

Wisborough Green Parish Council

Annual Report

The Parish Council Year from May 2021 to April 2022

Chairman's Report

Wisborough Green Parish Council decided to deliver its Annual Report in a different way and to every household. This is it, we hope that you read, understand and like it.

It is easy to both under-estimate and over-estimate what a Parish Council does; it is simple to see it as a small unit in an army: a platoon say, with the PC and the individual councillors being the Platoon and Section Commanders. The government is the Battalion Command and the County and District Councils, the Company Command; the Parish Council are responsible for delivering priorities from above 'on the ground' and operating with its own objectives, within its own sphere of influence.

In this report we have set out what the Wisborough Green platoon have been up to over the last year, what it has cost and where the funds have come from.

The WG Platoon delivers regular Sitreps (situation reports) in its three newsletters delivered in Ad Vinc and publishes the minutes of every meeting on the website; it is an admirable level of transparency and one that we hope you appreciate.

To really do the metaphor to death, there are some people who need to be 'Mentioned in Despatches' (this one): Gareth Evans, our Company Command Liaison Officer, was a novice when he started and has grown to be a thoroughly effective District Councillor; Janet Duncton (Long Service Medal) who continues to represent HQ Company (WSCC) in her own inimitable way; Sophie Winship who has recruited for and led the Wisborough Green Community Speed Watch to be a well-respected and effective team; Keith Carter who's leadership of the Village Hall and its refurbishment is admirable and, of course, our Platoon Sergeant (Clerk) Louise Davies (Long Service Medal), without whom the village wouldn't function. There are a plethora of others, too numerous to mention, who deserve recognition for their contribution to Wisborough Green: thank you all.

As we all hear and see the appalling events in Ukraine please reflect upon how lucky we all are to live where we do, in the country we do.

Peter Drummond, Chairman

**SEE YOU ON THE GREEN FOR THE BIG JUBILEE LUNCH ON SUNDAY
5TH JUNE - LET'S MAKE THIS A COMMUNITY EVENT TO REMEMBER.**

Your Parish Council

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VACANCY - COULD YOU SEE YOUR FACE AS PART OF THIS TEAM?
PLEASE EMAIL OR TELEPHONE LOUISE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Some High and Low Moments from the Year

- Vehement objection to the Glebe Fields planning application for 25 dwellings - a 56 page response was prepared.
- Acoustic camera trial on the A272 and successful Community Speedwatch, thanks to efforts of local residents.
- Great to get our Neighbourhood Plan Review to the Regulation 14 consultation in May; subsequent work to review comments and consider potential changes.
- Frustration that the CDC Local Plan is delayed which impacts upon progress of our Neighbourhood Plan Review.
- Largest project in quite sometime, drainage and levelling of the Village Green.
- Successful application for a Tree Preservation Order on the Scots Pine in Glebe Field.
- Successful application for New Homes Bonus Funding for the Pond Restoration. The lilies were cleared, a new fence installed, but the repointing will take place this Autumn.
- Remembrance Day road closure managed by Parish Councillors and the Clerk.
- The community litter picking resumed in October.
- Young Lives Matter survey undertaken. The results will help plan future improvements in the village.
- Successful application to The Woodland Trust - 30 saplings have now been planted at Songhurst Meadow in support of the Queen's Green Canopy to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.
- Successful application to CDC to fund a Field Maple at Songhurst Meadow to commemorate the Jubilee.
- Secured the WSCC Young Offenders' Scheme to undertake village maintenance.
- Parish Council vacancy since a resignation in July.
- Successful application for a Traffic Regulation Order to create a 40mph buffer zone on the A272 west side of the village.
- Frustration that the goal-posts keep being moved for funding a Village Broadband Scheme but we haven't given up!

