

**Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council**  
**Notes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021**  
*Held remotely via Zoom in line with SLCC guidelines due to Covid-19 restrictions*

Members:

Cllr Burtenshaw (Chairman) (P)  
Cllr Errington (Vice Chairman) (P)  
Cllr Loader (P)  
Cllr Taylor  
Cllr Wilson (P)

(P) denotes present

Others present:

County Councillor Michael Thierry  
District Councillor Emma Lane  
Parish Clerk, Joanna Ramsay  
1 member of the public

Cllr Burtenshaw warmly thanked everyone for attending.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – CLLR LINDSAY BURTONSHAW**

**Introduction**

Normally at this stage of the Parish Council year we would be convening in Ibsley Village Hall with an anticipated 'full house' of residents and specially invited guests and looking forward to our guest speaker on a topical subject – and probably, a delicious spread of refreshments! Not so this time with our remotely distanced Zoom meeting, albeit hopefully for the last time? However, may I still extend a warm welcome to you all.

What a year it has been?! Certainly, one of huge change for the Parish Council, not least in the context of Covid-19.

I want to commence my annual report by an explanation of those changes and also to extend our heart-felt thanks and gratitude to all those who have contributed in the recent past to the life of the parish in so many ways.

Earlier in 2020, we were immensely sorry to see the resignation of two councillors, Barbara Sampson and Patrick Webster. Barbara had been with us a relatively short time but always contributed in a positive way and often with appropriate questions to get us back on the straight and narrow! Patrick was our longest serving member of the Council; he had diligently attended every meeting and we certainly benefited from his extensive knowledge of the area and expertise on many aspects of rural life. It is hoped an appropriate recognition of service can be arranged during a special autumn meeting.

More recently, our numbers have been further reduced with the departure of Emma Blake, Laura Stainton-Burrell and Rupert Coutts, all due to work commitments elsewhere. Again, their contributions have been invaluable and we do thank them for the part they have played.

Chairman

Date

So, with a 'new year' of exciting challenges, we are looking for more councillors and hope to build up a good team to represent our residents.

We were fortunate indeed to have a temporary Clerk, Kate Mason, at the beginning of 2020. With her background and wealth of experience in local government, she guided us through this difficult period. We also managed to advertise for a permanent Clerk's position, receive applications and actually hold interviews last August. We were delighted to confirm and offer the position to Joanna Ramsay and Jo has already in a relatively short space of time, proved to be an invaluable member of the team. Thank you, Jo.

To our existing Councillors, I should like to thank them profusely for their continual dedication and commitment both during and outside the usual bi-monthly meetings.

For those new to the area (and those who need a gentle reminder) here is some background to what the Parish Council does for you.

## **1. The Structure of the Parish Council.**

### **1.1 The Councillors/'Staff'**

The Parish Council is currently entitled to have 10 Councillors. The Clerk is the only paid employee of the Council.

### **1.2 Meetings**

Full Council meetings are held monthly on the 4th Tuesday in each month and Planning Committee meetings on the 2nd Tuesday. Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings and bring their thoughts, concerns and comments to the Public Forum. All these meetings start at 7.30pm.

### **1.3 Committees**

The Planning Committee is an integral part of Council duties and it considers an average of 70 applications each year. We try to write to every applicant advising a Councillor will be coming to take photographs of the site and to chat through their application. The assessing Councillor will then present the application to the other Councillors to help them understand the proposed plans and their context. It is always good if applicants are able to attend the meetings to hear their views. The Parish Council makes its recommendation to the NFDC or NPA, and the final decision is then in their hands.

The Parish Council is always keen to see that planning regulations are observed; it will and does report to either the NPA or NFDC planning enforcement officers, any breaches in these regulations. Once reported, the Parish Council has to rely on the relevant authorities to take appropriate action.

Members of the Parish Council sit on many Outside Bodies and I would like to thank all the Councillors who play an active part as representatives, making sure that the views of the Parish Council and therefore you, the electors, are heard. This work is time consuming but essential.

Similarly, the Parish Council gets involved in many local consultations. Each time a Councillor takes the lead in preparing a report for their colleagues to consider and this

can take many hours of trawling through hundreds of pages until the relevant section for our Parish is found! Again, I thank my fellow members for their painstaking work!

