

BURGHCLERE PARISH COUNCIL

Notes of the Annual Parish Assembly

Held in the Portal Hall, Burghclere on Tuesday 17th May 2022 at 7pm

Present:

Parish Councillors: Richard Carrow (Chair), Andrew Crowley (Vice-Chair), Sandra Whiting, Geoff Morton, Ian Collins, and Julian Parkes

Borough Cllr John Izett
County Cllr Tom Thacker

15 members of the public

Louise James, Head of Grants, Greenham Common Trust (to item 4)

1. Apologies

Cllrs Amanda Wason & Alex Patrick-Smith

2. Welcome - Introduction of Speakers and Councillors

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. To receive and note any Matters Arising from the minutes of the previous Annual Assembly held on 4th May 2021

These had been circulated prior to the meeting and accepted as a true record.

4. Greenham Trust Presentation

Louise James, Head of Grants for Greenham Common Trust was in attendance to mark the Trust's 25th anniversary by giving a potted history of the Trust, structure and governance, how it gives funding including recent and current appeals. The presentation will be published on the website, alongside the minutes.

5. County and Borough Councillor Reports

County Councillor Tom Thacker gave an overview of:

Hampshire County Council – governing eleven of the thirteen districts located within Hampshire and acting as the upper tier of local government to approximately 1.4 million people. He noted the county to be 80% rural, with an extensive network of footpaths, 525 schools and 5,500 miles of roads. The total budget for 22/23 had been set at £2.4 billion. Forthcoming priorities were Pandemic Recovery, Roads/Infrastructure and Climate Change.

County Deal - Hampshire continued to pursue County Deals, despite not being included in the first wave announced as part of the government's Levelling Up Programme. In the meantime, HCC hoped to work alongside Southampton, Portsmouth, and District Councils to create an economic prosperity board.

Waste & Recycling – Cllr Thacker encouraged a national strategy in response to the government consultation on the proposal that householders should not be charged to dispose of DIY waste. There could be a cost increase to accommodate this however.

Cllr Keith Mans - would be standing down as Leader, to be replaced by Cllr Rob Humby, with Cllr Roz Chadd becoming Vice-Chairman.

Cllr Thacker responded to questions raised on road maintenance and the quality of repairs. He encouraged parishioners to continue to report them via HCC and/or the "Fix My Street" App.

The full report is attached at Appendix A.

Borough Cllr John Izett's reported:

He felt the Borough to be in good shape with sound finances.

Housing remained a key responsibility, with continued pressure for more development in and surrounding the Evingar ward, including at Wash Water, Bishops Green, Kingsclere and Sandleford. He noted that residents recognised the need for more homes but wished them to be delivered as part of planned development. He gave an overview on progress being made towards the Local Plan Update.

He congratulated all involved in the making of Burghclere's Neighbourhood Plan, recognising the role it would play in strengthening the Parish response to any proposed developments. He would be working with the PC to ensure the development on the favoured site in Harts Lane would be well planned.

All decisions taken by B&DBC would be looked at through the prism of **Climate Change**, with several actions already implemented, including:

- Introducing several electric vehicles into the fleet.
- Improving the energy performance of the council's buildings.
- Using alternative fuel in the council's mowers.

He encouraged Parishioners to take a look at [Residents Climate Change toolkit \(basingstoke.gov.uk\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/residents-climate-change-toolkit) and [Basingstoke Green Week](#).

The outcome of the elections on **5th May**, during which one third of Borough Councillors were up for election. The new overall composition is:

- Conservative Party - 29 seats
- Labour Party- 10 seats
- Liberal Democrats - 7 seats
- Basingstoke & Deane Independents - 8 seats

Cllr Carr was noted to have been elected as one of the three councillors representing Evingar ward, he had also been put forward to join B&DBC's cabinet.

Cllr Izett noted Burghclere's impressive programme of events being held for the Platinum Jubilee weekend, and he was pleased to have supported the grant application resulting in £1k of funding from B&DBC towards the costs.

He noted his appreciation of all the Parish Council had achieved under the leadership of Cllr Carrow.

