

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting – 11th April 2017

I am pleased to report on Horsted Keynes Parish Council's activities over the last year. This report will also be available on the Horsted Keynes Parish Council web site at www.horstedkeynesparishcouncil.com.

Parish Councillors are all volunteers on the Parish Council and are bound by legislation for their rules and regulations, and represent the whole parish, not just the village. They supported working groups, represented the Parish at other outside bodies, as well as liaised with the electorate, and their work behind the scenes has been enormous.

The Council continues to meet monthly with additional sub-committees and working groups meeting on a regular basis. Attendance at meetings continues to be very high. Members of the public are of course able to attend these meetings if they wish, and are always very welcome.

Planning

The workload of the Planning Committee's members never lets up throughout the year. During their monthly meetings, many applications were reviewed and, where appropriate, comments on these applications were made to Mid Sussex District Council. The Committee seeks to ensure that the views of all interested parties are heard at these meetings which are open to the public, and my thanks goes to all those individuals who have taken the time to attend during the past year.

Toilets, Green, Recreational Ground and Highways

The Toilets, Green, Recreational Ground & Highways Committee members routinely take in their stride a variety of items which take up so much committee time.

Work has begun on a review of the Play Area, examining the need to replace and refurbish the equipment, which has provided a great deal of enjoyment to many children over the years. A tender document has been submitted under the MSDC ESPO Framework Agreement to 9 suppliers, and responses are expected in May.

Much of the work undertaken by this committee is largely unseen, but without which the village would notice a deterioration in our environment – managing the maintenance of the Memorial Pavilion, Play Area, Recreation Ground, Bus Shelter, Public Toilets, Finger Posts, Lewes Road Allotments, The Green, and any other common land areas of the Parish, and the provision of Dog Waste Bins.

Finance and Governance

The Parish Council sets its budget in January each year, which calculates how much money it needs to collect – referred to as a precept - which increased this year by 15%, and forms part of the council tax that you pay. At a time of inflation, we were extremely conscious of the rise in the precept, and its impact on household budgets.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Parish Council's workload has continued to be very heavily dominated by the Neighbourhood Plan.

At the June meeting of the Parish Council it was agreed that we engage the services of an independent specialist to review all the representations received during the statutory 6 week Pre-submission period of the Neighbourhood Plan, which ended on 26th May. Following the review a report was submitted for Councillors to consider at an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council, which was held in August.

The Parish Council considered the recommendations made in the report, and noted that the further work highlighted needed to be undertaken before the other recommendations could be agreed. The bullet points setting out the further work required were as follows:

- careful consideration of all the 111 representations made during the consultation along with the technical information, illustrative layouts, proposed new access arrangements etc. submitted at that time, including technical liaison where necessary with MSDC, WSCC and High Weald AONB Unit;
- review and updating of sustainability appraisals for potential housing development sites and, if necessary, Habitat Regulations Assessment.

The Council re-engaged the consultant, Chris Bowden, who had undertaken all the work prior to the Pre-submission consultation period, to update our Plan, based on the recommendations identified in the independent reviewer's report. This work was completed in early November and considered at an extraordinary Council meeting later in the month. It was agreed that the Parish Council proceed with 'Option 1' and move forward with the current Neighbourhood Plan.

In January, we received our updated Plan together with associated documents, which were circulated to all Councillors to review. In early February, the complete document set was forwarded to the AONB Unit and MSDC to review. The AONB Unit responded quickly, and all their recommendations were accepted. Unfortunately, MSDC had to delay their response due to changes required to the District Plan by the Examiner. In mid-March Councillor Billy Dye and I met with Judy Holmes (MSDC Assistant Chief Executive), Chris Tunnell (MSDC Head of Economic Promotion and Planning) and Alice Henstock (MSDC

Senior Planning Officer) to discuss the way forward. While it was acknowledged that our Plan was 'in good shape', we were advised not to submit it formally until the position of the District Plan was clearer. At that meeting MSDC agreed to complete their review of our Plan within a week. The outcome of that review has been forwarded to Chris Bowden, our consultant, who will update our Plan by the end of this month. MSDC have also forwarded our Habitat Regulation Assessment to Natural England for their review.

VISIONING leading to a Business Plan

Last year I expressed my disappointment that we did not begin work on a Business Plan owing to our time being dominated by the Neighbourhood Plan, and I am pleased to say that we have now started work.

The subjects to be discussed are:

- Youth (work on the provision of facilities for young people, explore the provision of youth club facilities, etc.)
- Refurbishment and replacement of the playground equipment, and how we intend to fund it.
- Community Assets & Services (e.g. cricket pitch, allotments, tennis courts, public toilets, etc.)
- Sports & Leisure Facilities (encourage organisations in the community which promote cultural and sporting activities, etc.)
- Communications (e.g. review Parish Council's web site, produce a monthly newsletter, promote local initiatives, etc.)
- Volunteering (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, Hackers, HK Help, Friends of Chernobyl's Children, Friends of Westall, etc.)
- Discretionary Grants (e.g. P&P magazine, St. Giles churchyard, local community groups, etc.)

Our vision is to put in place policies and initiatives that will improve the Parish and encourage a greater sense of involvement by the community.

Thanks

This is my second report as Chairman of Horsted Keynes Parish Council and I pay tribute to the work and achievements of all the members of the Parish Council, our Clerk, Michaela Frost, and our Finance Officer, Judith Bowron, who during the last year have devoted many hours of their personal time to the service of the local community.

I would also like to express the Parish Council's thanks to our County Councillor, Mrs Christine Field, and our District Councillors, Mr Chris Hersey and Mrs Linda Stockwell, for their efforts on our behalf.

David Colville, Chairman, Horsted Keynes Parish Council, 11th April 2017.