

Annual Parish Council review of 2020/21 – May 2021

The last 12 months has been a challenging time for many, and Hursley Parish has been no different with the onset of COVID.

The parish council continued to meet normally and operate the best it could by Zoom.

COVID

The village has had a few cases testing positive, but everyone has adhered to the advice relating to self-isolation and as a result the village and parish has escaped the worst of this pandemic. In the statistics we have been grouped with Olivers Battery as Hursley and Olivers Battery, but almost all the reports of cases and deaths sadly relate to Olivers Battery.

Traffic Calming

We have purchased a new and more modern flashing speed sign for the parish, and this has so far been located at either end of the village. This has the effect of reducing average speeds past the sign by about 4mph when compared with operating the sign in 'stealth' mode, ie active but the drivers are not flashed at. The average speed into and out of the village are being measured at under 30mph (Active and in stealth modes) at the south but at the north, where it is more open, in active mode we are less than 30mph but in stealth mode we are at about 32/33 mph.

So, these signs work.....However, the speed of traffic measured is just an average and not everyone drives at less than 30mph, in fact the police estimate is that a sizeable proportion of speeders caught in villages actually live in the village.

So, if you live in the village, please try hard to keep to 30mph or less.

Additionally we will be buying another new sign shortly (we also have an older one which is now shared with Sparsholt and ???). We have also increased the number of sites that we can use for these signs to include Port Lane, Pitt and Ladwell.

Many thanks to Elizabeth Billingham for organising this.

Assisted by Jan Warwick and Hampshire Council, we have been striving to achieve other improvements to the traffic calming for the village but due to COVID this project has slipped significantly, and we continue to await further input from Hampshire roads relating to this.

Recreation Ground

A re-wilding area has been established at the north end but as re-wilding takes considerable time, this has not yet established itself. Thanks to Angela Elder for this.

The play equipment has been under review and some repairs carried out to our train, slide and 'springy things'. The areas the equipment sits on have also recently been renewed and updated.

Many thanks to Alex Bell who keeps a keen eye on the rec for us all to enjoy.

Message to everyone, well done on the dog poo collections and for keeping it litter free.

Tree Work

A detailed review of all the trees at the Allotment and Cemetery has been carried out and some remedial work is about to start. A detailed review is also about to start for the recreation ground, Church Lane and Glebelands path.

Allotments

A small number of allotments changed hands during the year and a small management team of Martin Waldron, Ian Bawcutt and caroline Killeen are active in updating the terms and conditions and ensuring that every allotment holder gets the most enjoyment from their allotment. There is currently a healthy waiting list as well.

Thanks to Martin for continuing to take on his role as parish councillor for the allotments.

Litter Picking Activities

There have been several litter picking days this year, particularly on Poles Land, A3090, in the village, along Sparsholt road and at Farley Mount.

Some have been organised and some adhoc but many thanks to those who have helped (and you'll know who you are) and in particular to Alex Bell, Mark MacKinnon, Jan Warwick and ID Verde (HCC contractors)

Parish Noticeboards

Although these stem largely from a bygone era before Whatsapp, Facebook and the Internet, we continue to maintain and use these for all to benefit from. A number have been repaired during the year thanks to Elizabeth and Alex.

Glebelands Path

This suffers in a few places badly during wet weather, so we carried out a survey to ask people what they wanted. The decision was to keep it as rural as possible and carry out minor improvements. So, to this end, we have added some additional material in three places to alleviate the worse of the muddiness.

In addition, the new lighting along the path was eaten by squirrels and so this has been strengthened over the winter.

Village Community Shop and Post Office

The shop closed for about a week at the start of Covid and has since been open every day till 1pm (11am on Sundays).

This was enabled by a small team of volunteers who went above and beyond during the year. Many thanks to all of them.

As a result of this, many parishioners from the village and beyond, were able to shield or isolate themselves in the knowledge that the shop would provide. Hundreds of home grocery deliveries were organised for free, and items were sourced from the butchers (who also did not close) and the community shop. The post office was also kept open throughout, providing a lifeline for the sending of goods and gifts to family and friends.

The shop continues at present to operate a 'no customers in the shop' policy and operates from the marquee outside.

Both shops received the £10,000 government grant in 2020 which helped greatly, as did the furlough scheme. Net outcome from the shop and post office for 2020 being in the region of £30,000 profit after tax.

As the shop starts to open up more, including afternoons, we are looking for more volunteers to help so please contact David on 07834 128494

Many thanks to all for your loyal and continued support, please use your shops, both of them.

