

ELLISFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017/18

Appendix 1: Chairman's Report

Your Councillors

Members of Ellisfield Parish Council during 2017/18 were:

Caroline Cazenove Vice Chairman	Brocas, The Green
Tim Guinness Chairman	Widmoor Farm, College Lane
Gavin Park-Weir	Homestead, Green Lane
Vicky Reed	Upper Common Cottage, Green Lane
David Richards Retired	September, College Lane February 2018
Rose Taplin	3 Hill Farm Cottages, Green Lane

Your Clerk

Tim Guinness Acting clerk	As above April to September 2017
Peter Raine Sylvia Raine Joint clerks	Church Cottage, Church Lane Since 1 st October 2017

New Clerk

As reported last June, Peter and Sylvia Raine who live in Church Cottage, Church Lane, accepted your Parish Council's invitation to become joint Clerks on the basis they handle the tasks as a team.

The handover to Peter and Sylvia started on 1st October 2017. They are splitting the role – Peter deals with the financial aspects of the role and "project management" clerk activities and Sylvia ensures the smooth running of our meetings and associated paperwork, and handling of the routine administration and correspondence.

As stated then, we are pleased to have found a solution to Mick Walker's sad demise with another Ellisfield appointment which your Council believes does have real positives for a relatively small community such as ours.

Retirement of David Richards

David Richards served on the Parish Council for nearly 10 years. His thoughtful and well-balanced contributions were always much appreciated. His special responsibilities included representing Ellisfield

at the Basingstoke & Deane Association of Parish Councils (BDAPTC), which he regularly attended, and Highways issues. As Ellisfield's point of contact with Highways, he had the thankless task of time and again communicating our pot hole problems. Others would have given up in frustration but he manfully discharged the duty for a number of years, for which we are very grateful. He also, at the time of the flash floods, two years ago, produced a comprehensive map of Ellisfield's grips, drains, culverts and ditches. We are grateful for his service and we will miss him.

The year

We met seven times: in May, June, July, September, November, January and March. This year was a relatively quiet year and no newsletters were published by the Parish Council directly, however EBAG, the Ellisfield Broadband Action Group, circulated numerous communications about the knotty issue of trying to get fast Broadband into the south of Ellisfield.

In addition a letter was circulated asking for Residents permission to send them email communications and to that end to maintain email and telephone contact details.

Individual councillors are tasked with keeping a watching brief on specific areas of interest. During the past year these have been:

Caroline Cazenove	Burial Ground, Hill Farm Pond, Neighbourhood Watch, World War I celebrations
Tim Guinness	Website, Planning, Affordable Housing, Solar Farm
Gavin Park-Weir	Broadband, Land & Property, Veolia, Barfoots Anaerobic Digester
David Richards	Highways, BDAPTC, Environment (until January)
Rose Taplin	Memorial Hall, Environment
Vicky Reed	Footpaths/Rights of Way, Welcome Packs, Allotments

Report on 2017/18- Main Areas of Focus

Broadband to the south of Ellisfield

A working party was established to deal with the issue that Ellisfield South was in great risk of being left stranded as a super fast broadband no go area.

Gavin Park-Weir assembled a group comprising himself, Andy and Ali Swanston, Alix Taylor, Ashley Turberville, Charlie Hellewell, Dirk and Janette Bacon, Richard Adamthwaite and Julian Wright.

The group did great work interacting with HCC, BT Openreach and Redraw (a possible wireless provider).

I will leave it to them to report more fully but suffice it to say we now have both a Redraw solution and a Fibre to the Premises solution potentially coming into place. A real triumph.

Flooding resilience

Last year we persuaded Highways to dig out the silt from the flood pits. This year the problem we sought to address was putting in place a robust system of maintenance of ditches and grips, and working out how to keep culverts and drains in good condition. The former we have now resolved by engaging Steve Brabbin to give the village 30 hours of work per year with his digger under the Lengthsman scheme. The latter still remains a bit ad hoc.

Steve started in January and over the first quarter of the year was able to do 15 hours of work. As a result, the ditches on Bell Lane and the ditch from Sylvan Lea down to the flood pit and the entrance to the flood pits on Furzen Lane are now working better in my opinion than for many years.

Encouragingly it is also pleasing to note that the system seemed to cope very well during the heavy rains in February March,

Planning Applications & Consultations

There were five planning applications in the village that came up for comment by your council – Location of Statue of Archimedes at College Farm; Forge Cottage Garage extension; The Lodge Extension; Langstrath Loft Conversion; Widmoor Farm outbuildings conversion – and two external matters – the proposed MOTO motorway service station at Black Dam; and TAG Airspace control expansion.

Routine Areas of Focus and Other Items

Highways & other rights of way

Regular contact continued between David Richards and myself and Hampshire Highways about potholes, grips, gullies, ditches, silt-traps and grit bins.

