

Sparsholt Parish Council Annual report 2017/2018

As Chair of the Parish Council I am pleased once again to report on the past year and to look at the challenges we have ahead of us in the coming year.

Councillors

We have 9 Councillors representing Sparsholt who bring a different range of skills and volunteer their time to ensure we listen and act to the benefit of all in the Parish. We hold our meetings every month on the 3rd Thursday of the month. With so many planning applications to deal with we have a general meeting every other month and a dedicated planning meeting on the other month. We have small finance committee and form other subcommittees with the full Council agreement when the need arises.

This is my team

Stewart Wooles as Vice Chairman looks after Highways and is also Chair of the Finance group.

Nigel Reid looks after the Playground is responsible for the safety and maintenance of the equipment. Nigel also looks after the PC interest in the village shop.

John Little looks after Communication and continues to assist our clerk in maintaining the village website. John coordinates the distribution of the village newsletter and also is a member of the Finance group.

Sue Annesley is our Northwood Park area Councillor and looks after the PC asset register and is also our Village Hall representative.

Andrew Osmond (OZ) holds the portfolio for Security and Transport. He regularly updates the Councillors on Countryside alerts and other notifiable events occurring in the area.

Katy Cobbold is our School Governor Councillor and this past year has seen her heavily involved in the recruitment of the new Headmistress for the school.

Pete Chadwick is our portfolio holder for Footpaths and has probably found this past year an opportunity to appreciate the need to act promptly when trees and other weather generated hazards give us cause for concern for personal safety.

Jo Alexander has now been with us for just over a year and already is contributing and involving herself in village matters.

Jo and Nigel both have Legal backgrounds and we are assured that they will do their best to make sure that the PC remains both compliant and acts accordingly within the constraints we must comply with.

Finally, Jill Judge our very organised and diligent Parish Clerk. We share Jill with Crawley and Headbourne Worthy now which often means we can forge even closer links with our neighbours.

To my team I say thank you for all your hard work and commitment over the past year to both me and the village.

What have we been up to over the last year?

Well it has been another busy year for us dealing with planning applications and looking at the outcome of the Parish Plan Groups recommendations.

We have regular updates from the Case Officer on the progress of the AD at Sparsholt College and have also involved our MP Steve Brine. We are aware of the Fiddington application by Ecotricity and that their Borough Council rejected the initial application for the same AD facility near their village. Ecotricity then re submitted a more detailed traffic plan. The resubmission was also declined by the Borough Council and Ecotricity then lodged an Appeal which was then subsequently withdrawn.

You will all be aware that we have last week received details of an application to vary conditions to various parts of the approved AD plant and the educational building. I have spoken to the case officer and requested and had approved an extension to the PC comments to enable us to have a little more time to discuss and obtain further detail. Ecotricity are sending a representative to our next PC meeting on May 17th at 8.30 pm. We will then make our comments on this latest change. In the meantime we urge residents to carefully read the current application and make any comments they may have to Parish Councillors or to the planning department.

Parish Plan

Sue Annesley worked closely with the Parish Plan working group to refine and produce the draft Parish Plan. We thank her for her representation on our behalf.

Our roads and traffic are still a major concern for us and after the past winter, it would be very helpful if all residents report the nearest pothole to them. There is money available to repair these holes and it beholds all of us to ensure we report them.

WCC and County Council

Caroline Horrill as the Leader of Winchester City Council means she is even busier, but still fully commits to her role as our City Councillor and attends our PC meetings. Caroline thank you for all you do for us.

We welcome Jan Warwick as our New County Councillor having been elected in May 2017. Jan is also a City Councillor involve in key projects for Winchester.

Jan has already awarded some grants to village groups and regularly attends our bi monthly general meetings. We look forward to working with Jan in the future.

The new CEO of Winchester City Council came to one of Parish Council meetings and was willing to listen to Councillors concerns about our working relationship with WCC. Since then we have also had welcome visits from Julie Pinnock the Head of Planning Development and The Head of the WCC enforcement Team.

What Next?

We have new Data Protection legislation coming in for which our clerk has been fully trained on. All Councillors will be using official council registered email addresses from the end of May this year.

More detailed work will be done to achieve as many of the Parish Plan recommendations as possible. This will take some time because as you will appreciate liaising and justifying our desires with the required public authorities is not always a prime concern for others.

We anticipate that the Church Farm application will arrive shortly and will keep all residents informed of progress.

We have City and Parish Elections on May 3rd in the Mosaic Room of the village Hall. I am pleased to report that all of the Parish Councillors indicated that we are willing to stand for re-election and we have since heard that there will not be a contested election for the Parish Council. However you will have the opportunity of voting for your choice of City Councillor. We have 3 for our area which is the Micheldever and Wonston ward and this year only 1 of the 3 Councillors is required to seek election.

Fly Tipping

You will all have noticed the increase in fly tipping in the area. All I can ask is that we all keep our eyes open and report any suspicious activity. WCC have successfully prosecuted a number of cases. Take a note of any vehicles number plate or name on the side of the vehicle. I would not advocate tackling anyone concerned but mobile phone with cameras on them can be very useful.

Finance

I am taking this opportunity to remind you that with ever decreasing money coming from Central Government to Local Government, we as the 3rd and lowest layer of local government will see less coming to us to be able to run the Parish. We will see half of our grant from WCC this year and absolutely nothing in 2019. By prudent financial management and routine small increases in the Precept the PC has as previously reported anticipated the reduction and removal of the WCC grant and is still currently in a sound financial position.

Appreciation

I would now like to conclude with a few words of appreciation.

To Ian Hay and Richard Summerfield retired Parish Councillors who both continue in a volunteer capacity, to report on footpath issues in the case of Ian now working closely with Pete Chadwick and Richard who organises the village clean ups and provides very welcome rewards in the way of hot drinks and at the last one - Hot cross buns and Easter eggs for those that turned out to help.

Charlotte Chadwick has will shortly relinquish her post as volunteer playground checker, having done this for a few years we thank her for her contribution. If we have a volunteer out there to take her place it would be greatly appreciated.

All those people who came to help with the village clean up and trudged our very wet lanes and footpaths collecting the rubbish discarded from commuters and visitors to our village.
Thank you

Thank you to the Parish Plan working group for producing a plan that is now held with our VDS and conservation Report in Winchester. All plans these will now be considered when a planning application is submitted.

Thank you to the Ham Green Volunteers and the shop Volunteers for keeping the shop open, to the school for providing a safe and happy environment for our children to develop.

You are all what makes Sparsholt one of the most desirable villages in Hampshire.

Sue Wood

Chair.

April 2018