



WISBOROUGH GREEN
PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report

The Parish Council Year from May 2023 to April 2024

Chairman's Report

At the time of writing my introduction last year I reflected upon the war in Ukraine and the fervent wish that it had been resolved, in Ukraine's favour, before we had to replace the Ukrainian flag on the Green. Well that was a forlorn hope, not only have we had to replace the flag (after someone stole it, damaging the flagpole into the bargain) but can now add the tragic scenes in Gaza following Hamas's grotesque attack on Israel and the darkening skies over Iran. As the world seemingly becomes a less safe place it's good to be in Wisborough Green where life is altogether more pleasant and less complicated.

Last year I highlighted the village's Sword of Damocles, the threat of large-scale development, however there's only been nominal progress and the Glebe Fields developers have come back with, as promised, a plan for 65+ houses. CDC's proposed Local Plan has (probably, by the time of publication) been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination and the PC will be making a submission endeavouring to set out the flawed reasoning that led to such a large, and sudden, increase in WG's allocation. This is a huge task involving many hours of volunteer time; to employ professionals is beyond the PC's budget.

As we set out, in an attempt to keep the PC element of Council Tax bills down, the last year has been one without any major projects. One thing that has come on stream is the extension to the cricket net area and the addition of a five-a-side goal and a second basketball net. Judging by their regular use by a variety of ages this can be counted a resounding success.

As CDC's budgets are increasingly stretched and they cut back to, more or less, their statutory requirements, to maintain the village the way we all want, the PC is having to step onto the crease. The public loos are now owned and maintained by the village and other maintenance items will be undertaken by contractors appointed by the PC. It is likely this list will never get shorter and explains the above inflation increase in the PC element of Council Tax.

There are, as usual, many people to thank who volunteer around the village in a wide range of roles, too many to individually name. It is these people that keep everything that contributes to the 'glory of Wisborough' going. We really do live in a special place.

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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Sophie Winship (Current Vice-Chair) T: 700783



COULD THIS BE YOU?



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Louise Davies
PC Clerk



Some High and Low Moments from the Year

- The new Youth Surface on the Green was installed. Judging by it's use, it's been a huge success.
- CDC confirmed that title to the Public Toilets will be transferred to the village from 1 April 2024 but we now pick up all the costs.
- No news from CDC about the new Pavilion planning application.
- Frustration that the Local Plan delay has also delayed progress of our Neighbourhood Plan review. Unfortunately, the developers continue to hover.
- Our replacement Speed Indicator Device has been put to good use at 7 locations around the village.
- Disappointment that we haven't been able to improve Village Broadband but we haven't given up!
- Two community litter picking sessions held; great turnout.
- Three Horse Chestnuts removed due to disease. Replacement trees of another species planted.
- Non contested election in May 2023 and we had a full house. Unfortunately we now have one vacancy.
- Dog fouling is a real problem in the village. A publicity campaign was undertaken to raise awareness.
- Community Highways Scheme application submitted for a connecting footway on the village green along Kirdford Road.
- Community Traffic Regulation Order application submitted for a speed reduction in Durbans Road.
- Access and parking restriction trial undertaken in the west road. Results have informed a permanent arrangement.
- Byelaws consultation undertaken to allow existing Byelaws to be updated for the Green and introduced for Songhurst Meadow.
- Three fingerpost signs refurbished and the telephone box repainted.
- The large ditch opposite the Cricketers cleared to aid village drainage.
- Remembrance Day road closure managed by Parish Councillors and the Clerk; it was quiet for the 2 minute silence.

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. The next election is 2027

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) although 12 meetings held this year.
- Public are welcome to attend
- Public section included on the agenda
- Agenda published - notice boards & website

PRECEPT

- Collected by CDC through the Council Tax
- £78,000 for Financial Year to 31 March 2024
- 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 to top up drainage trenches
- Maintains – grass cutting, litter and dog waste collection
- Trees - 3 sadly removed
- Two community litter picks

SONGHURST MEADOW

- Registered owner
- Maintains

ALLOTMENTS

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

PLAYGROUND

- Weekly inspection
- 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 38 applications (55 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
- Councillors attended planning and data protection training

COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

- **Planning:** Met on 4 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):** Green Coordination Group and New Pavilion Lease