Cllr Carrow responded to questions raised by giving an overview of the "Energy Champions" scheme, noting that no one in the Parish was currently trained.

6. Parish Council Report – Cllr Richard Carrow, Chair of Burghclere Parish Council

Cllr Carrow read the following report:

This is the first in-person parish assembly since 2019 and it's nice to be back. We've had 11 meetings over the last year; the first two were virtual using zoom, since then, by government mandate, all have been in person. We've had a couple of meetings where Cllrs or others have joined from outside by telephone/computer but our technology needs improvement to make this viable, and voting remotely is not permitted. The first minute last year was to note the death of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh and the last this year relates to the Queen's Jubilee, which are royal bookends to note.

There's been some turnover in the parish council. Cllr Briony Canning stood down this time last year after 45 years in the public eye. In honour of her service we've erected a plaque. We're very grateful of all the work Briony has done and continues to do. Helen Brierley kindly joined us last year but has sadly had to step down due to other commitments; we thank her for her support. Alex Patrick-Smith recently joined us and we welcome his arrival, although can't be with us today.

We have had another very busy year as we will hear in the following reports. Before getting into detail I want to make a couple of observations.

- 1. Although at the bottom of local government we are affected by government policies. As best we can, we keep an eye on changes to planning policy, levelling up, climate change as well as any changes to local government. We are helped considerably by our County and*

Borough Councillors and I'd like to thank them for their support, not only on roads and housing issues, but also looking at the bigger picture, which is much appreciated.

- 2. I am keen that we and other parishes work closely together. I meet or talk with the Chairs of Newtown, Ecchinswell, Highclere, Ashmansworth and East Woodhay on a fairly regular basis and where we think we ought to act in concert we will approach our MP or elected Cllr representatives. Mindful of cross-County boundary issues we also have occasional contact with WBC. A number of us work with other groups for example on climate change.*
- 3. B&DBC's Local Plan Update continues, and we are consulted at various stages. This will have an important bearing on us, as I shall explain under Neighbourhood Plan Review.*
- 4. Finally you should know that the SofS has approved Bloor Homes application at Sandlesford (Donnington Homes is yet to be ruled on). Bloor covers the Northern part of the site with access onto Monks Lane, which will affect traffic at the Tesco Roundabout, the A339 to the Swan roundabout and the traffic on the B4640 to Tothill.*

Turning now to routine matters:

Issues we've considered or addressed during the year include:

- Potholes & road conditions*
- HGV parking at Tothill*
- Fly-tipping*
- Airplane noise*
- Drains*
- Flooding*
- Speeding*
- Recycling & waste*
- Nuisance vehicles*
- Overgrown hedges*
- Litter*
- Fords/Flooding*

I have no doubt that many or most of these will continue to exercise us in the coming year!

A large proportion of our time is devoted to planning. 38 applications have been considered in the last year and we look at these through the prism of national and local planning policies and our own neighbourhood plan. We welcome the presence of residents and other interested parties for their input to these discussions. We've even had a reporter from Newbury Today attend and publish an article about the Orchard Homes development. I will talk about the NPR later.

Play area. We've started a plan to add additional equipment to the play area and enlarge it to add adult exercise equipment in part of the Portal Hall cottage garden, accessible from the Millennium garden. Work to replace the fences is almost complete and we've installed 2 new gates. The funds for this have almost entirely come from the S106 monies held by B&DBC. The current play equipment has been refurbished and in some areas replaced, such as the chains and swings. As this is maintenance, the costs fall to us and is an ongoing requirement. The

new equipment will be installed in late June through to mid July and will mean some restrictions on the use of the play area during that time.

Policies. We've reviewed, approved and introduced 15 policies and procedures, which can be found on our website.

Finance. We've continued to meet our financial responsibilities, including setting the annual precept and ensuring the audit requirements are met. I'd like to pay tribute to Jacqui who last year got a very good chit from our auditor. I'll let Andrew talk about Pinder, but I'm happy to say that in terms of grants we've given money to the church, the Sports Club for their defibrillator and to Victim Support.

