black, Landowner Advisor.

Richard Black gave a verbal and slide presentation. Wilder Horsham District is a new partnership, the first of its kind, between Sussex Wildlife Trust and Horsham District Council. The project is about seven months old. As well as the climate crisis there is a biodiversity crisis and the two are intimately linked. This project is a way of trying to address this. The object is to help wildlife thrive across the district and he and Community Support Officer Chloe Harrison hope to create networks of land and wildlife corridors to enable nature recovery and link areas up. There is a new website page for Wilder Horsham District, and Twitter and social media accounts are also active.

Sussex has lost 97% of its meadows since the war. Pulborough is one of the most biodiverse areas in Sussex, with its proximity to Pulborough Brooks and Amberley Wild Brooks. The project aims to work with landowners to promote natural succession. Some of the ways of encouraging nature recovery include things like natural grazing of pigs, malt grazing cattle and regenerative agriculture. Just letting the grass grow or setting aside 2m of your garden for wildflowers can make a difference. WSCC is piloting projects where communities can apply to only have verges cut once a year, so that they produce natural habitat and support insects.

The project has set up a Nature Recovery Award, with up to £5,000 funding available to award quarterly to landowners or community groups for projects contributing to practical schemes that make links and networks for wildlife through the landscape.

They are also looking at developing some volunteer groups to work on land management projects and have linked with Sussex Wildlife Trust volunteer, Phil Huggins, heading up an Arun Valley Regional & Storrington Volunteer Group.

The Knepp Estate in central Horsham District is a good example of nature recovery, being some 20 years ago of little note in terms of biodiversity. From ordinary Weald farmland through a wilding project it has made incredibly successful gains such as turtle doves. Richard shared a draft map of what the Horsham Nature Recovery Network could look like. He is already in talks with Elizabeth Hunt of Wilding Pulborough and is keen to work with the Parish Council on encouraging biodiversity.

The Chairman of Council thanked Richard for the very informative talk and it was agreed to take any questions after the short presentation from Elizabeth Hunt, since the two initiatives were complementary.

7. WILDING PULBROUGH PROJECT – PRESENTATION BY ELIZABETH HUNT

Resident volunteer and Parish Councillor Elizabeth Hunt gave a short verbal talk. Wilding Pulborough had been formed a few months ago having heard about the Wilder Horsham District initiative. The group now had 84 members. The Facebook group are looking for projects and applying for grants to support initiatives. She outlined three potential projects being investigated, some of which grant funding is being applied for:

1. Discussions underway with land owners to lay a long hedge along Old Rectory Lane, using advice from a professional hedge layer and volunteer support from the local youth club to clear existing vegetation. The removed wood would be offered free or burned at a bonfire site.
2. Permission being sought to establish a meadow between the Memorial Garden and the Village Hall.
3. Discussions with the Diocese about a scheme in the Glebe Fields and at graves.
4. Discussions at Parish Council committee around potential to eliminate/reduce pesticide use.
5. Identifying verges suitable to apply for the WSCC reduced mowing scheme.

A Member offered to take the timber removed from Old Rectory Lane in preference to burning, as he is creating dead-hedges on his land.

A Member asked to arrange a meeting in his personal capacity with Richard Black to seek advice on land management matters at his property, where he and his partner are introducing rewilding, dead-hedging and ponds, and also on some conservation issues of concern. Richard Black agreed to meet him and the Clerk would put them in touch.

Some discussion took place around the conflict between principle/planning authority objectives for nature recovery whilst having to meet Government led housing requirements, and the potential for more sustainable new builds utilising solar panels and grey water. It was acknowledged that often very difficult decisions had to be made but that Sussex Wildlife Trust would be proactive in reporting poor decision making in relation to the environment and it was hoped that part of the Wilder Sussex District partnership would assist in informing the knowledge base of planning officers.

