

ELSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the main items of business carried out by the Council during the financial year 2014-15. It is available on the Council website (www.elstead-pc.gov.uk).

COUNCIL MEMBERS

The nine members of the current Parish Council are Mr Leif Davidsen, Mrs Joan Holroyd, Mr Roger Holroyd, Ms Jane Jacobs, Mr Andrew Jones, Mr Bryn Morgan (who is also a Waverley Borough Council member), Mr Patrick Murphy, Mr Richard Terry and Mrs Anne Thomas.

At its May meeting, the Council re-elected Mr Murphy as its Chairman and Mrs Thomas as its Vice-Chairman. Ms Jacobs was elected as chairman of the Planning Sub-Committee and Mrs Thomas was re-elected as chairman of the Play Area Sub-Committee. The Council is again grateful for the regular attendance at its meetings of Councillor David Harmer (Surrey County Council) and Councillor Jenny Else (Waverley Borough Council).

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 2014-5 the Council received £68k and spent £43k. The significant difference between receipts and expenditure was due to receipt of a large reimbursement of VAT paid out in the previous year (due to play area expenditure), grants for works which were successfully applied for and grant receipts for Neighbourhood Plan work which were not fully spent in 2014-15.

The main items of expenditure in the year (other than administrative costs and sundry maintenance items) were the maintenance of the recreation grounds and village green (£12k), the cost of the Council's contribution to the drainage works at the Thursley Road Recreation Ground (£1,400), and the preparations for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan (£1,500). Grants were made to the Village Hall Trust to assist with its current refurbishment programme (£1,000), to the Clockhouse at Milford (£1,000), to Help in Elstead (£300) and to the local Citizens Advice Bureau (£250). All four organisations provide important services for the parishioners of Elstead.

The Precept for 2014-5 at £29,376 was largely unchanged from the previous year Precept (£29,341).

2014-15 MAIN OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE

At its May 2014 meeting the Council determined its main priorities for the coming year. It agreed that these should be:

- Review the need for a defibrillator
- Updated emergency plan
- Improvement of FP62 in association with Surrey County Council
- Improved drainage on Thursley Rd Recreation Ground
- Reach a decision on whether or not to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan

Defibrillator

The Council agreed that it should investigate the feasibility of providing 24-hour public access to at least one defibrillator in the village, in order to speed up the availability of emergency resuscitation facilities in the event of cardiac arrest. Councillor Joan Holroyd volunteered to investigate and to come forward with recommendations. In parallel, the Billmeir Charitable Trust generously agreed to fund the provision of up to 6 defibrillators for both Elstead and Thursley Parishes, up to a total cost of £7,200.

Following Councillor Holroyd's consultations with the British Heart Foundation and other expert bodies, and the funding offer from the Billmeir Trust, the Council agreed to install defibrillators in three locations in the village: outside the Spar Store on the village green; in the Pavilion at the Thursley Road Recreation Ground; and adjacent to the Tennis Club at the Burford Lodge Recreation Ground. Plans for the installations are now in hand and suitable training will be made available to volunteers on the use of the defibrillators once they are installed.

Updated Emergency Plan

Following the bad weather over Christmas 2013, and the disrupted electricity supply, Cllr Jenny Else called a public meeting which led to the formation of the 'Elstead Emergency Response' (EER), a group of volunteers.

The group led by Sally Barclay, has finalised a plan to provide assistance across our community and specifically to those residents that are vulnerable and those that may become vulnerable living in Elstead, during an emergency. An emergency is defined as any incident or severe weather event that is likely to or has caused disruption to village services for 24 hours or more.

The plan includes arrangements for opening the village hall as an information hub and coordination centre, a list of volunteers with DBS checks, the facility for any parishioner to turn up and volunteer, and if necessary opening up the sports pavilion as a drop in centre.

EER stands as an independent community group. It is not directly managed by the Parish Council, and it can be activated without Council involvement but in agreement with EER the Parish Council will now update its emergency response to utilise this group, its structure, procedures and volunteers.

The Parish Council would like to thank Sally Barclay and her team for all their hard work to produce the plan, which will shortly be published on the parish council website.

Improvement of the Condition of Footpath 62

Footpath 62 connects Springfield with Westhill via the area known as Bonfire Hill. It is a well-used right of way which provides a pedestrian short cut between the two parts of the village. The route had however become obstructed by vegetation and becomes waterlogged in wet weather, making it difficult to negotiate particularly in the winter months.

The Council arranged for its contractor, Richard Knight to cut back the vegetation and to invite Surrey County Council to reinstate the surface of the route using its rights of way volunteer group. The Parish Council agreed to cover the cost of the materials. The vegetation work was accordingly carried out in the early summer of 2014, but the Council is still awaiting the reinstatement work to start.

Drainage Works at Thursley Road Recreation Ground

During the winter of 2013-14, the southern half of the Thursley Road Recreation Ground was subject to prolonged flooding following the unusually heavy rainfall. This meant that no football could be played there between December and March. By contrast, the northern half was reasonably dry as a result of the drainage works carried out there several years ago. This enabled the junior football programme to be maintained, at least in part.