There are a couple of things we've tried to get off the ground and are still looking for any resident or a group to take on:

- climate change. More could be done within the parish and it needs a group of enthusiastic volunteers (not just me with a thermal imaging camera!) to raise awareness and instigate measures similar to that undertaken by Sustainable Overton and others.

- speeding. It's a common complaint and I've asked for volunteers to come forward and similarly set up initiatives along the lines of Ecchinswell's. I hope residents will come forward to help.

Please contact me or Jacqui in both cases if you want to assist.

Cllr Carrow also noted the importance of collecting data in support of arguments about speeding etc. Claims needed to be supported by evidence if they were to be taken seriously by government, County or Borough councils.

7. Pinder Recreational Report – Cllr Andrew Crowley, Chair of Pinder Recreation Trust

Cllr Crowley reported:

- The relationship between the Parish Council and Pinder Recreation Trust, explaining that the Parish Council acts as the Trustee of the Pinder Recreational Trust and in this capacity, a committee, made up of the councillors, takes care of the day-to-day running of the Portal Hall, as well as the upkeep of the Recreation Ground in the village.
- The Pre-School continued to operate during the challenges presented by the Pandemic and remained an important facility for the village.
- Bookings had increased both from private hirers and local groups.
- Income from the Portal Cottage remained consistent.

- Business grants received during the pandemic helped to ensure there would be a reasonable end of year surplus.
- Progress was being made towards commencing the task of replacing the Portal Hall windows. Grant income was being sourced for this project.
- A number of maintenance tasks had taken place including resurfacing the floor and cleaning the eaves. Future plans include upgrading the kitchen.
- The new website continued to be effective and enhanced communication.
- Investments continued to provide a large portion of the Trust's income.
- SSE were bidding for the purchase of the transmitter located on Trust land.
- Energy costs had been kept under control with the help of a three-year fixed contract.

Cllr Crowley thanked all for their support during the year, particularly acknowledging Cllr Whiting for her tireless work and "can do" attitude in dealing with the hall bookings and cleaning. Their support and dedication had ensured the Trust was in a positive position for the coming year.

8. Burghclere Sports Club Report

No one was in attendance to represent the Sports Club, however they submitted a presentation as an overview of their year. This will be uploaded to the Parish Council website along with the assembly minutes.

9. Commons Reports

The following reports were given:

Neill Bruce: Herbert Plantation.

This last winter, from September to end March, a great deal has been achieved by the volunteers in the Herbert Plantation. Last autumn the rangers were able to come and mow the very overgrown verges, which will encourage more wild flowers this Spring. The result of the lockdowns was that the whole wood had become very overgrown, especially in the old larch plot 5A. The main project was to widen this glade area a great deal, and it is now well populated by primroses and other wildflowers. There was also some work done to let more light onto the public Footpath No 6 that runs North & South through the wood. This will help it dry out. More will be done from this September.

The volunteers are still as 2 teams:

Team A is led by Harry Dove, who does the felling, with helpers Samir Hilali, Nick Selsey, Ian Findlay, and Toby Tucker. They usually work on the first Sunday morning of the month, when the duty ranger is over from Yateley.

Team B is led by Neill and Simon Melville, who does the felling, plus Nick Selsey and/or Ian Findlay, and we work weekday afternoons.

Those of you who walk there will be aware that there are a great number of ash trees, most of which are sadly dying from the Chalara disease. It had been hoped to get most felled by now, but it s been difficult to source a contractor. It s now hoped to start late summer after the nesting season. One compartment - 6E - has so many dying ash trees it has had to be closed. Only those ash trees that could fall on a path will be felled.

Neill is having an onsite meeting in June with the area manager and ranger to look at last winter s work, and plan for next winter. It is hoped Team A will open the Compartment 5A Glade Walk a bit more, then return to Cpt 2 to remove the many ancient leaning birch that are now falling with every storm.

Team B will complete the opening up of footpath 6. clear storm damage and carry out any other work that is required.