A member of the public expressed thanks for the excellent presentations and asked about Barbastelle bat flight paths and resting places in relation to the proposals for strategic development near to The Mens site. Richard Black advised that colleagues at Sussex Wildlife Trust had made representations to the District Council about this. It was noted that it is developers who submit proposals, not the planning authority, which then has to assess viability against planning legislation, so it is really the planning process that is the root of problems.

A member of the public thanked the Council for hosting the very interesting presentations and nature orientated theme and wished to make some comments. She said that her husband has been associated with Sussex Wildlife Trust for around 20 years, previously as CEO and recently as its President. He would be happy to be available to support or advise on some of the local schemes wherever possible. She then spoke about her own interests in the importance of health and wellbeing and its connection to nature. At the Chairman's request, she agreed to pass on her contact details to the Clerk if anyone was interested in finding out more about some related initiatives she was personally involved with.

The Clerk reported that a member of the public had commented in the chat tool that it was a pity that Horsham District Council didn't provide weekly recycling collections.

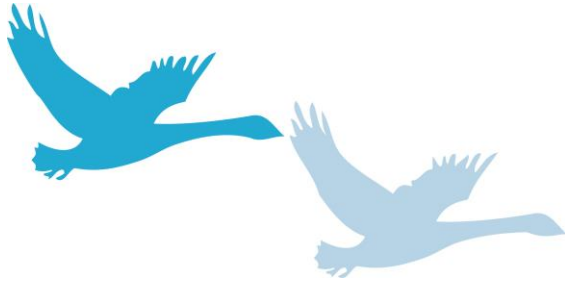
8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, INCLUDING PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no other questions or business. The Chairman thanked all the speakers for their contributions. He said it was very encouraging to hear about so many initiatives both local and district wide and it was useful to have points of reference from this evening too.

The meeting closed at 8.42pm

..... Chairman

..... Date



PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT
April 2020 to March 2021

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This has been a particularly challenging year. The national pandemic has given all organisations, including county, district and parish councils, a different set of challenges to managing ongoing business compared to normal years. Following central government guidance and legislation we have adapted to holding virtual meetings, and both our Clerk and Deputy Clerk adapted to working principally from home apart from occasional essential visits to the office. As I write this report, there is an air of optimism that we will be able to return to conducting ourselves as normal during the coming year. Just as adapting to the virtual world created challenges, so too will finding a balanced way to managing ongoing council business going forwards.

Progress has continued to be made on our Neighbourhood Plan. We went through local Parish consultation during the year, progressed to District Council consultation and appointed a public examiner. However, following potential concerns raised by Historic England about possible archaeological remains, additional preparation work has been necessitated for our Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and support offices from Horsham District Council before we go to public examination. This will require another round of District Council consultation prior to the public examination. It is still hoped that we can go out to referendum before the end of this year, but the slippage might result in the referendum being conducted in early 2022.

Progress on the sports pavilion rebuild project has been slower than we would have liked. Necessary steps including surveys have been undertaken to take the project to pre-application planning approval. When we achieve this pre-application approval, the business plan will be finalised, and this will allow us to look at funding options.

All recreation facilities have been maintained during the year even though sports teams have not been able to fully utilise them due to the pandemic. Similarly, playground and outdoor gym equipment have also been maintained and we look forward to these facilities being actively used again in the coming months.

There continues to be concern about the possible large-scale development of housing at Adversane and District Councillors have a difficult decision to make on this in the next few months. The Parish Council's Planning and Services committee has handled a lower volume of applications in the last year due to the pandemic, but some of the applications that have been handled have involved much work due to potential significant impacts on individual parts of our community and parish.

I started the report by saying this has been a challenging year. It would not have been possible to manage either our ongoing business or any of the challenges presented without the hard work and dedication of our Clerk and Deputy Clerk and the rest of the parish team. Our Neighbourhood Wardens have also needed to handle varied and different challenges against the backdrop of the pandemic. I would like to thank all those involved in facilitating the smooth running of the parish during the last year and thank councillors for overcoming any technology challenges that have been presented to them to hold virtual meetings successfully.