The Council concluded that similar drainage works therefore needed to be carried out on the southern section. These were completed in the early autumn, jointly funded by the Parish Council, Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council (via Planning Infrastructure Contribution funds) at a total cost of £3,610. It is gratifying that in the winter of 2014-15 no football matches at the Thursley Road Recreation Ground had to be cancelled owing to wet weather.

Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood planning provides an opportunity for communities to set out a vision for how they want their community to develop over the next 10-20 years in order to meet identified local needs. More specifically, they allow the community to choose where it wants new homes, offices and shops to be built and to have its say on what new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. In addition, parish receipts from the new Community Infrastructure Levy will be doubled for parishes with Neighbourhood Plans.

Neighbourhood plans do however involve a significant amount of work and expense, both for the parish councils involved and for the local community. The Council therefore considered the matter carefully before deciding to seek the views of the village on whether or not to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan. It concluded that on balance the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. The proposal for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, covering the whole of the parish of Elstead together with the Weyburn-Tanshire area of Peper Harow, was accordingly outlined at a public meeting held in November 2014 and attended by over 100 parishioners from both parishes. The meeting overwhelmingly endorsed the proposal. Councillor Jane Jacobs agreed to chair a working party set up to take the matter forward.

The next step was to formally designate the area covered by the plan and to submit this proposal to Waverley Borough Council. This was done in January 2015. At the same time, five groups were set up, consisting both of Parish Council members and parishioners, whose remit is to decide what should be included in the plan under 4 headings: Environment; Heritage and Design; Housing and Community Facilities; Transport, Parking, Utilities and Services and Employment. The fifth group has the specific remit of identifying the best use of the former (now derelict) Federal Mogul site on the boundary of Peper Harow and Elstead Parishes. The work of the groups will be co-ordinated by a Steering Group chaired by Councillor Jacobs (Vice Chairman Dawn Davidsen, Secretary Michael Organe).

The Neighbourhood Plan process is likely to be a lengthy one, probably occupying the next 12-18 months. There is therefore still plenty of time for any parishioners not yet involved to take part in the project.

The Council has decided to increase the precept for 2015-16 by some £7,000 to cover the additional costs of the Neighbourhood Plan process. It has already received a similar amount from Locality, a government funded agency, for the same purpose.

OTHER ISSUES

Superfast broadband

While much of the village has been benefitting from Superfast broadband for more than a year now, there are still many houses that have yet to be able to take advantage. For some of those, they are still waiting for new cabinets to be provided – such as those properties off the Farnham Road, but hopefully that will not be long now. For others in the village and the outlying areas of the parish, there is still no proposed solution available. It was always known that once the main parts of the village were connected, the remaining properties would then get focus. The parish council will continue to review the situation to ensure that some solution is offered to everyone. Additionally as new houses are provided in the village in the future, the parish council will check that Superfast broadband will be made available for those new properties as well.

Electricity Supplies

Following the series of major power cuts affecting the village in 2013-14, and the ensuing complaints from the Council and from parishioners, Scottish and Southern Power Distribution (SSEPD) have been carrying out over the last year a major programme of system improvements, including extensive tree cutting. There have been no major power outages affecting the village over the last 12 months.

Parish Council Contractor

The Council has again relied heavily on the services of its contractor, Richard Knight, to carry out minor maintenance and renovation works to its property in the village. A summary list of the works undertaken by Mr Knight, together with their cost, is contained in the Annex to this document. The Council is grateful to Mr Knight for the work he has carried out, which again has been effected both quickly and economically.

Parish Clerk

Our new Parish Clerk, Elaine Felton, took over from Chris Newman in April 2014. We are very grateful to Elaine for the smooth and effective way in which she has taken up her responsibilities and for her efficient handling of the business of the Council over the past year. Elaine is also Clerk to Thursley Parish Council. Her joint role has enabled greater co-operation and co-ordination between the two neighbouring Parish Councils, which has proved to be a significant benefit to both bodies.

Denis Holmes

Denis Holmes, former Parish Council Chairman, died in February 2015 after a very short illness. Denis served as chairman of Elstead Parish Council from 1999 till 2011, and for several years prior to that as a member. He worked assiduously and tirelessly on behalf of the village, overseeing and facilitating a number of major projects initiated by or part-funded by the Council. These included a large new children's' play area, nearly 40 village allotments and a splendid new sports and community pavilion. He was also heavily involved in other village activities, including the garden and badminton clubs and the meals on wheels service. Denis was held in the highest esteem by his colleagues on the Council, both for the work which he did and for the collaborative and considerate way in which he did it. He will be greatly missed in the village.

P W Murphy
Chairman, Elstead Parish Council
April 2015

Annex 1 - Maintenance Works 2014-15 - Richard Knight

Croft Play Area - mowing, strimming, repairs	76
Woolfords Cemetery - mowing, strimming, spraying, maintenance	370
Jubilee Play Area - new posts, repairs to border	136
Cricket Pavilion/Burford Lodge - top soil and seeding	66
New village signs	89
Posts on village green	66
Hedge cutting - Thursley Road	56
Backland Field - clearance of entrance and field	473
Clearance of drains and pavement by village green	47
Cemetery supervision	140
Village green - reinstatement following car damage	14
New seat installation	117
Gritting	19
Ditch clearing	66
Total	£1,735