

ELLISFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018/19

Appendix 1: Chairman's Report

Your Councillors

Members of Ellisfield Parish Council during 2018/19 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
Andy Swanston	Oak Hill, Green Lane Joined October 2018
Rose Taplin	3 Hill Farm Cottages, Green Lane

Your joint Clerks

Peter Raine Sylvia Raine	Church Cottage, Church Lane
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New Councillor

In October, Andy Swanston kindly accepted your Council's invitation to join the parish council. Andy, as most people will be very aware, has been running the Ellisfield Volunteer's Group very efficiently for quite a number of years. He has now passed these responsibilities on to Graham Simpson.

Council elections

All your councillors agreed to stand for re-election and were re-elected on the 2nd May unopposed.

The year

We met eight times: in May, June, July, September, October, December, January and March. A newsletter was published in August and a survey of villager's opinions about the possibility of extending speed limits and willingness to assist if a defibrillator was installed in the village was carried out and the results published in November.

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,
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Tim Guinness	World War I celebrations Website, Planning, Affordable Housing, Solar Farm, EVG (joint), Land
Gavin Park-Weir	Broadband (joint), Veolia, Barfoots Anaerobic Digester
Andy Swanston	Highways, Broadband (joint), EVG (joint), property on parish land
Rose Taplin	Memorial Hall, Environment
Vicky Reed	Footpaths/Rights of Way, Welcome Packs, Allotments

Report on 2018/19 - Main Areas of Focus

Broadband

Fibre to the Cabinet Broadband was installed in the North of the village in late Spring 2018.

The working party (EBAG) for Broadband for the south of the village completed their great work that was started last year to prevent the south of Ellisfield being left without fast broadband. To do this, they interacted with HCC, BT Openreach and Redraw very effectively. This culminated in a contract being entered into with HCC to bring Fibre to the Premises (by the pole) by the end of 2019. To achieve this, residents had to raise 50% of the funding and this was matched by HCC.

The contract was signed in July. Since then EBAG has been monitoring progress which has necessitated certain permissions being obtained by BT Openreach from the Government. This has been a rather more drawn out process than originally hoped but thanks to regular interaction by EBAG the go live date which at one stage looked to have slipped to 2020, is still hoped to be November 2019 and there is very good breaking news in that BDUK, the Government department concerned, gave their approval this week.

Separately, Redraw installed a mast behind the houses to the south of Lower Common which enables fast broadband by wireless to be signed up for in the intervening period.

World War 1 Centenary Celebrations

One of the highlights of last year was the First World War Centenary celebrations held in the village hall on Saturday 10th November organised by a working party chaired by Caroline Cazenove. The evening included

a very interesting presentation by Gordon Dunse, World War I songs sung by the Belles of St Martin's, supper and rag time dancing. Also a children's event and decoration of the hall took place before the main event. It was agreed that the evening was a great success as can be seen on the Ellisfield Village Facebook Group photo section.

Flooding resilience

This year work continued on maintaining and improving our network of grips, ditches and flood pits. In particular Highways' agreement to digging out the silt from the flood pits to the south of the Axford Road and by the gravel pits was secured in return for a contribution by Ellisfield volunteers to clear the area of brambles and other vegetation in preparation for the digging out. This work by the volunteers was coordinated by Andy Swanston and took place on the 9th February and we expect Highways to do the digging out very shortly.

Steve Brabbin played an invaluable role as our Lengthsman. His achievements included opening up a third flood pit off Furzen Lane; keeping the main ditch into the main Lower Common flood pit in good condition and digging out over 75 grips off Ellisfield's lanes such as Green Lane and College Lane.

Other work achieved in the year included organising Highways to do some work on the drains off the road near the bus stop south of the Green. Flooding at this point has been a near insoluble problem for many years but it does look as if for the moment the problem has nearly gone away. We also have been in contact with Highways over a catch pit that was revealed by Steve's work along Furzen Lane and we have drawn to their attention some drains at the bottom of both Green Lane and College Lane which are not working as they should.