Ian Hare
Chairman

PLANNING & SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

There has been a significant drop in planning applications this year which is hardly surprising due to the impact of Covid-19 on our normal way of life. Despite this, we have been able to hold virtual meetings to discuss and make decisions, as consultees, on various planning applications.

There has been a new planning application for the derelict building, Ransoms Station Road this year. Purple Pepper Partnership gave a presentation to us about the planning application. The plan is part demolition, refurbishment and extension of the building.

However, to date, there are still issues regarding vehicle access to the property and no decision has been made on this planning application.

Staying in the area of Station Road, residents might have observed the damaged bus shelter near the station. This will be replaced at a later date.

Finally, I must mention Brookfield Homes Development Stane Street, Codmore Hill. We have registered our disappointment of the original proposal and agreement of a sloping footpath has not been carried out. Instead, a retrospective planning application has been put forward for a footpath with many steps which is unsuitable for mobility scooter users, pushchairs, very young children and less able residents. We can only hope Brookfield Homes will have to redesign this footpath.

Cllr E Kipp (Chairman - Planning & Services Committee)

RECREATION & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE REPORT

Despite the difficult start to the year with the pandemic, the Council has continued progressing various projects with land management and maintenance of the sports pavilion, public/recreation grounds and playgrounds.

Land at Rivermead is being managed by following a 5 year management plan, which is progressing. Pocket Park has had an area cleared for wildflower planting and a £1,00 grant has been awarded by Tesco Bags of Help for Pocket Park. This is less than the original wish-list but will nonetheless help with improvements, and the Council will liaise with St Mary's School regarding suitable purchases, as they will be using the area for their Forest School activities.

The Council's Allotment site continued to be very busy with many plot holders growing fruit and vegetables. The plots have provided a rewarding, peaceful and healthy activity that people could continue to use during restrictions.

Nutbourne Common is being managed to ensure it retains its natural character whilst being accessible to walkers.

The Council is very appreciative of volunteers who give up their time to help maintain areas like the Memorial Garden and to groups of volunteer litter pickers who look after the whole village.

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 £273,588 compared to £243,751 for 2019-2020. Part of this income is from government grants due to COVID plus a cleansing grant. Your Council spent no S106 funds on projects this past year due to COVID impacts on all projects. The Council also received the first of the new CIL monies that now come direct to the council for expenditure on village projects or investments by village bodies. Revenue from allotments and the Multi Sports Facility were below budget in part due to some allotments not being occupied and less tennis being played on the MSF due to COVID restrictions. Your Council also suffered a sharp drop in income due to the impact of COVID restrictions on the Sports and Social club and sports groups leading to a reduction in rents and leases. Some losses on income and the increased expenditure due to the COVID pandemic were covered by grants from central government via HDC of more than £10,000 over the financial year.

For the year 2020-2021 the total cost of the wardens now depends on the PPC precept alone invoiced from HDC that administers the warden's scheme on its behalf. The cost for the year was £63,042. The precept in 2020-2021 was £234,655 and that for the period 2021-2022 it was set £243,663. The band D property rate is set at £96.81 compared to £92.95 in 2020-2021, about 7p a week.

The project work associated with the refurbishment of the Sports and Social Club Pavilion continued slowly despite COVID. Preplanning advice was sought from HDC and fed back to the architects and now the relevant work is ongoing in order to submit a full planning application to HDC for the new scheme. This involves a number of reports and assessments to underpin the application with spending at the moment for the period to 31st March 2021 at around £3,800. The projected capital and refurbishment budget remains about £900-950,000. The Finance & Policy Committee will seek funding as will some of the sports clubs once COVID restrictions are lifted. The council view is that with a full planning application securing funding might be easier especially with help from possible users such as the Youth club and possible other commercial use of the facility. The main sourcing of funds so far for the project are Parish Council earmarked reserves, S106 funds, possibly other third party funding as well as grants and the shortfall remains around £400,000+.