The Parish Council Year at a Glance

FIRST LEVEL OF DEMOCRACY PROVIDING LOCAL VOICE ON LOCAL AFFAIRS. PROTECTING THE VILLAGE FOR US AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

- In law, a council is a single corporate body & the decisions it takes are the responsibility of the council as a whole
- Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and policy documents for governance

COUNCILLORS

- 9 unpaid Councillors but currently only 8
- **Vacancy since July 2021 - advertised**
- Chair (Peter Drummond) and Vice-Chair (Andrew Jackson) were elected in May
- Members are elected every 4 years; the next election is May 2023

PARISH COUNCIL CLERK

- Only Council employee – 24 hours per week
- Undertakes Council's instructions
- Offers advice in relation to law & policy
- Provides information for effective decisions
- Responsible for financial records

MEETINGS

- Last virtual meeting on Zoom - 4th May 21
- Third Tuesday of most months at the Village Hall at 7.45 pm (not August or December)
- Extra meeting held in December 2021
- Public are welcome to attend & raise matters with the Council. Public section included on the agenda

PRECEPT

- Collected by CDC through the Council Tax
- £67,000 for Financial Year to 31 March 22
- Allows the Parish Council to undertake its functions and maintain its property

PROPERTY / ASSETS
Owns, maintains and insures

VILLAGE GREEN

- Registered owner
- Considered and granted approval for RunWisborough & the August Fete
- In partnership with WG Sports, undertook major drainage & levelling work
- Maintains – grass cutting, litter collection, dog bins
- Pond - lily clearance, willows pollarded & new fence
- Trees - 3 yearly inspection and decay survey undertaken
- Community Litter Picking

ALLOTMENTS

- Priority to WG residents
- Tenancies managed
- Inspections & maintenance

PLAYGROUND

- Weekly inspection by resident
- Annual RoSPA inspection
- Maintenance as identified

OTHER ASSETS:

- Maintenance undertaken
- Some paths, installation of posts, bench repair and cleaning
- 3 new donated benches

OTHER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PLANNING

- Full Council or Planning Committee comment on applications
- Reviewed a total of 44 applications (60 last year)
- Glebe Field (Church Fields) planning application - promoted awareness and submitted a detailed objection response
- Referred several enforcement matters to CDC

REPRESENTATION

Attended meetings with CDC, WSCC, Local Council Associations and other parishes

TRAINING

- The Clerk attended regular briefing sessions
- One councillor attended Planning Training

COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

- **Planning:** Met on 6 occasions
- **Finance:** Met once for in-depth discussion, and scrutiny of the PC's budget, objectives, and long-term financial planning.
- **Working Groups (involving other non-councillors):** Pavilion, Drainage, Green Coordination Group & Youth Survey

COMMUNICATION

- Three newsletters to all households via the Parish magazine
- Notices/news in the Parish magazine

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

- Liaised closely with Steering Group
- Received & managed grant funding
- Approved draft reviewed Plan and Regulation 14 consultation arrangements

RISK ASSESSMENTS

- Undertaken annually for PC management and property
- Identified repairs undertaken

SONGHURST MEADOW OPEN SPACE

- Liaising closely with Runnymede Homes
- Planning open space area
- Tree planting

SUPPORT TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

- Donations to outside charities which benefit village residents
- Donations to village groups