Broadband

The parish council has been striving to improve broadband speeds in the parish for a few years now and currently about 2/3rds has speeds of 56Mb and the other 1/3rd is stuck at 17Mb

A project to deliver FTTP (fiber to the premises) technology, which can provide up to 330Mb speeds has been under way with Openreach, Hampshire Council and central government. All villagers were asked to sign up for no cost to themselves and sadly a number have not followed up. This means currently that we are some way short of our target grant to cover the cost of this infrastructure. We are therefore currently focussed on how we can bridge this funding gap. This also means that those who did not sign up may be stuck at their existing speed which in turn will cost them to implement in the future and devalue their property when they come to sell. This project will succeed, its just taking a little time as there is only one provider, Openreach. Many thanks to Jan Warwick for her perseverance with this.

Hursley Parish Plan

The parish plan, begun by Michael Arthur and David Killeen a few years ago was at last completed by Mike Watts and Chris Beddoes who were able to pull the final strands together into a cohesive document. This was published in 2020 and remains available on request and on the parish council website. Many thanks to Mike and Chris.

‘Royaldown’ and ‘Save South Winchester’

During November 2020 it was discovered that a proposal to turn all of the land between the village and Olivers Battery, including land between Olivers Battery and Compton, into a 5,000-house estate, lorry park, park & ride and industrial area.

The Winchester housing requirement, as laid down by central government, does not require anything like this number for new housing and there are many potential ‘brown field’ or previously developed sites available.

A project to let Winchester know that this was not a good idea was started in which your parish council was involved.

A dedicated team from Hursley and Olivers Battery was formed which included representation from CPRE and independent consultants met every week for 5 months and a great deal of work was carried out.

This work then coincided with the Winchester Local Plan review and culminated in a well published demonstration (held online) and submission to the Winchester local plan process pointing out why this was an unnecessary bad idea.

A Petition was created with 5,800 signatures, a Facebook supporters page had 1,350 members and a demo with 400 attendees.

We now have to wait until the autumn when it is expected Winchester will summarise its suggested Local Plan and we will have another opportunity to comment.

Many thanks to the team who put this all together on our behalf.

Neighbourhood Plan

Following on from the completion of our parish plan we decided to pursue the creation of a neighbourhood plan about the same time as ‘Royaldown’ appeared.

“A **Parish plan** is a community-led plan which determines the future of the community and how it can change for the better. They are documents that set out a vision for the future of a parish and outlines how that can be achieved in an action plan. The parish plan process included a village appraisal, a household questionnaire to assess the needs and aspirations of local people, participatory appraisals, hands-on interactive workshops, business surveys and the creation of an action plan.”

“A Neighbourhood Plan contains policies to help shape and deliver new development in their areas. Under the terms of the Localism Act, communities can now choose to produce a neighbourhood plan and because this document will become a statutory (legal) document they have to produce it in a certain way.

The Government has set out regulations on how this should be done. Neighbourhood Plans can set out a vision for an area and should contain planning policies for the use and development of land. A Neighbourhood Plan should be developed to help guide development, rather than to prevent it. Policies should cover local issues rather than strategic issues. For example, a Plan could cover where new homes, shops or offices should go and what green spaces should be protected.

Plans should be developed in partnership with the Parish Council, local community groups, Local Authority, statutory consultees, local residents and businesses. They will need to be produced in conformity with Winchester City Council’s Local Plan and national planning policy. If the Plan is adopted by Winchester Council, it will become a statutory document that will be used when determining planning applications.

Neighbourhood planning cannot be used to block the building of the homes and businesses considered to be necessary to meet Winchester’s current and future needs. It can, however, influence the type, design, location and mix of new development. A Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to an independent examination and a local referendum before it can be formally adopted.”

As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan will cost some money to develop.

Consequently, some of the work already carried out by professionals in conjunction with the recent Local Plan submission to Winchester will be used in our Neighbourhood Plan.

As a result, the parish council increased the precept ‘rates’ for the 21/22 year to help pay for this. The amount of money raised in this way will be about £20,000 and will cost the average rate payer about 88p per week. A further £10,000 has been raised from grant funding available to parish councils who decide to generate a neighbourhood plan.

Work will continue this project in the summer.

Planning Applications

Can we please remind everyone that it may be helpful to discuss any plans for alterations to your property with a parish councillor prior to applying to Winchester. This may save you time and money. Thank you.

Best wishes for 2021 and beyond.

David Killeen
Chair – Hursley Parish Council
May 2021

