

Parish of Yapton

Annual Parish Meeting

Chairman's Report 2017/2018

Introduction

This report covers the twelve months period since the last Annual Parish Meeting on 8th May 2017. It is my eleventh report to you as Chairman of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council is composed of 10 members. The last scheduled Parish Council elections took place in May 2015. In November 2017, Mr Peter Dunkley was co-opted to the Parish Council.

Over the last 12 months there have been six meetings of the full Parish Council and six meetings of the Planning Committee. At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2017, I was re-elected as Chairman with Michael Pickthall being re-elected as Vice-Chairman.

Yapton is represented at the County Council by two members, Jacky Pendleton and Hilary Flynn who were elected in May 2017, for a four-year term, to represent the Middleton Division (which includes Yapton) and Felpham Division (which includes Hoe Lane, Flansham) respectively. The four-yearly cycle of District and Parish Council elections will be held on the 4th May 2019 to elect representatives for the Yapton ward on the District Council, and to fill the 10 seats on the Parish Council.

What do we do?

For those who may be new to the village, the parish services include responsibility for and maintaining the King George V Playing Field, the two village car parks, the skate park, the children's play area, a range of outdoor exercise equipment, the all-purpose floodlit sports enclosure and adjacent youth shelter, the picnic tables and seats on the playing field, the litter collection service, an allotments site, bus shelters, as well as some street lighting and financial support for the village hall and voluntary organisations.

Your Council has representatives on outside bodies which oversee and manage various functions and activities impacting on the local area. A key role, which is discussed later, is the Council's role in the planning function, particularly with regard to the vetting of all planning applications for the parish.

The Council also maintains a website www.yaptonpc.gov.uk which contains information about the Parish, the Council and its meetings. The Council also publishes, after each Parish Council meeting, the *Yapton News*, a bi-monthly magazine for residents, which not only includes information about the Parish Council's activities but also includes, amongst other things, reports from clubs and organisations which operate in the village. *Yapton News* is delivered free of charge, by a team of volunteers and councillors, to nearly 1900 households in the parish.

In March 2018, the Parish Council agreed to set up and operate its own Social Media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. One of our Councillors has agreed to operate the accounts in conjunction with the Clerk, and we will be posting information on Facebook and Twitter, and also monitor the sites to deal with any queries or requests posted by residents.

Recreational facilities in Yapton

The contract for grass cutting on the playing field was renewed in 2017 for the three years from April 2017 - 2020 and will be performed by George Burley Ltd of Dorking. The contractor undertakes grass cutting for many West Sussex schools and has a local depot at Halnaker, near Chichester. The Parish contract provides for the field to be cut on a fortnightly basis (weather permitting), normally on Thursdays, although there is provision for extra cuts and for it to be rolled if these are needed.

The Parish Council prides itself in maintaining all the play equipment to a high standard and carrying out promptly any repairs which may be needed. It is encouraging therefore, when you look at its overall condition, to realise that it is now 18 years since the children's play area was opened to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Regular inspections of both the play area equipment and the gym equipment is undertaken to ensure the equipment remains safe and fit for purpose.

The skate park continues to be hugely popular with our youngsters and the envy of many of our neighbours. Indeed we know that youngsters travel from further afield to use the facilities and this is encouraging because it also brings in business for the shops in the village. The Council let a contract in 2017 to carry out significant repairs and remediation to the grass banks of the skatepark to bring them up to a good standard for the enjoyment of our young people throughout the year.

Planning matters

Over the past year the Council, and the Planning Committee, has carefully vetted all the planning applications which have been submitted for Yapton - some 60 in total (compared to 26 in the previous year). The majority of these were relatively straightforward household applications, but as in the previous year a number of major applications were submitted on behalf of developers, including an application for a housing development on the southern end of Cinders Lane Nursery Site off Bilsham Road (19 units), Bonhams, Hoe Lane, Flansham (reduced from 34 to 10 units), land at Stakers Farm (70 units), and land at Street Buildings (45 units). A total of 144 units.

