

REPORT OF THE OTTERBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 17 APRIL 2007

The Chairman, Cllr Richard Oldham, welcomed all to the meeting

Chairman's Report for 2006/2007

The Chairman opened with a résumé of the two most notable events of the year: the Anthony Rice affair at Elderfield and the incursion onto the Common by travellers. Major items of expenditure within the village had included posts around the Common, a height restriction barrier at the Recreation Ground, completion of the youth facilities and two new bus shelters. The refurbishment of the Children's Play Area at the Recreation Ground was the most important project for 2007/08 as well as a further bus shelter. In addition Council had strived to maintain safety within the village on the roads and footpaths with prompt reporting of damage to traffic calming measures and signs. Many changes had occurred in the make up of the Parish Council, including the retirement of the previous Chairman who was thanked for his leadership and service. In the May Parish Elections, three of the current nine Councillors had decided not to stand and they were also thanked for their hard work and support. One new candidate had been elected, bringing the Council to seven members from May. Two vacancies still existed and would be advertised. The work of the many voluntary organisations within the village was recognised and praised. New people were encouraged to come forward and help in the running of them and to give their support.

Report by Cllr NI Phillips, Chairman, Planning and Highways Committee

The number of planning applications received in 2006/07 was 33. The aim was to balance the needs and aspirations of residents with the long-term appearance of the village. When completed the VDS would provide a valuable resource for the future. A major issue was the use of garden developments. Vigilance was needed to ensure the provision of quality accommodation and that the increase in housing density did not reduce the attractiveness of the village. The second main issue was the development of land for recycling waste products and the resultant volume of HGVs on village roads. The Four Dells Farm application was being followed closely. The Report concluded with a request for Parishioners to contact the Parish Council with their views on planning applications in order that these might be reflected in planning responses.

Report by Cllr R Zebedee, Chairman Amenities and Recreation Committee

The youth facilities had been completed except for seeding which would be undertaken soon. Plans were currently being drawn up for major refurbishment of the Children's Play Area and consultation was proposed with local groups. Applications for Lottery funding and other grants would be made. Five different suppliers had been approached and their draft presentations were available to see at the rear of the hall. Extensive coppicing had occurred within Oakwood Copse but it had not damaged the bluebells. Some fencing might also be required to prevent damage to new trees by the deer but permissive paths would remain. Southern Water had installed new security fencing around their site. It was not yet known how this would affect Otterbourne

Cricket Club. The Parish Council had advised the Sports Club of the maximum extent of permitted development to the Recreation Ground and the Club would be putting forward detailed plans for consideration. No agreement had been reached with regard the Licence renewal and arbitration was being considered. Work on improving the banks of the Itchen Navigation was due to start in 2007 with a £1.6 million grant over five years. Otterbourne School was hoping to introduce a 'walking bus' to school and the Recreation Ground car park was being considered as one collection point.

Report by Cllr R Gray, Chairman, Finance Committee.

Accounts for 2005/06 were audited and approved by external auditors on 28 June 2006. Presentation of unaudited accounts for year ending 31 March 07 was made. Major items of expenditure were: expenditure on grounds and pavilion maintenance, fencing and security at the Recreation Ground, final payment of youth facilities, bus shelter replacement and upkeep, insurance for village assets, replacement and addition of bollards to secure the Common, provision and servicing of dog and litter bins in the village. Aside from the precept major items of income were: interest on monies held on deposit, rental income from the Sports Club, reimbursement of youth facilities project from the WCC Open Spaces fund, a lottery grant for the VDS, a voluntary contribution from a parishioner towards reinstatement of the Common bund. The total planned expenditure for 2007/08 will be £69,265 of which the Precept will contribute £26,002 an increase of 1.2% on 2006/07, with the balance being met by interest from accounts and reduction of reserves as recommended by the external auditors. Major overheads will include the Parish Clerk, dog and litter bin emptying, bus shelter cleaning, insurances, recreation ground maintenance and provision towards replacement bollards. One off expenditure is proposed for: replacement of the bus shelter at Oakwood Avenue, external maintenance for the pavilion, provision for replacement street lighting, community access boards, Common land works and refurbishment of the Children's Play Area. A VAT Inspection had taken place by HM Revenue and Customs for years 2004/05/06 and there were no findings or recommendations

Police Report

There were 229 incidents recorded during the period 1/4/06 to 17/04/07 although not all related to crimes for which the number was estimated at 100. Otterbourne was now included within the Southgate area of Winchester, comprising Colden Common and as far as Marwell Zoo car park, Hursley, Farley Chamberlayne, Compton and Shawford, Twyford, parts of Allbrook, Olivers Battery, Badger Farm, Stanmore and St Cross as far as Southgate Street. Five Police Officers, one Sergeant and three Community Support Officers covered the area, based at Twyford. There would hopefully be an increase in visual presence in the village as both PCs and the CSOs returned to patrolling on bicycles or foot. The CSOs particularly dealt with anti social behaviour and vandalism issues. A map of the new area was displayed in the hall. PC Mark Smith was thanked for his work within the village and especially his response to the travellers' incursion on the Common.