If you are interested in Herbert then you can find a huge amount of information on Neill's village web site [www. burghclerevillage.uk](http://www.burghclerevillage.uk) including a map you can download to your phone.

Burghclere Common: Simon Melville

Little work was done on Burghclere Common until late August, when Simon & Sue started work on recutting and herbicide-treating regrowth of Holly beside the path along the western side of the Common. They worked on this on 16 days in August and September and were joined one morning by a group of Green Gym volunteers in cutting further scrub between the path and the open heath. 2 bonfires were set to get rid of all the cut material.

Late winter storms brought down a number of Birch and Oak trees and caused damage to several others – some of which Simon cleared up where they were obstructing paths. One large fallen Oak tree near the south east corner of the Common was sold to a villager who removed it for firewood.

No Bracken spraying took place this year nor was any vegetation mowing undertaken on the open heath.

A male Nightjar was heard churring on the Common during several nights in June, and Woodcock were seen on a few occasions.

The Parish Council has now registered the Common with the Rural Payments Agency (part of Defra) as the first stage of applying for a Countryside Stewardship scheme to pay for future management of the Common. At the same time, a new Management Plan for the Common

has been approved by the PC and will form the basis for a Stewardship application in the Spring of 2023.

Earlstone Common: Denis Matthews

The Trustees continue to try to identify sources of income to provide not only for the ongoing maintenance of the common, but also to try and return the common to the condition required under the original indenture.

Simon Melville had been applying for a grant from the Rural Payment Agency, under the Countryside Stewardship scheme, but sadly this cannot be processed until 2023, due to various RPA administrative issues. However, Simon and his team from Green Gym continue to undertake as much ongoing maintenance as they can, for which we are all grateful.

We had also requested several commercial Felling Companies to quote for the task of clearing the bulk of the Pine Trees and selling the timber. Sadly though, even with the increase in global timber prices, we have, as yet, not received any indication that this can be done without the injection of considerable funds from the Trust, a position we cannot accept. However, we will continue to explore avenues that would allow this to be done, with zero cost to the Trust at the very least.

10. Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Richard Carrow

Cllr Carrow read the following report:

Our neighbourhood plan was made a year ago. It has helped us shape development in the parish and has unquestionably helped to see off other proposals such as that by Falcon Developments between the church and St Michaels School. But there is a problem. The protection that it affords us against speculative development effectively lapses after 2 years if B&DBC still doesn't have a 5 year land supply at that point. This takes us to 5 May 2023. B&DBC don't expect to regain their 5 yls until their Local Plan Update completes - hopefully in late 2024. We know from residents' reports that surveys have been undertaken elsewhere in the parish and there is every likelihood Falcon will try their luck again. We have opted therefore to review our plan with enough detail, we hope, to prevent such speculative development succeeding in the 'gap period'. Moreover, the draft Local Plan Update does not give us (yet!) an additional housing allocation so we do not envisage having to undertake another housing survey as we did before. We are still required to consult however and we will be drawing up a Design Code with the aim of carrying out a Regulation 14 consultation in July. The Design Code will update and add more detail to the design policy in the current plan, which will give developers and residents more clarity on this topic. Although timings are tight I hope we can complete the Review before next May.

11. Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Richard Carrow

Cllr Carrow read the following:

Bob Hills remains the POC for all matters NW. I also get material from the Police (Alert Hampshire) and where appropriate either bring them up at a parish council meetings or post on next-door.com.

12. Footpaths – Cllr Richard Carrow

Cllr Carrow read the following:

Many thanks to landowners, farmers and residents whose properties abut footpaths for their help in clearing paths and fallen trees. Thanks too to walkers who help snip back the odd twig or bramble on their wanderings. Where ramblers see something amiss e.g. a broken sign or stile, please report it on HCC's website or let me know. But a reminder: as we move into the growing season: please maintain your hedges where they might impede vehicles or pedestrians. You are under a legal obligation to do so and this is permissible even during the nesting season. Guidance can be found on B&DBC or WBC's websites. On a personal note, I have undergone training and can use a strimmer and/or hedge cutter (one bought by the parish for this purpose) here or in other parishes, with other volunteers. Finally HCC Countryside Services have teamed up with the charity Walking with the Wounded. They will undertake a number of tasks on the footpath network between the disused railway and West St over the coming months. If you encounter them do say hello and thank them for their contribution.