#### **1.4 Governance**

The parish falls within two authority areas - New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority. We are immensely grateful to the professionals within both authorities for the guidance and clarification on numerous issues that they are able to offer us. A special thank you to our County Councillor Michael Thierry and District Councillor Emma Lane for their contributions

As a Parish Council, we are guided and directed by local government statutes and directives and we're continuing the process of updating our Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Procedures and many other necessary policies.

We are also continually trying to keep abreast of new legislation and correct procedures by attending several training sessions throughout the year; mostly organised by HALC (Hampshire Association of Local Councils).

#### **1.5 Finance**

The end of year Financial report has been circulated separately and shows a small underspend of about £1,500 against our budgeted figure.

There is a sizeable balance held in the Reserve account, mostly accumulated from developer contributions. Projects have been identified in order to make use of these funds.

Once the accounts have been passed by the internal auditor they will go for external adjudication. Once they are returned you will be able to inspect them if you wish. You may also view copies of the payments and receipts by contacting the Clerk.

#### **1.6 Area**

Ours is one of the largest parishes in the New Forest, but one of the smallest in terms of households and electorate with a parish population of less than 1500 people. The boundary encompasses three quite distinct sections: Ringwood Forest and the village of Harbridge to the west, the central River Avon and A338 running north to south and to the east the hamlets of Gorley, Ibsley, and Mockbeggar, before rising up the escarpment to the New Forest Commons.

### **2. Communication.**

#### **2.1 Newsletter**

We are hoping to resurrect the Parish Newsletter now that things will be returning to some degree of normality? It is preferable that these are circulated by email in order to save postage costs, so please get in touch with the Clerk to update your details. (Data Protection Regulations will apply)

#### **2.2 Website**

Thanks to our Clerk, Jo Ramsay, we now have a new website which is being run by her, in house. It is still in the early stages of development, but I do believe it is the communication tool for both the present and the future and we would like to link to

other sites of interest for residents and visitors alike. Please submit any feedback to the Clerk.

### **2.3 Notice Boards**

There are 5 boards: New Road, Mockbeggar; Harbridge (shared with the Church); Ellingham Church Hall; next to the phone box at the Red Shoot; Hockeys Farm. These are updated every two weeks with the Agenda for the next meeting and any other important notices. We're looking to replace them all with larger ones in the near future.

### **2.4 Ellingham Show**

Sadly, our local Show was cancelled last year (due to COVID restrictions) and in 2019 (remember the high winds that destroyed the tents?!), but we wish it every success for this year. It is a great venue to meet many residents, have a chat and get their views and opinions about the parish and the Council.

### **2.5 Litter Pick and Ragwort Pull**

Having designated a date, usually in June/July, this has always provided a good community effort in order to keep our parish verges clear both for aesthetic reasons but also to safeguard grazing livestock. My thanks to those who carry out these tasks outside of an organised event!

## **3. Environmental.**

### **3.1 Footpaths**

We continue to be actively involved in improving the myriad of footpaths within the parish, but most of the credit must go to the Ringwood & Fordingbridge Footpath Society who offer considerable assistance in identifying remedial work that needs to be done and even keeping those footpaths clear, if the landowner has failed to maintain them. We thank them for their invaluable help and guidance.

I should also like to repeat our thanks to former councillor, Patrick Webster, who not only reports concerns and issues, but also helps in a very practical way but cutting back and clearing obstructions himself. A real community minded effort.

### **3.2 Flooding/Ditches**

The Gorley road ditch continues to require ongoing maintenance in order to minimise flooding in the Mockbeggar area. Some emergency work was carried out last winter which, together with essential monitoring from Hampshire Highways to keep culverts clear, has helped to alleviate the problems. A site meeting is to be arranged with the Flood & Water Management Team from HCC in order to work with them.

Many of the ditches are small or get trodden in by grazing livestock plus the culverts are old or are of too small a diameter or are not kept clear! Please do your part if maintenance is required on your own property.