COMMUNICATION

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

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

- Liaised closely with Steering Group

RISK ASSESSMENTS

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

DEVELOPER CONTACT

- Have attended meetings with developers to be fully informed

SUPPORT TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

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

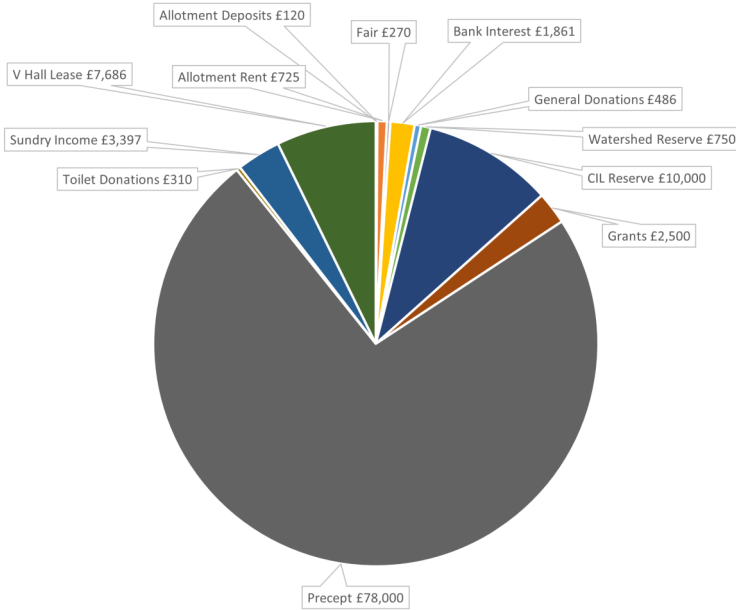
CONSULTATIONS

- Responded to Gatwick consultations

PUBLIC TOILETS – working in partnership with CDC

- PC responsible for the daily cleaning costs
- CDC responsible for utility charges, insurance & drains
- New cleaning contractor
- Deep cleaned
- Ownership transferred to the PC from April 2024

Money Matters - Income for year ending 31st March 2024



Total Income - £95,355: Not including money transferred into the budget from the Reserve Funds. Transfers were a further **£10,750** from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) & Watershed Reserves.

Precept - £78,000: Increased by £8,000 on the previous year.

Village Hall Lease - £7,686: Paid every 6 months and has covered the loan repayments for the Old Workhouse refurbishment. The last repayment was November 2023. This income comes into the budget from April 2024.

Sundry Income - £3,397: Relates to peppercorn rent, the Fete Society garage rent, and an insurance payment of £3,312 for the replacement Speed Indicator Device.

Grant Funding - £2,500: CDC granted £2,000 towards the new Youth Surface Project on the Green and £500 for the Coronation celebration band.

Bank Interest- £1,861: Up from £398 on the previous year. Three 1-year Fixed Term Deposit Accounts have been opened with £30,000 in each. These funds are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme and earn interest.

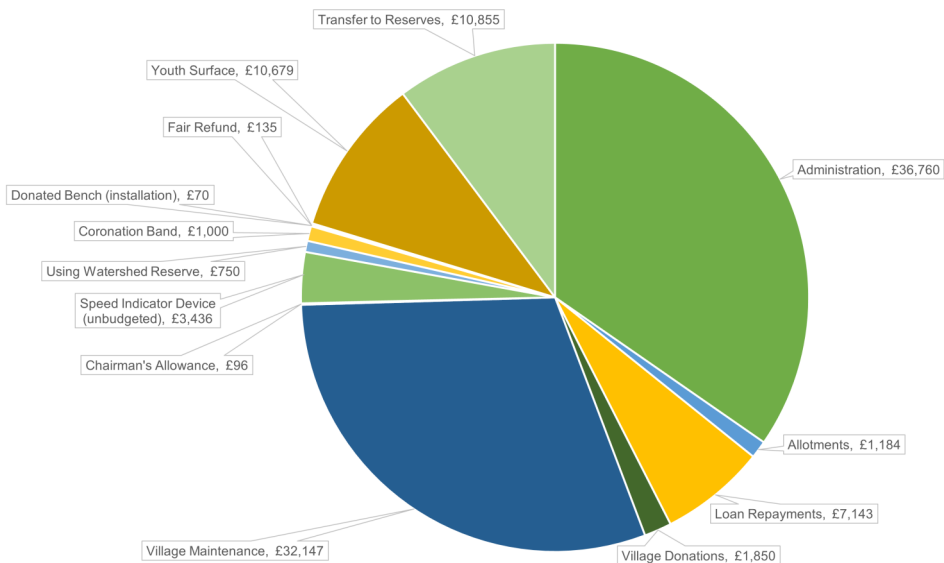
Allotments - £725 for rent: Charged at 27p per square metre per year, increased to 34p from 1st April 2024. A £30 deposit is taken to encourage plots to be left in a good condition; **£120** was received.

