



WISBOROUGH GREEN
PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report

The Parish Council Year from May 2022 to April 2023

Chairman's Report

At the time of writing my introduction last year, we were all in shock at Russia's invasion of Ukraine and yet to experience the effect on our own lives from this appalling conflict. I understand it is an odd measure, but we are already onto our second Ukrainian flag on the village green; I hope the war is over, and Russia expelled, before we need to replace the flag again.

It has been an interesting year; the major projects being the handover of the Songhurst Meadow open space to the village and the construction of the, exactly half-mile, track around the perimeter, and completion of the village green drainage. The former is absolutely delightful and it's wonderful that some parents are parking in the public car park and walking to the school. The latter was not without controversy however I think we can claim a win. Despite a wet winter, football was played throughout and the green appears in great overall condition, ready for the impending cricket season. Provided we don't experience another exceptionally dry spell we can hope that the trench shrinkage that blighted last year will be consigned to history.

It's important to remember that the green is for more than just sport; walking, picnics (please take your rubbish home), dog walking (please bag and bin your pooch's offerings) or just chillin' in the sun. The green is the village's beating heart and critical to making WG the quintessential, beautiful English village that it is.

Maintaining that status is one of the Parish Council's key priorities which brings me onto the CDC Local Plan and the WG Neighbourhood Plan. When the revision/ updating process for both of these was begun in 2018, WG was allocated 25 new homes on top of the 68 we had delivered in the Plan's first iteration. In 2020 this number was increased to 40 and then at the last gasp, in January this year, 75. As far as I can tell, for CDC this is just a quantitative exercise (numbers) with lip service being paid to the qualitative aspects of their proposals (aesthetics). The threat of development on Glebe Fields hasn't gone away (the application was withdrawn not refused) and be under no illusion as any development there will be a gateway to development of 80+ homes in the future. My view, this would change WG forever.

There are, as usual, many people to thank, however I would like to single out the Neighbourhood Plan Review Team who keep going, despite setbacks and changes and, in two cases, having moved from the village – that's how special WG is... and, of course, Louise, without whom the wheels would fall off.

Please do read this summary report and feel free to raise any questions either by email or in person by coming to a PC meeting, where you will always be welcome. There is a full report available on the village website www.wisboroughgreen.org

Peter Drummond, Chairman

Your Parish Council from 9th May 2023



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Louise Davies
PC Clerk



Some High and Low Moments from the Year

- Title to Songhurst Meadow Open Space transferred to the Parish Council. We have a fabulous new recreation area complete with circular exercise path. Official opening held.
- CDC advised in January 2023 of an increase in the Local Plan housing allocation, 40 to 75. An 11 page response was submitted to the Local Plan consultation to raise village concerns.
- Frustration that this increase impacts upon progress of our Neighbourhood Plan Review - stalled again.
- Following the 'Young Lives Matter' survey in December 2021, plans have been made to enlarge the cricket net surface to provide a permanent basketball and 5 a-side-goal. Coming soon.
- No news from CDC about the planning application for the new Pavilion.
- Councillors agreed on the design for a Parish Council logo.
- Our Speed Indicator Device arrived and was put to good use. A real low, it was stolen from Newpound Lane in March.
- The pond restoration project was completed. The wall is now secure for many years to come.
- Remembrance Day road closure managed by Parish Councillors and the Clerk; it was quiet for the 2 minute silence.
- Two community litter picking sessions held; great turnout.
- WSCC Young Offenders' Scheme undertook village maintenance.
- Signage for the 40mph buffer zone on the A272 west side of the village installed; the SID proved that it is reducing speed.
- Unwelcome visitors on the village green in August - a stressful time.
- Frustration that the goal-posts keep being moved for funding a Village Broadband Scheme but we haven't given up!
- One small Horse Chestnut removed. Sadly surveys confirmed that two large trees need to come down due to internal decay.
- Publicans generously provide Warm Spaces this winter.
- No interest in the Parish Council vacancy since July 2021. Non contested election in May 2023 and we now have a full house.

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
- Chair (Peter Drummond) and Vice-Chair (Sophie Winship) were elected in May
- Members are elected every 4 years
- Uncontested election May 2023 - all seats filled

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

- Third Tuesday of most months at the Village Hall at 7.45 pm (not August or December)
- Public are welcome to attend
- Public section included on the agenda
- Agenda published - notice boards & website
- September meeting delayed due to national mourning for the late Queen

PRECEPT

- Collected by CDC through the Council Tax
- £70,000 for Financial Year to 31 March 2023
- 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, School & August Fetes
- In partnership with WG Sports, continued drainage & levelling work
- Maintains – grass cutting, litter collection, dog bins
- Pond - brick work re-pointed
- Trees - decay survey on 3 trees - 2 sadly to be removed
- Community Litter Picking

SONGHURST MEADOW

- Registered owner since July
- Maintains

ALLOTMENTS

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

PLAYGROUND

- Weekly inspection by a resident/parent
- Annual RoSPA inspection
- Maintenance as identified