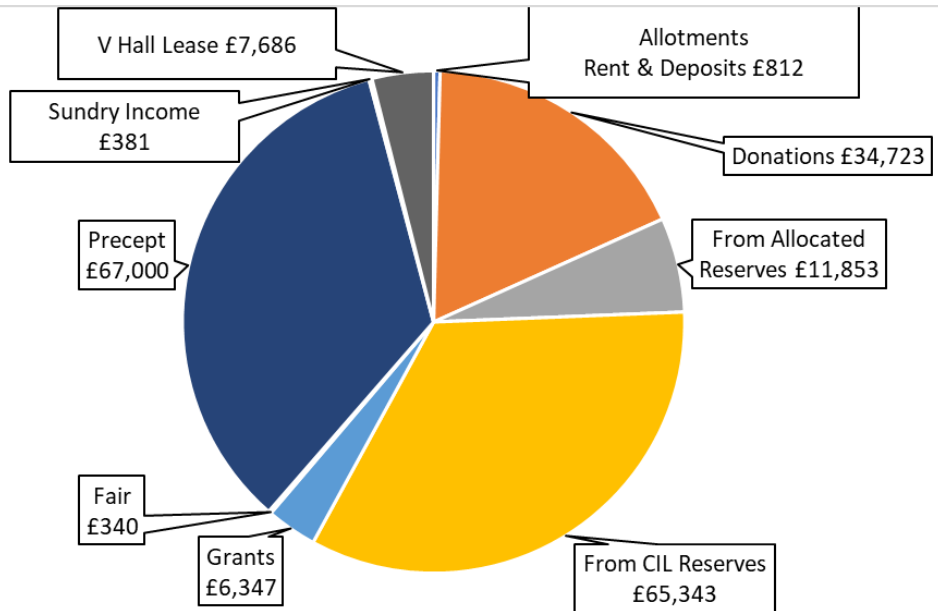
CONSULTATIONS

- Responded to Gatwick consultations
- Sent objection to CDC in relation to the Townfield planning application in Kirdford
- Sent objection to WSCC regarding the Loxwood Clay Pits application
- Organised A272 speed/noise survey
- Organised Young Lives Matter survey

PUBLIC TOILETS – working in partnership with CDC.

- PC responsible for the annual cleaning costs and small maintenance items.
- CDC responsible for utility charges, insurance & drains!
- Deep cleaned
- CDC redecorated in March

Money Matters - Income for year ending 31st March 2022



Total Income: The total, not including money transferred into the budget from Reserve Funds, was £117,288.08. The Precept was set at £67,000.

Allotments: The division of larger plots over the years has created further opportunities; 25p per square metre is currently charged per year. A £30 deposit is taken to encourage plots to be left in a reasonable condition when vacated.

Donations: The PC received a contribution of £34,723 from WG Sports towards the drainage and levelling work on the Green.

Reserve Funds: The PC has reserves to save for future projects or unexpected costs. Reserve funds were used for playground repairs, help deflect water from the Village Hall car park to the pond, repair potholes and resolve a damp issue in the Hall.

CIL Funding: The PC also transferred CIL from reserves into the budget for the Village Green Project, Village Hall Refurbishment and New Pavilion Project.

Grant Funding: The PC was in receipt of £1,615 Neighbourhood Plan funding for Regulation 14 consultancy advice. New Homes Bonus funding of £4,482 was received from CDC and allocated to the pond project. CDC also provided a £250 grant to purchase the Field Maple planted at Songhurst Meadow to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022.

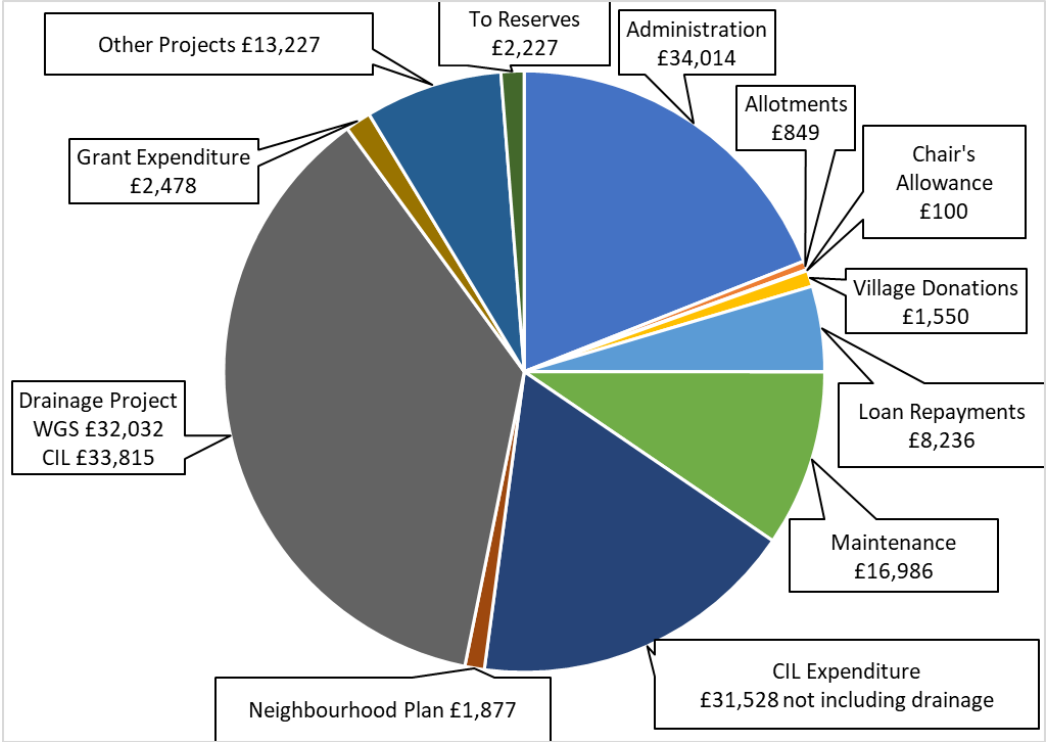
Public Toilet Donations: The PC was pleased to receive an anonymous donation of £40 from a visitor and £250 from the Fete Society.