It goes without saying that the pothole situation is going from dire to worse. Highways' resources are constrained and the very cold snaps this Spring accompanied by short bursts of very heavy rain have aggravated the situation greatly. Our hope is that if we go on reporting our pothole issues in a reasonably disciplined and forceful manner, they will eventually get addressed.

We can however report finally a success in addressing the large ponds of standing water that regularly accumulate near the bus shelter on the green. A few weeks ago, a thorough job appears to have been done by Highways rodding the drainage pipes and emptying the silt traps on the plot of land at the Green.

Lastly, we have now carried out the renting of some simple equipment to enable us to measure traffic volumes and speeds along the Axford Road and now have the results of roughly 10 days of traffic. On average, in every day about 160 vehicles travel at over 37 mph despite the 30 mph speed limit and 4 of them go over 50 mph.

Burial Ground

There was three burials/ashes interments during the year those of Jean Dyson who used to live at Mayfield, Green Lane; Mick Lunn who lived at Northgate Farm; and Desmond and Jo Gurd.

Maintenance of Land and Property

Ellisfield Volunteers continue to mow the Burial Ground; Lower Common; and Gravel Pits for the Parish Council and their quote of £1,450 for 2018/19 which was the same as in 2017/18 was gratefully accepted.

As always, many thanks go to all those who volunteer for the mowing schedule and other ad-hoc activities such as Hill Farm Pond maintenance and autumn clear-ups. The mowing schedule can be seen on Paul Turner's village website.

A decision was taken on new noticeboards. It was decided to replace all of the old ones in one go viz the noticeboards on the two bus shelters and the main noticeboard on Lower Common. Funding for this has come principally from grants received from Barfoots (Anaerobic Digester) and Laings (Solar Farm) and for which we are grateful.

Repairs to the Bus shelter at the bottom of Green Lane were also completed very recently.

Affordable Housing

Two vacancies came up this year. Pleasingly both were filled by individuals with local connections. A vacancy in Farriers Field last summer was filled by an individual who had been living in the village for a year and a vacancy in Canon close was filled with the widowed mother of an Ellisfield resident.

Liaison local businesses – Barfoots Anaerobic Digester Plant; Solar Farm; Veolia site:

Barfoots and Laing (Solar Farm) continue to support the community with grants. (see under property). Applications for grants to Veolia however have not met with success. Periodic meetings are held with Veolia about the state of the road at the approach to the A339 and lorry parking. The latter seems to be less of a problem now. The former continues a knotty issue and Highways informed the local liaison meeting in January

they had no budget to do the work needed soon.

Hill Farm Pond

The pond continues to flourish and be enjoyed by wildlife and humans alike.

Phone Box

This continues as a mini library/book/DVD exchange and April Carol now keeps that in good order.

Environment

No matters of significance in the year apart from some flytipping in Bushey Warren Lane.

Parish Council Website

Charlie Hellewell continues to do a great job handling this for your Council.

The Fox Inn

Lucy Tuft is now in her fourth year at The Fox. As always, I urge you to give her your support. The Fox is a lovely village pub and we don't want to lose it.

Welcome Packs

Welcome packs continued to be delivered during 2017/18 by Vicky Reed. Recipients included Sean Wheatley (Farriers Field) and Trevor and Joy Pride (Canon Close).

Police and Neighbourhood Watch

We are very grateful to Jane Hannah for acting as the Ellisfield Neighbourhood Watch coordinator.

Litter Picking and other environmental concerns

Litter picking. Our thanks go to our litter pickers - Harry Frankham, Harry Rumpus and Jackson Hellewell who performed this very necessary task.

Memorial Hall

Rose Taplin continues to attend Memorial Hall meetings as the parish council representative.

Allotments

Vicky Reed organised a meeting of the Ellisfield Allotment Growers Association in October. This year there are three vacant plots. A potato growing competition is planned for this summer. New tenants don't be shy.

Finance

2017/18 Accounts

Last year's draft accounts versus the previous year are attached.

2018/19 Budget and Precept

The budget for the coming year versus last year actual is also attached

As you will see, the amount decided on as a precept was £5,521 – again no increase on last year and the council again decided to dip into our parish funds if expenditure exceeded this and our other revenue.

It should be repeated that the precept we are levying is

lower than it might be because of the great contribution by the Ellisfield Volunteers to keeping our public spaces tidy at well below contractor's rates.

Conclusion

I would like to thank my colleagues (Caroline Cazenove, Gavin Park-Weir, Rose Taplin, and Vicky Reed) who all contribute to our common goal of looking after the interests of the village. I also want to reiterate my thanks to David Richards for all his service as a Councillor until he stood down in January.

I am extremely grateful to Peter and Sylvia Raine for taking on the challenge of acting as Joint Clerks.

Finally, I would like to thank Jacqui Matthews for all the help she has provided during the period that I was acting clerk and during the handover period to Peter and Sylvia.

It has been a privilege being Chairman (and acting clerk for part of the year) during 2017/18

Tim Guinness Chairman