



ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021



INTRODUCTION

As Chair of Funtington Parish Council, I am delighted to deliver the Parish Council Annual Report for 2021 - 2022. It has been another challenging year for the Council, as I am sure it has been for all of you. The year began with our meetings still being held via Zoom but, in June, face to face meetings recommenced. Of course, the ongoing Covid restrictions impacted on our work for the Parish but, even given those restrictions, we managed to achieve a number of things, as set out in this report.

The return to face to face meetings allowed us to introduce a change of venue and they are now held alternately in West Stoke Village Hall and St Mary's Church Room, Funtington. We hope this will help Parishioners who have previously been unable to attend our meetings to come and join us. Please see the website and the noticeboards for monthly venues.

Whilst two councillors left the council during the year, we were lucky enough to welcome two new Councillors: one from East Ashling and one from Funtington. We also welcomed our new West Sussex County Councillor who regularly attends our meetings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Clerk and the Councillors, including those that have now left, for all their support and hard work during the year.



COMMUNICATION

As we all know, effective communication is one of the most important aspects of our work but, potentially, one of the most difficult to achieve. However, the Communications Committee has held its first meetings this year, which led to updates to our website and production of our first Newsletter. It is proposed to continue producing a Newsletter as well as putting information on the website, the notice-boards and in the Parish and Village Magazines. By using a variety of communication approaches we hope to reach and inform as many of you as possible. If you would like to join the Communications Committee or would just like to send in ideas for improving communication, please contact clerk@funtingtonpc.org.



COUNTRYSIDE

A number of initiatives were undertaken during the year in order to keep our Parish looking its best. These included:

- a number of litter picking events - more volunteers required - it shouldn't always be down to the same few people;
- appointment of alternative contractor to look after the playground in West Ashling, to ensure best value for money;
- removal of the two huge Leylandii trees from the West Ashling playground to open

up the grassed area and allow more room for youngsters to run around;

- ongoing maintenance of the Dell; and
- repair to the telephone kiosk in West Stoke.

Three councillors continue to participate in, and report back to the Council on, the Broadley Copse Farm Liaison Group. It has been noticed and recorded, by those living nearest to the Farm, that there has been a considerable decrease in the odours emanating from the Farm: the Group will continue to monitor the situation. It should also be noted that the biodigester, which suffered from some initial problems, is now working at 90%+ efficiency.



PLANNING

To help ensure our Parish remains a beautiful place to live, the Parish Council (through the monthly meetings of the Planning Committee) continues to keep an extremely careful eye on all relevant planning applications - whether they be within the boundary of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) or within the remit of Chichester District Council (CDC).

The Planning Committee has had another fairly quiet year, presumably due to the effect of the pandemic: the number of applications considered was 48, compared to 67 last year and 98 in 2019-20. The 48 applications did not include those for tree works, which numbered 22 and for which no comments or objections were felt necessary.

Of the 48 applications reviewed by the Planning Committee in 2020-21 written objections were lodged against five, one of which was from the Gypsy and Traveller community - to increase the number of pitches on an existing site. At the time of going to print, we are awaiting dates for hearings concerning a number of appeals made by the Gypsy and Traveller

community. Those appeals are being heard due to such as: refusal of planning permission; enforcement and stop notices. In addition to these appeals, Planning Enforcement at CDC is dealing with further stop notices. In particular those placed on property in Southbrook Road and for which the three month grace period has expired.

It should also be noted that planning permission has been granted for a new development of 17 houses in Heather Close, West Ashling. This meets the housing allocation for the parish.

Commencement of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has finally begun after being delayed, primarily due to Covid and all its concomitant restrictions. A very well attended public meeting was held on 22 September when a Senior Planning Consultant from the SDNPA gave a comprehensive presentation on 'Neighbourhood Planning: an Introduction'. Since then a Steering Group has been formed, External Consultants to help ensure our Plan is accepted have been appointed and a grant approved to provide some measure of financial support. Future meetings, general NP information and opportunities for you to get involved will be publicised on the parish noticeboards, the website and in both the Parish and Village Magazines.



MONEY MATTERS

It is essential that the Parish Council keeps a careful eye on its income and expenditure as it is dealing with public monies. Therefore, the Council's financial situation is reported at each monthly meeting and we are subject to both an annual internal and external audit. Our end of year figures for 2021 - 2022 show a final balance of £77,586.28 which includes the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL - a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in our area). At year end our CIL monies amounted to £39,755.93 of which £23,794.08 has been ring-fenced to support

refurbishment of the West Ashling and Funtington District Village Hall. This then leaves a balance of £15,941.85 as yet unallocated CIL monies, which will be used to support other community projects.

Further financial matters worthy of mention are:

- £1,337.20 - increase in the annual precept: approximately £1.00 per household.
- £15,000.00 - ring-fenced for possible legal expenditure
- £2,088.74 - VAT refund
- £3,870.00 - grant towards costs of Neighbourhood Plan until April 22 when further grant monies should be available
- £2,500.00 - donations including those to: Citizens Advice; Good Neighbours; Samaritans; Victim Support and the Church, all of which were increased to help with the restrictions caused by the pandemic.
- £5,895 - removal of trees from West Ashling Playground: largest expenditure 2021-22
- £1,857.80 - SID posts and signage



HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

The Council continues to promote safe driving speeds via the permanently positioned Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) - in Funtington and East Ashling - and the two mobile Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs), which are rotated through the four Parish villages. Not only do the SIDs flash up the travelling speeds of vehicles, they also enable the data - volume, speeds etc - to be downloaded and reported to the Parish Council. We are also closely following the outcome of the West Sussex County Council motion to get the principle of vehicular speed of 20 miles an hour for country villages, with the hope that this will further help to make our roads safer.

Of course the Parish, in common with our neighbouring parishes, continues to suffer from potholes, damage to the sides and verges, litter and fly-tipping. These do not come within the remit of the Parish Council and all we can do is to implore all Parishioners to report any such issues via the 'Love Clean Streets' app (previously 'Love West Sussex') which is free to download to your mobile phone. Fly tipping can also be reported to Chichester District Council



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022-23

Whilst much has actually been achieved during the year, the Council also had to plan for the year to come and consider what other initiatives would improve the Parish. The initiatives for 2022-23 being discussed are:

- the introduction of 'White Village Welcome Gates', in a further effort to reduce vehicular speed through our villages;
- an additional Community Notice-board on Downs Street, West Ashling;
- further Defibrillator training, for which we have already received considerable interest;
- improvements to the Parish finger posts;
- support for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee;
- proposed participation in newly formed Residents Against Vehicles Excessive Noise' (RAVEN) The group's main purpose is to: *'To eliminate the excessive noise from vehicles, particularly motorbikes, affecting Chichester City and other parishes in the Chichester District south of the Downs';* and
- commencement of the plan to update the equipment in West Ashling playground. Two quotes have already been received; we await the third.