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Open Forum for Parishioners

A parishioner requested a sign post to the Recreation Ground. Concern was raised regarding travellers. The matter would be discussed at a future Parish Council meeting.

Address by Cllr S Hudson, Team Leader, Village Design Statement

Work on the VDS was started a year ago. It had covered types of dwelling, design, amenities, views, open spaces, buildings, boundaries, materials, signage and commercial buildings. Two parallel exhibitions were planned on 12 May and 11 June to share ideas and engage the community. Following this a draft would be prepared for Parishioners to see prior to production. An Awards for All grant had been successful for funding the project.

Address by Mrs A Langrish, Headteacher, Otterbourne CE Primary School

A brief on the school and its aims was handed out to Parishioners. The Ofstead Inspection carried out in October 2006 had resulted in a good report. The school was involved with the village community in many ways including choir performances to The Old Parsonage and The Grange, the May Day event at Cranbury Park, sporting and academic links with Thornden School, worship in St Matthew's Church and drama performances in the Village Hall. The support of local businesses and organisations was appreciated. A number of local, national and international charities were supported by the children. A high level of support was received from parents, governors and members of the local community. Priorities for further improvement included development of the curriculum and the learning environment, developing teaching, improving assessment of learning and promoting spiritual development. Several big initiatives were underway including building work to extend the school, landscape and wildlife projects. Also initiatives on Health at School and a School Travel Plan. The Travel Plan was required to reduce traffic and a number of methods were being examined: a walking bus and walking routes, cycle routes and a mini bus. The training of volunteers and risk assessments would be carried out in conjunction with HCC.

Address by Mr E Whieldon, William's Garage, Shop and Post Office

A talk and slide projection was presented by Peter The garage had been purchased in 1990 and had been rebuilt to its present status in 1994. It currently employed 36 people. Plans were now proposed to make further development with the aim of improving facilities and securing the provision of the village shop and post office for the future. The plans were at early stage and required the support of the Parish Council. Much of the proposal was the result of identified key responses in the Parish Plan concerning support to the village and elderly people. Initial approaches to WCC had been received favourably. A piece of land to the rear of the property had been purchased for the expansion. It was proposed to demolish the shop and rebuild it 2 ½ times its current size creating 290 sq m of new shop space. Three suppliers were being considered: Spar, Cost Cutters and Budgens. The shop would stock a much wider range of supplies, produce and frozen foods. There would also be an improved in-house bakery and

patisserie, sandwich facility and take away service. A coffee stop and internet area would be provided, a larger off-licence, ATM and enlarged Post Office and till area. Disabled access and home delivery service would be improved. The entrance and exit and petrol forecourt would remain the same but more parking area would be provided and safer access to the shop. A quality, enclosed, auto car wash would be built. The workshops would be demolished and rebuilt out of sight to the rear on the new land purchased. The shop would remain open throughout the development and two Project Managers would be on site during the works. There were several questions arising including the programme of events, whether the new area of land purchased was outside the development boundary, the design and colour of the forecourt canopy, flood plane concerns, size of the development, whether the project would proceed if the new land could not be used.

Address by Mrs G Macdonald, St Matthew's Church Social Committee

Mrs Macdonald gave a talk in her role as social co-ordinator for the Church. A large number of community events were scheduled throughout the year and built upon. Fundraising was undertaken by the Executive Committee. The Diocese Quota required this year was £24,000. The May Day celebrations were the most important event raising over £6,000 in 2006. Mrs Macdonald then spoke about the need to join with a third Parish for the services of a Vicar. It had been agreed that the United Benefice of Otterbourne and Allbrook and Compton and Shawford would join with Hursley. Thanks was given to the Community for its support.

Address by Mr Michael Warne, Otterbourne Conservation Group

This was first formed in 1987 and was now in its 20th anniversary year. There were three aims: to conserve the various natural habitats in Otterbourne together with the associated wildlife; to preserve such items and buildings of historical interest as still exist in the village and to maintain as far as possible a village ambience in Otterbourne. Work takes place on three sites: Sponder's Mede, St Matthew's old churchyard, Otterbourne Hill Common. Also on village footpaths and stiles. Work is only permitted on sites owned by the Parish Council and not private sites due to public liability insurance. Persons on Community Service Orders are often enrolled to help with the work. The next AGM will take place on 30 May and will include a series of short presentations on the Group's work.

The Chairman thanked the speakers and parishioners for attending and the Meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Mrs J Ayre, Clerk
17 April 2007