

Sparsholt Parish Council Annual report 2016/2017

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

It is important to remember that as Parish Councillors we are all unpaid volunteers who try to do the best for our village with no remuneration or other intent other than listen to what our residents want and aim to achieve what we can within financial constraints. More of that later - - -

We said a reluctant farewell to Richard Summerfield at the end of 2016 and after years of tireless support to the PC as our Memorial Hall representative we wish a very happy retirement. Well almost! It seems that these days none of us actually do fully retire because Richard has agreed to still be our man in charge of the village clean up. In the same way that when Ian Hay retired more than a year ago, Ian still keeps an eye on and personally repairs our footpaths on an ad hoc basis. This is what caring for our village means to people and we thank both Richard and Ian for their continued commitment.

There are 9 Councillors representing Sparsholt and each one, after a period of induction and ensuring being a Councillor is for them take over a particular portfolio of their own.

This is my team

Stewart Wooles as my Vice Chairman looks after Highways and also Chairs the Finance group.

Nigel Reid looks after the Playground and is ably supported by Charlotte Chadwick, together they ensure the safety and maintenance of the equipment. Nigel also looks after the PC interest in the village shop.

John Little looks after Communication and has this year been assisting Jill in updating 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 has succeeded Ricard Summerfield as the Village Hall representative.

Andrew Osmond (OZ) holds the portfolio for Security and Transport which hopefully doesn't give him too onerous a task because as a busy Farmer his time is precious. However being out and about does mean he sees and hears a lot too. Oz's contribution to the details of the supply chain to the forthcoming AD has and will be a continuing asset to us as a PC.

Katy Cobbold is our School Governor Councillor and despite having 3 children and a part time job is such a valuable member of the Council. It is good to know that we have young people on the Council who want to take an active part in what happens in our village.

Pete Chadwick (husband of Charlotte who helps with the playground) has completed an induction course for new Councillors and will this year be looking to adopt a portfolio of his

own that takes his particular interest. Although Pete works away some of the time his contribution and enthusiasm is appreciated by us all.

Jo Alexander joined us in January following Richard's retirement and again we have a younger person with small children wanting to be involved with the interests of the village. With both Jo and Nigel with Legal backgrounds 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 who does beyond her remit and is a very organised and diligent clerk. We share Jill with Crawley and Headborne Worthy now which often means we can forge even closer links with our neighbours. In times such as these this is very useful.

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

2016

Briefly- What have we been up to over the last year?

Well it has been both Euphoria and Despair. I am talking about the infamous AD. In April we successfully persuaded the Planning Committee to reject the huge Industrial size AD construction at Sparsholt College with all but one planning committee member supporting the application.

We fully support the College in their quest for building an Education centre for the teaching of renewable energies but we felt to build along-side it something the size of a miniature oil refinery was a step too far.

In September Ecotricity resubmitted their application with a more detailed transport plan on what they considered to be the only reason for the initial application refusal. Despite an overwhelming number of objections and 7 parishes saying please listen to us and refuse this application the planning committee decided to grant permission with a long list of conditions to be met before building can commence. You may not be surprised to hear that as a Parish Council we are actively monitoring that all the conditions are met.

Other Planning applications received this year total around 20 and we endeavour to meet and discuss these applications with the applicants to ensure that WCC get supportive or otherwise comments from us.

You will all have noticed the alterations to the exit from Church Farm and be wondering what is happening next? Well so are we. The Church Farm development approval 3 years ago has now expired and we await to see what comes in next.

WCC and County Council

It is with enormous pride that we congratulate Caroline Horrill on becoming the Leader of Winchester City Council and although she is even busier now she still fully commits to her role as our City Councillor and attends our PC meetings. Caroline thank you for all you do for us.

Phil Bailey as our County Councillor is not seeking re-election in May and we wish him all the best for his future. Thank you Phil for working with Stewart to finally get the flooding at the plough situation sorted at last. Your generosity in awarding us several grants for village groups and amenities is also greatly appreciated.

What Next?

Communication

With a new CEO and a new City Council Leader we look forward to more open and collaborative cooperation with the City Council. We have also updated our village website to provide more information and easier access.

Finance

We must remind ourselves 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 next year and absolutely nothing in 2019. By prudent financial management and routine small increases in the Precept the PC has anticipated the reduction and removal of the WCC grant and is currently in a sound financial position.

Parish Plan

We have had a very small group of volunteers working on your behalf to produce a Parish plan that will sit alongside our VDS and Conservation Plan to make sure that any development and new builds fit within the vision for Sparsholt and the whole Parish.

You will hear this evening feedback from the Parish Plan Working Group on what it is you the Village residents want to see. The Parish Council will then work to achieve as many of these requests as we can, providing the finance and our capability is there to do it.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to all the residents and volunteers in the village that support the village clean ups, the village shop, the church, Ham green volunteers and our village school. You are what make Sparsholt one of the most desirable villages in Hampshire.

Thank you for listening to me

Sue Wood

Chair.