Cllr P Clarke (Chairman - Finance & Policy Committee)

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
(Awaiting Audit)
(figures updated from those published with agenda)

Yr ended 31 st March 2020		Current Yr ended 31 st March 2021
	Income Summary	
214,079	Precept	234,655
214,079	Sub Total	203,655
	Operating Income	
733	Administration	23,002
0	Capital Grants	0
1,880	Loans and Finance	488
1,266	MSF	722
5,844	Discretionary	5,990
360	Highways	400
1,337	Allotments	1825
18,213	Other Recreation	6,476
243,751	Total Income	273,558
	Running Costs	
21,672	Administration	21,009
599	Advertising & Publicity	0
250	MSF	372
145,170	Staff Costs	167,354
11,289	Discretionary	5,033
5,967	Highways	5,494
4,824	Street Lighting	5,050
948	Allotments	1,236
840	Bowling Club	622
10,257	Grounds Maintenance	12,025
6,243	Pavilion	7,858
29,482	Other Recreation	20,005
237,540	Total Expenditure	246,148
	General Fund Analysis	
62,396	Opening Balance	69,299
243,751	Plus : Income for Year	273,558
306,147		342,858
237,540	Less : Expenditure	246,148
68,607		96,709
(692)	Transfers to/from Reserves	13,563
69,299	Closing Balance	83,146

COUNCIL MEMBERS (as at 31st March 2021)

Chairman Mr Ian Hare	Middlemare, West Mare Lane, RH20 2EA Email: ihare@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel: 07850 364601	Ex Officio All Committees
Vice Chairman Mr Paul Clarke	9 Riverside, Pulborough, RH20 1FJ Email: pclarke@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel : 01798 875645	Finance & Policy Committee (C) Recreation & Open Spaces Committee
Councillors		
Mrs Ruth Court	7 Rectory Close, Pulborough, RH20 2AJ Email : rcourt@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel : 01798 874421	Recreation & Open Spaces Committee (VC) Finance & Policy Committee
Mr Len Ellis Brown	c/o Pulborough PC, Swan View, Lower Street, RH20 2BF Email: lellisbrown@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel: 07812 011412	Planning & Services Committee Finance & Policy Committee
Mrs Jeannie Esdaile	c/o Pulborough PC, Swan View, Lower Street, RH20 2BF Email : jesdaile@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel : 01798 874209	Planning & Services Committee
Mr Sean Harvey	1 Station Villas, Station Approach, RH20 1SG Email: sharvey@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel: 01798 669553	Recreation & Open Spaces Committee
Mrs Edna Henly	70 Stane Street Close, Pulborough, RH20 1FR Email: ehenly@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel : 01798 872599	Planning & Services Committee Recreation & Open Spaces (C) Finance & Policy Committee
Mrs Elizabeth Hunt	c/o Pulborough PC, Swan View, Lower Street, RH20 2BF Email: ehunt@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel: 01798 874147	Planning & Services Committee Recreation & Open Spaces Committee
Mrs Barbara Kay	c/o Pulborough PC, Swan View, Lower Street RH20 2BF Email : bkay@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel : 01798 875545	Planning & Services Committee
Mrs Elaine Kipp	1 Laurel Mount, Pulborough, RH20 2PE Email: ekipp@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel : 01798 875451	Finance & Policy (VC) Planning & Services Committee (C)
Mrs Andrea Lawson	c/o Pulborough PC, Swan View, Lower Street RH20 2BF Tel : 01798 813746	Planning & Services Committee Recreation & Open Spaces Committee
Mr Frank Riddle	The Old Manor, The Street, Nutbourne, RH20 2HE Email: friddle@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel: 01798 813484	Planning & Services Committee
Mrs Lissette Trembling	c/o Pulborough PC, Swan View, Lower Street RH20 2BF Email: ltrembling@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel: 07929 420815	Planning & Services Committee (VC)
Vacancy		
Vacancy		

OFFICERS

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL
DEPUTY CLERK

Mrs Heather Knight
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
(Currently closed to public until further notice)