In addition, Arun District Council has designated land between Drove Lane and Bilsham Road as a Strategic Housing Site. Two applications totaling up to 550 dwellings have been received for this site.

The early part of 2017 was very busy for the Planning Committee Chairman and its Members. The Committee met on the 8th May 2017 and noted receipt of the judgment on the planning application Y/60/14/OUT – for up to 100 dwellings on land to the south of Ford Lane, and East of North End Road – following the submission of an appeal by the applicant following the refusal of the Secretary of State to grant planning permission. The High Court hearing took place on the 21st March 2017, and took place over two days. The judgement in this High Court Appeal Case was handed down on the 11th April 2017. The case was dismissed by the Court, and therefore, the application could not proceed, on the basis that in considering planning applications in the future, the Yapton Neighbourhood Plan should be taken in account, even when the District Council has not got a sound Local Plan in place.

The Council was also advised that the Appeal submitted on Planning Application Y/80/16/OUT – a resubmission of the original application Y/60/14/OUT - following Arun District Council's refusal to grant planning permission – would be by public inquiry. Coming almost a year later, the outcome of the appeal was announced on the 15th January 2018. The Inspector stated that “Overall, there are material considerations which indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. As such, I conclude that the appeal should succeed and planning permission be granted”.

The Public Inquiry, following the “call-in” of Planning Application Y/19/16/OUT – 108 dwellings on land off Burndell Road – was held at Bognor Regis Town Hall over two days, commencing on the 25th

April 2017. The outcome of the appeal by Gleasons, following the call-in, was announced on the 13th October 2017. The Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal and allowed the planning permission on this site.

At its meeting on the 31st July, the Committee considered the following applications:

- Land at Southern end of Cinders Lane Yapton (19 dwellings) - Support with reservations
- Bonhams, Hoe Lane, Flansham (34 dwellings) – Raised an objection
- Land at Stakers Farm, North End Road (70 dwellings) – Raised an objection
- Land at Street Buildings, North End Road (45 dwellings) – Raised an objection

The meeting held on the 11th September considered Yapton's response for the forthcoming examination in public of the Arun Local Plan. The Committee held a wide ranging discussion on the proposed new Strategic site at Tack Lee Road / Drove Lane / Bilsham Road. The Committee began to formulate proposals on how the Parish Council might influence the development in design terms and facilities, and agreed that the Parish Council had to be pragmatic with this proposed new development, which is outside of the Yapton Neighbourhood Plan, as it is a Strategic Site likely to be incorporated in the agreed Arun Local Plan. The site might encompass between 400 to 600 dwellings and the Parish Council would want to influence the development. The Parish Council agreed that getting the right infrastructure was key, particularly in regard to the provision of future medical facilities and primary school facilities. It was also felt that the development should be sympathetic to the rural nature of the village, and links to the village need to be carefully created in the plans.

In November, the Committee resolved to confirm the proposals prepared by the Chairman of the Committee, on how the Parish Council might influence the development in design terms and the infrastructure and facilities provided, which have been submitted to Arun District Council for inclusion in discussions with the Developers once the Planning Application has been submitted.

The January 2018 Committee spent a considerable amount of time discussing the two planning applications Y/91/17/OUT and Y/92/17/OUT comprising the Small Strategic Housing Site at Tack Lee Road / Drove Lane / Bilsham Road. The Committee agreed that the developers needed to take into account the various issues raised particularly relating to: ❖ Drainage and flood prevention; ❖ Traffic, both local and feeder routes to the village; ❖ The PC does not support a second primary school in the village and a suitable solution must be found by expanding the existing school facility; ❖ Medical facilities; ❖ Appropriate housing mix for the village (for age 55 and over); ❖ Desire for local affordable housing. The Committee were keen to ensure that both developers/landowners are tied into ensuring that all planning obligations are met relating to the concerns raised at this meeting.

