

Parish of Yapton

Annual Parish Meeting

Chairman's Report 2018/2019

Introduction

This report covers the twelve months period since the last Annual Parish Meeting on 14th May 2018. It is my twelfth 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 2018, Mr Chris Sprules resigned from the Parish Council, and it was decided not to fill the vacancy until the next scheduled elections due to take place in May 2019.

Over the last 12 months there have been six meetings of the full Parish Council and five meetings of the Planning Committee. At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2018, 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 were held on the 2nd May 2019 to elect representatives for the Yapton ward on the District Council, and to fill the 10 seats on the Parish Council. However, as only 7 nominations were received for the 10 seats on the Parish Council, these candidates were elected without the need for an election. The remaining 3 seats will be filled by co-option to the Parish Council.

What do we do?

The Parish Council has responsibility for and maintains the King George V Playing Field on Main Road, 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 at Cinders Lane, bus shelters, as well as some street lighting and financial support for the village hall and to 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 all 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.

Since March 2018, the Parish Council has operated its own Social Media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. One of our Councillors' operates the accounts in conjunction with the Clerk, and over the past year we have been regularly posting information on Facebook and Twitter, and also monitoring the sites and responding to 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 three years from April 2017 - 2020 and is carried out by George Burley Ltd of Dorking. The contract provides for the field to be cut on a fortnightly basis (weather permitting) from start of April to mid-October, 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 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 19 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. In 2017 the Council carried 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 52 in total (compared to 60 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.

The following major applications have been considered and the Committee's response is shown against each application:

- **Land adjacent to Bonhams & Flints, Hoe Lane, Flansham (Y/20/18/OUT)** - Outline application with some matters reserved for the erection of 10 dwellings with access from Hoe Lane, Flansham (resubmission following Y/40/17/OUT). This application is a Departure from the Development plan – **Objection**
- **Clays Farm, North End Road, Yapton (Y/62/18/OUT)** - Outline application with some matters reserved (appearance, landscaping, layout & scale) for 33 No. residential dwellings, access, landscaping & associated works. This application is a Departure from the Development Plan – **Objection**
- **10 Acre Field North of Grevatts Lane, Yapton (Y103/18/PL)** - Single Chapel Crematorium with car parking, landscape works, surface water drainage features & associated highway improvements. This application is a Departure from the Development Plan. – **OBJECTION**
- The Committee was asked to consider whether it wished to make a response to the Planning **Application CM/4/19/PL - Construction of a crematorium** comprising of a crematorium building & associated structures, car parking, access & landscaped spaces on Land south of the A259, Grevatt's Lane, Climping by Southern Co-operative Limited. - This application is a Departure from the Development Plan. - **The Planning Committee decided to endorse the objection made by Climping Parish Council.**

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.

YAPTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Planning Committee received regular updates on the progress being made in reviewing the "made" Neighbourhood Plan with a view to updating the Plan to take into account the requirement for additional housing numbers and other matters now that the Arun Local Plan (ALP) has been agreed. With the local plan now agreed, Yapton Parish Council has been allocated a potential additional 90 new homes to be found in the parish to meet the 1,250 home deficit across the Arun District area as shown in the adopted ALP. These would either be found through the updated YNP or via Arun District Council's (ADC) DPD process. This is over and above all the sites that have been granted planning over the last few years (450 homes) and the Strategic Housing Site SD7 (circa 550 homes).

The Yapton Neighbourhood Plan Steering group has met on various occasions to consider various aspects of the plan which need updating and to allocate key areas of the work to Steering Group Members. The Committee are being advised by Planning Consultants O'Neill Homer, who had been appointed to advise the Council on the work required to proceed with the update. It was noted that any new or updated Neighbourhood Plan would be more extensive and include many new areas which would follow the framework of the Arun District Council Local Plan. The costs of the consultant's work would be mainly met from a successful grant application to Locality in April 2018, totalling £8,450.

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, with the appointment of a new Headteacher, to further developing the links and relationship which has been built up between the school, parish council and the local community. The school has been regularly supplying articles for inclusion in the Yapton News over the past year.

Allotments

The Council continues to provide Allotments at a site in Cinders Lane, Yapton. Mr Mick Caiger continues in his role of managing and overseeing the Parish Council's Allotments, 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 2019. With the agreed site rental remaining at the rate of £500.00 in 2019/20 the Council agreed that the allotment annual rental be increased by £2 to £34.00 for a 5-rod plot for 2019/2020.

