

## **ELSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2018/9**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1 This report describes the main items of business carried out by the Council during the financial year 2018/19. It is available on the Council website ([www.elstead-pc.gov.uk](http://www.elstead-pc.gov.uk)).

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS**

2 The members of the Parish Council are Mrs Kathryn Brooke, Mr Leif Davidsen, Mr Roger Gardiner, Mrs Joan Holroyd, Mr Roger Holroyd, Ms Jane Jacobs, Mr John Mathisen, Mr Patrick Murphy. and Mr Richard Rees. At its May 2018 meeting, the Council re-elected Mr Murphy as its chairman and elected Mr Davidsen as its vice-chairman. Ms Jacobs was re-elected as chairman of the Planning Sub-Committee. The Council is again grateful for the regular attendance at its meetings of Councillor David Harmer (Surrey County Council) and Councillors Jenny and David Else (Waverley Borough Council).

### **FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

3 In 2018/9 the Council received £68,868 and spent £61,095. The main items of expenditure in the year (other than administrative costs and sundry maintenance items) were: tree surgery/maintenance (£7,741), grass cutting (£7,750), the maintenance of recreational equipment (£4,264), maintenance of the recreation grounds (£4,074), further preparations for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan (£3,801) and servicing the three village defibrillators (£1,400). The Parish Council was pleased to support the following organisations this financial year; Citizens Advice Waverley (£500) and The Clockhouse (£785). Both groups provide a lot of support for a number of Elstead residents.

4 The precept for 2018/9, at £40,000, is +5% versus 2017/8. The end of year balance for 2018/9 is £56,015 versus £48,242 in 2017/8.

5 Parish Council expenditure continues to show a rising trend. This is partly because of new requirements, including the Neighbourhood Plan and the programme of tree maintenance, but also because the Council is having to take over financial commitments from both the County Council (eg rights of way maintenance) and the Borough Council. In the case of the latter, our receipts from the Borough Council's compensatory grant, which used to provide 50% of the Parish Council's expenditure on recreation and leisure facilities, have been continually and substantially reduced over recent years and now represent only 25% of relevant expenditure. The result is the council tax payers in the parishes in Waverley having to pay twice for their recreational and leisure facilities (ie in council tax payments both to Waverley and the parish) and are consequently at a significant financial disadvantage compared with their counterparts in the main towns in the borough. WBC has advised the Parish Council that it will be phasing out the compensatory grant and local support grant within the next two years. The Parish Council will continue to challenge WBC to retain it.

6 The combined effect of these factors has meant that the Council concluded it would need to make a substantial increase in the parish precept for the 2019/20, amounting to just under 50%. The increased amount raised (£20,000) will be spent mainly on consultancy work related to the final stages of the NHP, further tree maintenance and survey work, and the replacement of the toy train at the Jubilee Play Area.

## **2018/9 MAIN OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

7 The Council again determined that its main priority for the coming year should be the further development and completion of the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP). A draft of the NHP was issued for public consultation in July 2018. As previously noted, this draft did not include allocations for housing sites owing to disagreement between the NHP Steering Group and Waverley Borough Council (WBC) over the definition of a new Green Belt boundary for the village in order to accommodate the 60 or so new dwellings required to be found in accordance with WBC's Local Plan Part 1.

8 In parallel with the consultation, WBC issued its proposals for its Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2). These included plans for housing sites in the village, under which most new development would take place on two locations in Hookley Lane. These proposals received over 90 adverse comments from respondents in the village, the bulk of which supported the Steering Group's plans for the majority of new homes to be built closer to village services at a site at Sunray Farm.

9 While both these consultations were being undertaken, the government issued new planning guidance which as from January 2019 enables NHPs to make minor modifications to Green Belt boundaries to provide land for housing (previously, this power was reserved to the Borough Councils). In the light of this changed guidance, and the adverse responses to WBC's proposals for LPP2, our local Borough Councillors, David and Jenny Else, arranged a meeting between Steering Group representatives and the leader of WBC, Councillor Julia Potts, to discuss the best way forward. The outcome was an agreement that the definition of the Green Belt boundary and the allocation of housing sites should be matters to be determined in the NHP, rather than in LPP2.