The members of the Committee then discussed a range of issues and whether the Committee should, on behalf of the Parish Council, either object to or support the applications with conditions imposed through strong legal agreement. As this had been promoted through the Arun Local Plan, an objection would not probably carry much weight. However, supporting the applications and working with the Developers on improvements to the village infrastructure as outlined above would be of benefit to the whole village. The Committee also indicated that any agreement should be for a 10-year period rather than the usual 5 years. The Committee resolved to support the two applications Y/91/17/OUT and Y/92/17/OUT with conditions to be included within the Planning S.106 agreements as outlined above.

If you have a concern about a particular planning application in the village please do contact the Chairman of the Planning Committee or the Clerk. In this connection residents may also be interested to know that the Parish Council has published on its website guidance about the procedure to follow when responding to planning applications.

Encouraging Sustainable transport in Yapton

The Council considered a discussion paper prepared by Councillor Chris Sprules which requested Yapton PC to look at and consider how it could support and improve the offer to the local community especially for those wishing to use more sustainable transport in and around the village. This would provide the County and District Councillors with a clear understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve and the help needed. The Council noted the contents and confirmed that it would support and work towards implementing the issues raised by Councillor Sprules in his paper.

Consultation on proposed improvements to the A27 in the Arundel area

The Council considered the arrangements for the consultation on the creation of an A27 Arundel bypass. The public consultation ran from 22nd August to 16th October 2017. The Parish Council considered the three options being promoted by Highways England and decided to make a response to Highways England supporting Option 3 (A new dual-carriageway from Crossbush junction, south of the current A27, rejoining the A27 at a new junction near Havenwood Park. This option also included improvements at Crossbush junction, new bridges over the railway line and the River Arun and a new pedestrian/cycle path between Crossbush junction and Yapton Lane), with a request that a junction be included where the new road meets Ford Road.

Yapton CE Primary School

The Parish Council has endeavoured to maintain its links with the local primary school in Yapton which the majority of children in the village attend. We look forward to further developing the links and relationship which has been built up between the school, parish council and the community. The school has recently begun to supply articles for inclusion in the Yapton News.

Allotments

Following his retirement as a Parish Councillor, Mr Mick Caiger continues in his role of managing and overseeing the Parish Council's Allotment site in Cinders Lane, and we thank him for all the work he does behind the scenes to ensure everything runs smoothly.

The Council considered the need to fix the allotments rentals for the financial year commencing on 1st April 2018. With the agreed site rental at the rate of £500.00 in 2018, the Council agreed that the allotment annual rental be increased by £1 to £501.00 for a 5-rod plot for 2018/2019.

Grants to Voluntary Organisations 2017/18

The Council considered applications received from 8 voluntary and charitable organisations for grant-aid in financial year 2017/18. The Budget for 2017/18 was £890 and was fully allocated. In addition, following the fire at the Yapton Primary School in March 2017, the Parish Council approved a special grant of £500 towards to re-provision of resources and materials for use in the school.

Yapton Community Emergency Plan

The Council received various reports on the work which had been completed by Sheena McKenzie since her appointment as Lead Co-ordinator by the Council at its July meeting. This had included:

- (i) creating a dedicated meeting room and store on the first floor of the Village Hall in Yapton;
- (ii) holding a meeting with volunteers and councillors and identifying leaders to work closely with the lead co-ordinator;
- (iii) finalising the Emergency & Resilience Plan and other key documents; and
- (iv) arranging for "What if" training provided by the West Sussex County Council Emergency and Resilience Team for leaders and councilors.

The Council also received a report from Councillor Michael Pickthall on a very successful meeting held between Ford, Walberton and Yapton Parish Councils (Clymping could not make the date arranged for the meeting) to discuss possible joint working on Emergency and Resilience matters, sharing resources and identifying a lead co-ordinator to work across the four councils on emergency planning matters. The four Parish Councils have agreed to look further into joint working arrangements and the creation of a hub in Yapton.

A meeting of the Volunteers was held in March 2018 and the Clerk reported that there were now 29 volunteers signed up to the Emergency and Resilience Group, including 4 Yapton parish councillors. The Council had also received the basic stock of emergency equipment which had been supplied by the West Sussex County Council following the attendance at the training course by members of the Yapton Emergency and Resilience Group.