13. Jubilee Events – Cllr Sandra Whiting

Cllr Whiting read the following:

Many of you will have already seen a timetable of events being held here in the village to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Back in January I met with my Parish Councillor hat on invited members of all our village organisations and individuals to a meeting to discuss ideas. The consequences have been we have been able to put together a very good programme of events to celebrate this momentous occasion.

To support these events the PC have been successful in obtaining a B&DBC grant of £1000 which will be spread between the organisations so most events will be free to attend, and we hope enjoyed by all local residents. We are very grateful to B&DBC for their support.

14. Open Forum

During the open forum there was discussion on the entrance to the Harts Lane site for the Orchard Homes development and questions regarding the capacity of the sewage system.

The meeting closed at 9pm.

Appendix A

Hampshire County Councillor Annual Parish Meeting Report 2022

Facts and Figures Hampshire's population is **1,389,200** (2020) the third most populous county in England (85% is rural and 15% urban). Hampshire CC maintains **5400** miles of roads, **4300** miles pavements, **474** maintained schools for 138,000 pupils, **52** academy schools for **38,000** pupils, **10** residential homes for children and young people, **18** Older Persons Care Homes and **5** Country Parks.

Budget HCC approves £2.4 billion spending on local services in 2022/2023

Plans for the next financial year focus on the county's ongoing work following the pandemic, support for vulnerable children and adults, investment in Hampshire's roads and infrastructure to support economic recovery, as well as climate change mitigation.

The annual council tax charge has risen by by 2.99%, of which 1% is for adults' social care. The budget includes £556.2 million of capital expenditure over the next three years to boost jobs, the quality of the environment and to tackle climate change.

The proposed capital programme includes: • £109 million in new and extended school buildings to ensure there is a school place for every child in Hampshire • £136 million for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges in Hampshire over the next three years • £109 million for integrated transport schemes including over £50 million specifically focused on walking and cycling improvements • £95 million for major improvement of school and other County Council buildings and land holdings over the next three years following the £33 million for decarbonisation schemes covering solar PV, single to double glazing window replacements, transition from oil to gas and the implementation of heating controls that took place in 2021-2022

Climate Change Hampshire County Council has been taking active steps to ensure Hampshire is resilient to the impacts of a 2% rise in average temperature and in mitigating further changes through carbon reduction measures. HCC's own emissions have reduced by more than 43%, with more than a 50% reduction by 2025 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

County Deal

"In line with our level of ambition, we are prepared to work through the details of a Combined Authority with a Directly Elected Leader."

“Pan Hampshire’s sub-geography will be reflected through area-based collaboration building on existing partnerships. These will be included in the structure of a Deal – i.e. North, Central, and South Area Groups.”

The County Deal will devolve to a Combined Authority the powers to:

- Deliver strategic services
- Support local businesses
- Develop and control local strategic transport
- Make strategic and long-term investments
- Give adults the skills needed by the labour market
- Control local infrastructure decisions
- Keep the public healthy and safe. This includes control over the Police and Crime Commissioner’s functions
- Rate taxes and business tax supplements towards funding the above.

Hampshire is proposing a Directly elected Leader, rather than a Mayor, to lead a cabinet of County and District members.

Waste and Recycling

In November I wrote to Kit Malthouse and Cllr Rob Humby about the need for a national or at least regional approach to access to Recycling Centres, so that the current cross-border charging, such as that being made by West Berkshire Hampshire Residents’ access to the Newtown Road site, can be resolved.

Last month a government consultation paper was published, which proposes to put greater costs onto waste authorities by allowing DIY waste to be accepted without charge. There was no mention of cross-border charging, so sadly the situation remains the same.

New Leadership

Rob Humby
Roz Chadd