10 In consequence, the Elstead and Weyburn NHP will now include housing sites, as well as the matters covered in the draft plan published in July 2018. Because of the changed nature of the plan, it will need to be significantly revised and be subject to a further round of public consultation. To support the drafting of the revised plan, new consultants (Nexus Consulting) have been retained, and further research and technical assistance is being commissioned. This includes a new housing needs survey (now completed), a traffic survey, detailed professional assessments of each of the identified potential housing sites, and a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the NHP's proposals.

11 The aim is to produce a revised draft plan for public consultation in late summer 2019, with a view to submission to WBC and examination by an Inspector in the autumn. This would allow its adoption, subject to endorsement by a referendum, by spring 2020.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **Our Elstead**

12 At its December meeting, the Council resolved, on a proposal from Cllr John Mathisen, to set up a sub-committee whose objectives are to enhance the appearance and image of the village under the name of the 'Our Elstead' campaign. Cllr Mathisen was elected Chairman of the sub-committee. Projects so far undertaken include a Christmas Tree on the Village Green, clearing mud, litter and overgrown vegetation at the picnic area by Elstead Bridge, and a litter pick undertaken as part of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean, with support from Waverley BC.

13 Future projects include planters with summer flowers to be installed on the Green, and bulb planting in the autumn on suitable green spaces in the village. Strong support for all these projects has been received from large numbers of volunteers in the village. The Council is also grateful for support from Waverley BC and from DCB landscapes Ltd, Roger and Joan Holroyd and Vantage Publishing (Stefan Reynolds) for the planters.

### **The Former Federal Mogul/Weyburn Works Site - Development**

14 Planning consent for the building of 69 dwellings, together with a care home, on the former Federal Mogul/Weyburn Works site (located in both Peper Harow and Elstead parishes), was granted on appeal in early 2017. This major former employment site, covering 8 acres, has been lying derelict since the works closed in 2008.

15 The residential part of the site was sold to Clarion Homes, a charitable housing association. Elstead PC and Peper Harow representatives have held several meetings with Clarion Homes and their building contractors Thakeham Homes to discuss issues arising from the development. These meetings have proved to be extremely useful in ensuring good communications and liaison. Construction is now well under way and the first homes are due to be completed early in 2020.

### **Tree Survey and Maintenance**

16 The Parish Council's own land (the recreation grounds, play areas, village greens and the cemetery) accommodates a large number of mature trees whose condition needs to be formally surveyed every two years for safety reasons. The Council accordingly commissioned an expert survey of all its trees in 2017 (at a cost of c.£4,000) in order to identify all those needing attention. A large programme of maintenance work started in 2018, with priority given to those trees needing urgent work for safety reasons. Further work will be required on a continuing basis and the next tree survey will be commissioned for Autumn 2019.

### **Footpath 64**

17 Footpath 64, which runs alongside the River Wey between the Mill and Fulbrook Lane, has been closed for several years following the partial collapse of the riverside bank. This has been a popular and well-used route, which the Parish Council is anxious to see re-opened. It has been in discussion with SCC about a possible minor diversion which would retain the attractive riverside views. SCC have been in extended discussions with the landowner about these proposals. The Parish Council has renewed its offer to fund works which might be necessary to facilitate the diversion.

### **Website**

18 The Parish Council challenged its current service provider who in return reduced the annual service charge by 50%. The Parish Council has started to work on a new village website which it hopes will be ready soon. The website will link to village organisations, have a dedicated events page plus a history/archive page. There will be a separate page also for Parish Council information and Neighbourhood Plan documents. The Parish Council would like to thank Dawn Davidsen and Paul Williams for their help with this project.

### **Parish Council Contractor**

19 The Council's contractor, Richard Knight, continues to carry out minor maintenance and renovation works to its property in the village and to undertake other minor public works of importance to parishioners. These have included the replacement of the wooden bench around the oak tree on the Village Green with a new bench made from local oak. Without exception, this work is carried out promptly, effectively and economically.

### **Parish Clerk**

20 The Parish Council is fortunate to have available to it the services of our Parish Clerk, Juliet (Jules) Williams. Jules has consistently provided excellent support to the Council over the past year, in spite of the heavy workload associated in particular with the Neighbourhood Plan process. I wish again to record our recognition of her efforts in this regard.

P W Murphy  
Chairman, Elstead Parish Council  
May 2019