Speeding Survey

Following on from the project last year to measure speeds on the Axford Road and engage with Highways on the possibility of installing pinch points to slow the traffic, it was decided to widen the area for traffic calming to the whole village and to explore residents' views on this by making a survey of where, if anywhere, residents would like to see speed limits extended to. The results were put up on the website in December. It showed that the majority of residents in Green Lane would like the 30mph speed limit extended to it and the majority in Church Lane, Bell Lane and College Lane were against extending it in those lanes. Investigating whether Highways will act on this is on-going.

Planning Applications & Consultations

There were nine planning applications in the village that came up for comment by your council – Widmoor Farm outbuildings conversion, Mulberry House extension, Freeman's Cottage cattery, The Thatched

Cottage windows, The Old Manor swimming pool and four others relating to tree felling. In addition, your council commented on the erection of the mast behind Tanglewood and four external matters – the proposed MOTO motorway service station at Black Dam; Biogas Upgrader at Herriard Biopower and the extension of the timeline before the Veolia compost site has to be restored to its natural environment from 2025 to 2030; a shortening of the notice period for producing a plan for doing this from seven years to two and lastly your council wrote in support of Cliddesden Parish Council to uphold the decision not to allow the building of houses on land at Farleigh Road, Cliddesden.

Routine Areas of Focus and Other Items

Highways & other rights of way

Regular contact continued between Peter Raine and Hampshire Highways about potholes and road signs

Burial Ground

There were two burials/ashes interments during the year those of Stefan Bialik who lived at Guillemot; and Mrs Syms who used to live at Greystones.

During the year, Marcus Rule made a generous offer to donate an extra strip of land to the burial ground. Peter Raine and I are working on organising the conveyance of the land and grant funding to assist with moving the fence.

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 £1,645 for 2019/20 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.

The decisions taken last year to replace three more noticeboards and to re-varnish the new noticeboard installed three years ago, were successfully actioned during the year. As residents are probably aware, funding for these came principally from grants received from Barfoots (Anaerobic Digester) and Laings (Solar Farm) and for which we are grateful.

The balancing beam item among the children's play equipment on Lower Common had become unsafe and was repaired.

A new bench commemorating Sally Adams was installed at the gravel pits and the existing bench there moved to the burial ground.

Affordable Housing

One vacancy came up this year (very recently) at Farriers Field and this looks likely to be filled by an individual with a local connection.

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). Periodic liaison meetings are still held where issues such as pot holes, litter, solar inverter noise, Veolia smells, and traffic to and from the sites, are discussed.

Hill Farm Pond

The pond continues to flourish and be enjoyed by wildlife and humans alike. We are now looking into whether enough time has passed to enable us to register it at the Land Registry in the parish's name.

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.

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 fifth 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 2018/19 by Vicky Reed. Recipients included Marcus and Lucinda Rule (the Old Manor), Adrian Hamilton at the Bell House and the new residents at Meadowview.

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 and Jackson Hellewell who performed this very necessary task. At the end of April, Jackson stepped down and was replaced by Seren Hamer.

Memorial Hall

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

There was discussion during the year as to whether we should take over a project to install a defibrillator in the hall but in the end, the Memorial Hall committee decided they would take it forward and we passed on the list of residents who had indicated a preparedness to help with such a project.

Allotments

Vicky Reed continued to support the Ellisfield Allotment Growers Association. The number of vacant plots has now reduced to one. The potato growing competition last summer was a great success.

Finance

2018/19 Accounts

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

2019/20 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, Vicky Reed and Andy Swanston) who all contribute to our common goal of looking after the interests of the village.

I am extremely grateful to Peter and Sylvia Raine for rising so well to the challenge of acting as Joint Clerks.

It has been a privilege being Chairman during 2018/19.

Tim Guinness Chairman