OTHER ASSETS

- Inspection & maintenance

OTHER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PLANNING

- Full Council or Planning Committee comment on applications
- Reviewed a total of 55 applications (44 last year)
- 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
- Two councillors had training - planning & chairmanship

COMMUNICATION

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

COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

- **Planning:** Met on 5 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):** Drainage, Green Coordination Group & Pavilion Trustees

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

- Liaised closely with Steering Group
- Received & managed grant funding
- Commissioned consultants report on Local Green spaces
- Attended meetings with CDC regarding housing allocation & Local Plan review

RISK ASSESSMENTS

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

SUPPORT TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

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

SONGHURST MEADOW OPEN SPACE

- Liaising closely with Runnymede Homes
- Title transferred to the Parish Council
- Path installation

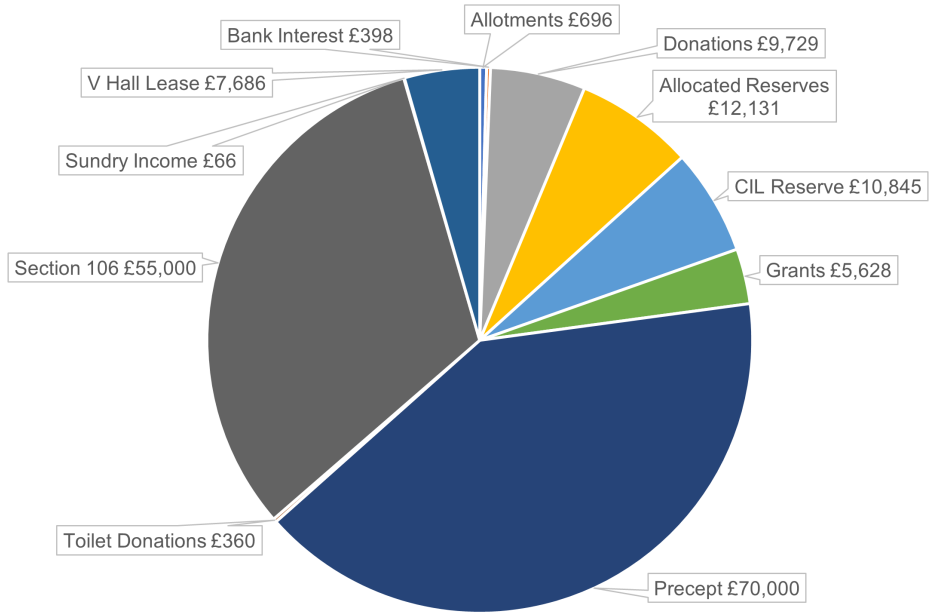
PUBLIC TOILETS – working in partnership with CDC

- PC responsible for the daily cleaning costs and small maintenance items
- CDC responsible for utility charges, insurance & drains
- New cleaning contractor
- Deep cleaned

CONSULTATIONS

- Responded to Chichester Local Plan consultation
- Responded to Gatwick consultations
- Sent objection to CDC in relation to the Crouchlands and Foxbridge planning applications

Money Matters - Income for year ending 31st March 2023



Total Income - £149,563: Not including money transferred into the budget from the Reserve Funds.

Precept - £70,000: Increased by £3,000 on the previous year.

Section 106 Funds - £55,000: A legal agreement from Runnymede Homes.

Donations - £9,729: Runnymede Homes also donated £8,000 towards the new path, WG Sports contributed to additional drainage sand, and bench donors paid for the purchase, installation and maintenance of benches.

Village Hall Lease - £7,686: Paid every 6 months and covers the loan repayments for the Old Workhouse refurbishment.

Allotments - £696: Charged at 25p per square metre per year, increased to 27p from 1st April 2023. A £30 deposit is taken to encourage plots to be left in a good condition.

Grant Funding - £5,628: Received for the Neighbourhood Plan and used for consultant support; £619 unspent funds were returned.

Bank Interest- £398: Up from £11.39 on the previous year. A 1-year Fixed Term Deposit Account was opened with £30,000 in January. It is the intention to open further accounts with £30,000 every 3 months.