### **3.3 Verges/Parking**

Understandably people wish to park their cars or horse boxes in order to walk or ride out to enjoy the Forest open spaces. The downside is the extremely limited designated parking areas on the western edge of the Commons, other than the National Trust's

Rockford Sandpit. This is an ongoing issue we are trying to address, but very much in association with the Western Escarpment Conservation Area Steering Group.

### **3.4 Parish Lengthsman Scheme**

This scheme enables ongoing maintenance tasks in the parish to be carried out by an appointee shared between parishes in the north-west of the Forest. We provide a monthly list of tasks including things such as ditch maintenance, cleaning road signs, minor repairs and generally tidying up the parish area.

### **3.5 King's Oak**

I am grateful to Cllr Richard Loader for initiating this project which has the intent of extending the life of this venerable ancient Oak. An action report was commissioned from Jeremy Barrell Tree Care that we are now working with land-owners and relevant statutory authorities to implement. It is going to be a challenge to stop people walking around the tree where the Dragon's Teeth currently are, temporary fencing would seem to be the next course of action to try and reduce further damage.

## **4. Community Matters.**

### **4.1 Planning**

We have been actively involved in consultations and the planning process for a number of significant schemes affecting our area including Linford Park Nursing Home, Snails Lane proposed housing development, the Dorset Local Plan with its impact on Alderholt and the surrounding infrastructure and a very recent application for the extraction of deep sand at Purple Haze on the B3081 Verwood Road.

### **4.2 Community Funded Initiative**

At last, the proposed works along Ellingham Drove and at Linwood to improve visibility and signage have been scheduled for later this year. This is a combined scheme between Hampshire Highways and the Parish Council, each contributing a proportion of costs.

### **4.3 Dodington Trust and Parish Council Grant Scheme**

Thanks to a new initiative during lockdown, we were able to encourage local young people to apply for some financial assistance with their educational needs. There was good response and we distributed about £1,500 from the Dodington Trust funds. In addition, we made our annual grants to local organisations totalling over £3,500.

## **Conclusion**

I really thought that this year would be a very much shortened Annual Report, but I am afraid I've managed to write more than a few paragraphs!

I believe we should all be grateful we live in such a beautiful area and are fortunate to have a committed council who want to preserve the best of it whilst adapting to changing perceptions and demands.

I just wish to say a huge "Thank you" to all the Councillors, our Clerk, the County and District representatives, the many professional and voluntary organisations and not least our residents for your continued support and assistance.

Chairman

Date

## INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Comments raised:

Verges & Parking – concern was raised that this is an ongoing problem, it is hoped that by putting in some Dragon's Teeth in certain areas will help reduce parking on verges, however it would be helpful to be able to put leaflets on car windscreens to remind residents and tourists alike of their responsibility to look after the verges.

Funding for Ellingham Church Hall – query was raised as to whether the Hall could access any additional funds/grants as Ibsley Village Hall have done to help them to recoup lost funds due to Covid-19. DCllr Lane suggested applying to the Business Support & Economic Development Team at NFDC

CCllr Thierry stated that he had given a £1,000 grant to Colin Andrews to use for the Project at Hockeys Farm where several trees are being planted. It is hoped this project will also help with the water running down the ditch line and flooding, giving a wider community benefit.

CCllr Thierry informed Councillors that he had stepped down from the NFDC Planning Committee, enabling him to be more vocal on local large-scale developments. CCllr Thierry is very concerned about affordable housing only being set at 50% on new applications and that often gets reduced. It is not in the interest of our residents who need affordable homes, and there are criteria set for local people to buy.

DCllr Lane raised that the road widening roadworks on the A31 has started and it will increase traffic on the Gorley Road, being used as a rat run. We need to keep speed down and be careful of wildlife. Flashing speed signs may be useful. CCllr Thierry raised that HCC do have a budget for Speed Indication Device signs every year so we could try to apply for funding to have them put in place.

DCllr Lane raised that it would be great if we could try and link the cycle path on the A338 to Blashford Lakes. There are a couple of footpaths that just stop at the A338.

*The meeting closed at 8.06pm*

### **Dates of forthcoming EHIPC meetings at 7.30pm:**

#### **Parish Council**

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019

#### **Planning Committee**

Tuesday 4th May 2019

#### **Annual Meeting**

Tuesday 4th May 2019