Yapton & Ford Village Hall

The Parish Council appointed three representatives to serve on the Management Committee, Derek Ambler, Tony Kendall and Chris Sprules, who give regular reports to the Council on their meetings and activities.

The Council has been pleased to note that the village hall's financial position has improved as a result of increased income from bookings and regular hirings of office space on the first floor. It will be recognised however that maintenance of the premises both internally and externally and the need to ensure that the public premises conform to strict regulatory and safety requirements, remain a drain on resources and is one with which the Management Committee has constantly to grapple.

For many years now the Parish Councils of Yapton and Ford have accepted financial responsibility for the maintenance of the external fabric of the building and Yapton has made provision in its budget should any significant maintenance issues arise.

Keeping the village tidy

As always it would be remiss of me in writing this report not to mention and warmly thank Jo Smithers, ably assisted by her husband Alan, for the really excellent work they do on our behalf to keep the village and particularly the playing field looking so tidy.

Despite our best efforts there remains, unfortunately, an on-going issue with dog fouling on the field. It is unacceptable that this should be left for Jo and Alan to clear up. It is a most unpleasant task for anyone and if left on the field could well be a serious health issue for our children. The Parish Council once again urges all dog owners to act responsibly, to keep their dogs on a lead whilst exercising them on the field and take their dog's mess away or use the bins provided. However, dog excrement should definitely not be put in the general waste bins in the play area but taken to the red bins on the field.

Yapton News

The *Yapton News*, which is published 6 times a year, aims is to provide an eclectic mix of articles as well as some 'interesting' information on what the Council itself is doing for and in the community. This is coupled with regular and interesting reports from many of the clubs and organisations which meet and serve the residents of the village and its surrounding localities.

The Editor strives to keep each issue of the magazine 'local' so that all the articles, pictures and features relate to and will be of interest to Yapton residents. The Editor always welcomes more contributions though. In the days of computers most people can easily do this by email and you don't even have to invest in a stamp!

For those local businesses who may have considered using *Yapton News* to advertise and promote their services, the cost of advertising is very reasonable for the 6 editions published each year, and delivery to approaching 1900 homes in the parish, and on the parish council's own website.

My grateful thanks go to all those who regularly send in contributions for the magazine and to the team of volunteers who help with delivering the Parish Council's magazine to an ever increasing number of households in the village.

Parish Council Policies

The Parish Council have reviewed and approved the following policies during the year:

- (a) Data Protection Policy (new)
- (b) Information Security Policy for Councillors (new)
- (c) Information Security Policy for Staff (new)
- (d) Data Retention Policy (new)
- (e) Media and Communications Policy (new)
- (f) Code of Conduct (new – as recommended by Arun District Council)

Our finances

Funding for the running of Parish Council services comes from the parish precept, which is included in your annual council tax bill, and is levied on every household in the parish. The Council also relies on other income from charges for services and reserves.

The Parish Council finances are becoming more stretched, having to cope with increasing costs, and the need to make appropriate provision for maintaining the recreational facilities in the village. The increasing number of property completions does bring in additional council tax, however, the Parish Council has reluctantly had to agree to an increase of 5% in its precept for 2018/19. This is an increase equivalent to 3p per week for the average property in Yapton. Where appropriate, the Council has, and will continue to supplement its income, by seeking grants where these become available, particularly for one-off projects. A financial statement setting out the Parish Council's income and expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2018 will be found at the end of this report.

Conclusion

In closing, I should like as usual to take this opportunity of recording my personal thanks to all members of the Parish Council for their support and interest in the village throughout the past year. I would also like to thank the Clerk of the Council, Andrew Gardiner, for the work he does in supporting me and in furthering the work of the Council.

In the coming 12 months the Council will continue its aim of delivering a quality and efficient service for the people of Yapton. The Council will work hard to ensure that the facilities and services for which it is responsible are maintained to a high standard. The Council will also aim to keep the community well informed through continuing the publication of *Yapton News* and regularly updating of the Council's website and, as recently agreed through social media, Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Stephen Haymes
Chairman of the Parish Council

14th May 2018