Donations - £486: £250 received from the Fete Society towards the Youth Project and £236 as the outstanding balance for a bench donation.

Public Toilet Donations - £310: From the Fete Society and one grateful visitor who anonymously donated £60 towards the upkeep.

Annual Fair - £270: The full fee was initially received but half then refunded due to the appalling weather and Mr Trickett's cooperation to relocate due to the drainage work.

Money Matters - Expenditure for year ending 31st March



Total Expenditure - £95,250

Administration - £36,760: The total annual cost which includes the Clerk's salary, insurance and all other expenses that allows the Council to function efficiently.

It also includes donations to outside village organisations that benefit WG residents. Applications were considered and the PC agreed to make donations to St Catherine's Hospice (£70), Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance (£125), Chichester & Arun Citizens Advice (£50), 4Sight Vision (£70), and the Royal British Legion (£100) for the Remembrance wreath.

Village Maintenance - £32,147: The PC 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, noticeboard treatment, new flags and general maintenance items. It also includes an allowance for Winter Management (snow/ice gritting) which of course wasn't used this year.

In addition to the usual work, we made budget provision for tree removal and replacements. The General Maintenance cost of £8,186 is slightly over the budget of £7,816 and also up on previous years. As with everything, there has been a general uplift in costs.

Village Maintenance also includes the CDC annual cost of weekly emptying 16 litter bins and 2 dog waste bins (£2,024) although halfway through the year the dog bins were removed and the litter bins promoted for both; two bins were installed at Songhurst Meadow. The daily cleaning cost and supplies for the public toilets (£7,929) is also included along with maintenance costs for the new Songhurst Meadow open space (grass cutting, tree surgery, posts and fencing costs).

Money Matters - Expenditure Continued

Allotments - £1,184: The PC continues to maintain the allotment hedge and addressed replacement taps and security. This year-end figure is higher than normal as the previous year's hedge cutting cost of £230 is also included. We also finish the year with a credit on the water bill. Deposits of £90 (3 x £30) were refunded.

Youth Surface Project - £10,679: CIL funding of £10,000 was received for the Songhurst Meadow development and was used to fund the youth surface along with £679 from budget. Deposit payments were also made in the previous financial year. A £2,000 grant was received from CDC and the Fete Society made a donation of £250, so the actual cost to the village was £12,423.

Watershed Reserve - £750: This reserve was used to clear the main drainage ditch behind the fence opposite the Cricketers Arms.

Other Projects - £1,000: Spent on the Coronation celebration event band although £500 was received as a grant from CDC, so the actual cost to the village was £500.

Loan Repayments - £7143: A low interest loan was taken out in 2016 to cover the cost of the Old Workhouse refurbishment. The PC has made annual repayments, covered by the Lease payment received from the V Hall. The last repayment was in November 2023.

Village Donations - £1,850: The PC continues to support village organisations and was pleased to contribute £350 to the Community Minibus Association and made a donation of £1,500 to St Peter's PCC towards the grass cutting and clock maintenance.

Fair Refund: It was agreed to fully refund the Fair fee as Mr Trickett was asked to relocate to the northern end of the Green and the weather was so appalling. He bought a few small items to keep his right to return and accepted a 50% refund.

Village Benches - £70: This cost was for installation and reimbursed by the donors.

Chairman's Allowance - £96: Used to buy the Annual Parish Meeting refreshments.

Unbudgeted Expenditure - £3,436: Relates to the replacement Speed Indicator Device, the original being stolen from Newpound Lane. The PC had a £250 excess.

Transfer to Reserves: £10,855:

Administration Miscellaneous: Included an election fee but £3,426 was unspent due to an uncontested election. Transferred to create an Election fund for future years.

Neighbourhood Plan: We budgeted £2,250 to continue with the review process but due to the Local Plan delay, progress has been stalled. The funds has been transferred to a NP reserve for when the work can resume.

Village Maintenance: Work totalling £1,585 was not invoiced before the year-end.

Allotment Deposits: £120 transferred and held in the reserve.

General Reserve: Unspent budget of £3,475 transferred back to the reserve. The PC creates reserves to save for future projects or unexpected expenditure. It is recommended that the PC retains a General Reserve of 3 - 6 months of the Precept.

A full version of this report and financial details, including the Internal & External Auditors' Reports, are published on the village website www.wisboroughgreen.org