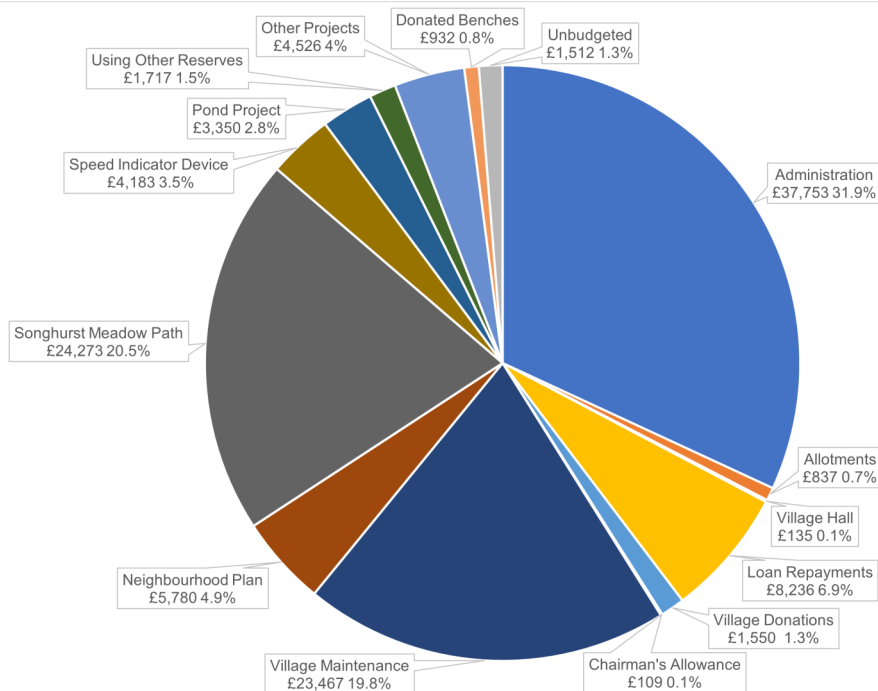
Public Toilet Donations - £360: From the Fete Society, School PTA, and the Fair (the fee was waived as the Fair was re-located) toward the upkeep, with thanks.

Sundry Income - £66: Relates to peppercorn rent and the Fete Society garage rent.

Allocated Reserves - £12,131: Bought into the budget and used for the pond, Speed Indicator Device, noticeboard, new path and a drainage project refund to WG Sports.

CIL Reserve - £10,845: Used for the new path and Speed Indicator Device.

Money Matters - Expenditure for year ending 31st March



Total Expenditure - £118,360

Administration - £37,753: The total annual cost which includes the Clerk's salary, insurance and all other expenses that allows the Council to function efficiently.

Included in Administration are Section 137 donations totalling £470. Applications from outside village organisations were considered and the PC agreed donations 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). A floral tribute for the late Queen was also purchased.

Village Maintenance - £23,467: The Parish Council is responsible for general village maintenance to preserve the village's appearance. Village maintenance includes work to the green, tree surgery, litter and dog bin emptying, post installation, verge repairs, dog waste bags, grass cutting, ditching and general maintenance items. It also includes an allowance for Winter Management which of course wasn't used this year.

This figure also includes the CDC annual cost of emptying 16 litter bins and 2 dog waste bins weekly (£2,038) as well as the annual cleaning cost and supplies for the public toilets (£6,768). With Songhurst Meadow open space being transferred to the PC, grass cutting, tree surgery, posts and fencing costs were incurred.

Allotments - £837: The PC continues to maintain the allotment hedge and addressed some health & safety and security concerns on the site. The water bill was higher due to the hot summer.

Money Matters - Expenditure Continued

Neighbourhood Plan - £5,780: We received £5,009 grant funding to fund consultants to offer help and advice, the majority being spent on a report to support a Local Green Space designation; £771 was spent from the budget.

Songhurst Meadow Path - £24,273: This was a major expenditure but is now providing a well used circular path which also links Newpound Lane and Durban's Road. It was funded with a donation from the developer (£8,000), Section 106 Funding (£5,818), Community Infrastructure Levy Funding (CIL) collected from the Songhurst Meadow development (£9,000) and £1,455 from the budget. CIL is ring-fenced within the PC's reserves and can only be for projects identified to support a growing village.

Speed Indicator Device - £4,183: Funded from New Homes Bonus (£2,338), received from CDC and held in reserves from the previous year, and CIL (£1,845).

Pond Project - £3,350: Re-pointing of the brick walls was the final part of the project delayed from the previous year. It was funded from New Homes Bonus held in reserves (£2,227) and budget provision (£1,123).

Use of Other Reserves - £1,717: Funds were held over from the previous year for a new noticeboard (£1,015) and to refund WG Sports for the drainage project (£702).

Other Projects - £4,526: Includes expenditure for the Jubilee celebration band (£500, a deposit for the new youth surface to be installed when the ground dries up (£1,250) and the new goal/basketball net (£2,745).

Loan Repayments - £8,236: A low interest loan was taken out in 2012 for the playground refurbishment and in 2016 to cover the cost of the Old Workhouse refurbishment. The PC makes annual repayments and for the Workhouse this is covered by the Lease payment received from the V Hall. The last playground payment was in November 2022. The last repayment for the Workhouse is November 2023.

Village Donations - £1,550: 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.

Village Benches - £932: This cost is reimbursed by the donors.

Chairman's Allowance - £109: Used to buy refreshments for the Annual Parish Meeting and a leaving gift for the Village Hall Chairman.

Village Hall - £135: Electrical connections for the new committee room screen.

Unbudgeted Expenditure - £1,512: Relates to new committee room chairs (PC meetings were getting very uncomfortable!) and a projection screen to display reports. The Jubilee party on the green was such a great event and the band was asked to continue playing, incurring an additional £200 charge.

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

SEE YOU ON THE GREEN FOR THE CORONATION PARTY ON SUNDAY
7TH MAY - LET'S MAKE THIS A COMMUNITY EVENT TO REMEMBER.