Money Matters - Income Continued

Sundry Income: Relates to Peppercorn rents and the Fete garage rental payment.

Village Hall Lease: This payment is paid by the Village Hall every 6 months and covers the cost of the loan repayments for the Old Workhouse refurbishment.

Money Matters - Expenditure for year ending 31st March



Administration: The total annual cost, which includes the Clerk's salary and all other expenses that allows the Council to function efficiently, totalled £34,014. This was down on budget primarily due to legal work to form a Community Land Trust not being completed. The unspent balance has been transferred to the Legal Reserve.

Allotments: The PC has continued to maintain the allotment hedge and addressed some health and safety concerns on the site.

Loan Repayments: A low interest loan was taken out in 2016 to cover the cost of the Old Workhouse refurbishment. The PC makes annual repayments which are covered by the payment received from the Village Hall. The last repayment is November 2023. The PC continues to repay the playground refurbishment loan which finishes in November 2022.

Money Matters - Expenditure Continued

Village Donations: The PC continues to support village organisations and was pleased to contribute £300 to the Community Minibus Association and made a donation of £1,250 to St Peter's PCC towards the grass cutting, and clock maintenance.

Applications from outside village organisations were also considered and the PC agreed donations, funded from the Section 137 budget, to St Catherine's Hospice (£50), Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance (£100), Chichester & Arun Citizens Advice (£50), 4Sight Vision (£50), Billingshurst Emergency Assistance Team (£100) and Remembrance wreaths from the Royal British Legion (£100). The total of £450 to out of village charities is included in the total Administration figure.

Maintenance: The Parish Council is responsible for general village maintenance to preserve the village's appearance. A total of £16,986 was spent: £6,480 under budget. General maintenance includes tree surgery, litter and dog bin emptying, the installation of posts, repair of verges and provision of dog waste bags, grass cutting and general maintenance items. General maintenance was under budget primarily due to the budget of £2,680 not being spent on the Green because of the drainage project. We had also over provided in General Maintenance in case tree work was required as a result of the 3-yearly inspection, and the new noticeboard, although ordered, will be paid next year. Other small savings were made across the budget.

This figure includes the CDC annual cost of weekly emptying 16 litter bins and 2 dog waste bins (£1,896) as well as the annual cleaning cost, including consumables, for the public toilets, totalling £6,043.

Neighbourhood Plan: We received £1,615 grant funding so the PC spent £262.

Village Green Drainage & Levelling: A joint project with WG Sports and by far the largest project undertaken for sometime, at a total cost of £65,847. The PC used CIL funding and received a contribution of £33,233 from WG Sports. The PC retains £1,500 for minor work to complete the project.

Community Infrastructure Funding: This funding was collected by CDC from the Songhurst Meadow developer. It is ring-fenced within the Parish Council's reserves and can only be used for projects identified on CDC's Infrastructure Business Plan. In addition to the Village Green drainage & levelling (£33,814.84), funds were also spent on the Village Hall Project (£24,565.16) and Pavilion Planning Fees (£6,963).

A full version of this report and financial details, including the External Auditor's Report summary, is published on the village website
www.wisboroughgreen.org
(<https://www.wisboroughgreen.org/pc-finance-year-end-accounts-2021-2022/>)