Grants to Voluntary Organisations 2018/19

The Council considered applications received from a number of local voluntary and charitable organisations for grant-aid in the financial year 2018/19. The Budget for 2018/19 was £890 and grants were allocated as follows:

Arun & Chichester Citizens Advice Bureau - £50;
Bognor Regis, Chichester and District branch of the Samaritans - £120;
West Sussex Mediation Service - £50;
Yapton and District Cottage Gardeners' Society - £150;
Yapton and Ford Parochial Church Council - £100 (for the maintenance of the closed churchyard);
Yapton Evergreens - £100.

The above allocations totalled £570.

Yapton Community Emergency Plan

The Village Hall Management Committee had reconsidered and reduced the rental for the resilience room on the first floor of the Village Hall. Members of Clymping, Ford and Walberton Parish Councils had been asked to take back a recommendation to their councils regarding the creation of a possible resilience hub in the first floor Emergency Planning & Resilience Room at the Yapton & Ford Village Hall. Clymping, Ford and Walberton Parish Councils all agreed to join, including the making of a financial contribution to the Village Hall Management Committee for the use of resilience room.

A number of get-togethers during the year had been held with the growing band of volunteers and Sheena McKenzie, now back from her recent illness, had arranged for a first aid course to be provided by representatives from another local council.

Yapton & Ford Village Hall

The Parish Council appointed three representatives to serve on the Management Committee during the past year, Derek Ambler, Tony Kendall and Chris Sprules, who gave 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 ageing premises and facilities, both internally and externally, and the need to ensure that these public premises conform to strict regulatory and safety requirements, remain a drain on resources and is one which the Management Committee constantly has under review.

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

At the March 2019 meeting of the Parish Council, the Council marked the retirement of Jo Smithers, who has been ably assisted by her husband Alan, who have ceased to provide the litter picking and cleansing contract which they have provided for around 12 years. The Chairman praised Jo and Alan for the really excellent work they have done on our behalf to keep the village and particularly the playing field looking so tidy. Later in the meeting, Mr David Vincent was appointed to take over the contract for the forthcoming year.

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 our litter pickers 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 Playing Field and adjoining car park

In July 2018 there was an incursion onto the playing field by a group of travellers. The travellers arrived during one evening and forced entry to the field at the entrance and stayed for 4 days and nights. The playing field and the play area was cleared of detritus left by the travellers by staff from Arun District Council. Unfortunately, the Parish Council incurred legal fees amounting to £700 in relation to the removal of the travellers from the field.

Following this incident the Council discussed possible works to improve the security of the Playing Field along the boundary with the Village Hall Car Park and the main access way to the Playing Field. It was suggested that a bund could be constructed along the length of the field with its boundary to the car park, from the village hall to the end of the car park. This may require planning permission and this is being investigated. The access way would require either new posts or a gate to be installed. The resurfacing of the entrance to the field is also being investigated. These improvements will incur significant additional expenditure.

Traffic Issues

The Council discussed various traffic issues of concern in the parish notably:

- the excess speed problem along Burndell Road;
- congestion along North End Road with queuing traffic waiting to cross the railway since the introduction of the new crossing barriers;
- congestion and safety concerns in the proximity of the Primary School on North End Road, particularly at drop-off and pick-up times; and
- the likely increase in traffic during and after the construction of the many new homes planned in the parish.

The local County Councillor had been informed about these issues, and there was a possibility that, with help that data from the Community Speedwatch scheme, and with the backing of residents, could assist in getting a community highway scheme to provide traffic calming in the area. The Council discussed the Community Speedwatch Scheme set up in Yapton a couple of years ago and the traffic issues group which had been working with the Police to identify the problem traffic hotspots in the village. The Clerk has been tasked to look into re-starting the group and seek to attract new members who could assist with the Community Speedwatch Scheme.

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. 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 these current days 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 it is delivered to approaching 1900 homes in the parish, and posted 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.

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 each year, 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 agreed to an increase of 10% in its precept for 2019/20. This is an increase equivalent to 6p 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 2019 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 through its social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter.

Stephen Haymes
Chairman of the Parish Council

13th May 2019