

BURGHCLERE PARISH COUNCIL

Notes of the Annual Parish Assembly

Held in the Portal Hall, Burghclere on Monday 15th May 2023 at 7pm

Present:

Parish Councillors: Richard Carrow (Chairman), Sandra Whiting, Geoff Morton, Ian Collins, Alex Patrick-Smith and Julian Parkes

County Cllr Tom Thacker

19 Parishioners (including representatives of reporting groups and organisations)

Corrine Davis-Cooke - Community Engagement Ranger, Hampshire County Council (to item 4)

1. Apologies

Cllr Andrew Crowley, Borough Cllr John Izett & Denis Mathews.

2. Welcome - Introduction of Speakers and Councillors

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Councillors and the Clerk.

3. To receive and note any Matters Arising from the minutes of the previous Annual Assembly held on 17th May 2022.

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

4. Presentation by Corinne Davis-Cooke – Hampshire Countryside Services

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Corinne Davis-Cooke to the meeting, noting that the parish had benefitted significantly from the support of Hampshire Countryside services.

Attendees were interested to receive a presentation covering the work of Hampshire Countryside Services and volunteering opportunities. The presentation slides will be made available on the parish council's website.

5. County and Borough Councillor Reports

County Councillor Tom Thacker spoke to a report attached as Appendix A. He received and responded to questions raised, including the frustrations raised regarding HCC's approach to the repair of potholes.

The Chairman read a report submitted by **Borough Councillor John Izett** and as attached at Appendix B.

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

The Chairman read the following report:

“Although covid is still with us I’m pleased we can return to in-person parish assemblies; only the second since 2019. We’ve had 14 meetings over the last year and notable royal events: the very successful Platinum Jubilee; the sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and more recently the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. I’m struck by how well activity within the parish can be informally coordinated with and between many various groups and different individuals, and welcome the way communication and working together can get things done. The very successful ‘Burghclere’s Got Talent’ event in the Portal Hall on 4 March was another a good example of this. The PC may not always lead, but we will continue to act in a supportive capacity wherever possible.

Within the parish council, Cllr Amanda Wason has stood down and we thank her enormously for her support over the last few years. We are still one Cllr short should anyone be interested or know of someone suitable.

We’ve had another very busy year as you will hear in the following reports. Before doing so I’d like to make my customary initial remarks.

1. Thanks again to our County and Borough Councillors, Tom Thacker and John Izett for all their considerable support, and in particular the grants we have received from HCC and B&DBC for the Platinum Jubilee and Coronation ceremonies, among others. I extend huge thanks to my fellow parish Cllrs and the parish clerk for their excellent work too.

2. At Jacqui’s suggestion we have instigated an Action Plan that addresses the key tasks that we have to undertake as a Parish Council. Most of these are routine and we also have a separate “Things To Do” list to ensure – for example – the fabric of this building is maintained. I have however added a series of forward-looking (and relatively Big Ticket) Strategic Actions:

- Review the Neighbourhood Plan;*
- Replace Portal Hall windows;*
- Footpath stile replacement.*

We have done the first, we are doing the second - and I have yet to start work on the third!

3. We’ve bid a sad farewell to Frank Knott and his dog Wilf, who has been our litter picker for several years. We’re delighted to welcome Dave McCelland from Wash Water. This role is funded by a B&DBC grant and topped up by MacDonalds at Tothill.

Turning now to routine matters:

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

- Potholes & road conditions
- Fly-tipping & litter
- Airplane noise
- Drains
- Flooding
- Community engagement
- Lengthsman Scheme

As many of these are regular items we will no doubt revisit them in the coming year.

We've also considered other matters:

- *Play area refurbishment. This major task is now complete and includes an adult exercise area. The last task; the fencing with the car park, has just been completed. Many thanks to Sovereign Play, and our fencers Jamie Jamieson and Ben Neville.*
- *Millennium garden improvement. We've removed or repaired the old benches and are very grateful to the HortSoc for their kind gift of a Jubilee Bench and Sam Paull for tidying up. There is scope to add a Coronation Bench, which is under consideration.*
- *E-vehicle charging in the Village Car Park. We are currently scoping the installation of e-vehicle chargers through B&DBC – Sandra will briefly mention this under Pinder.*
- *Finally the FLIR camera. This has proved quite popular – to date 5 people have used it.*

A significant proportion of our time is devoted to planning. 40 applications have been looked at in the last year (up from 38 last year). We consider these through the prism of national and local planning policies and our own (now modified) neighbourhood plan. We have welcomed the presence of residents and other interested parties for their input to these discussions.

On the Orchard Homes development, a planning application was submitted last year on which we made a number of comments. We await submission of a revised application, which we hope will take into account those we and others have proposed. The developers invited us to come up with suggestions for a name for this development (aka Cobbetts View). Briony Canning has mooted 4 under the following themes: historic, geographic, botanic, and Poetic. These are: Battens Field (Benjamin Batten owned this land in the early 19C), Gravelly Close, Mayflower Crescent and Primrose Way – or variations thereof. I invite the audience this evening to reflect on these - and if you wish - come up with comments or other proposals ahead of any formal request from either the developers or B&DBC, at which point we might consult more formally.

Policies. We've reviewed, approved and introduced 21 policies and procedures, which can be found on our website. We've signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge, developed by the National Association of Local Councils and Society of Local Council Clerks.

Finance. We've continued to meet our financial responsibilities, including setting the annual precept and ensuring the audit requirements are met. Thanks to Jacqui's excellent

housekeeping we again got a very good report from our auditor. I'm happy to say that in terms of grants we've donated £800 to the church and £50 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 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. As reported before, I'd welcome any keen parishioners who'd like to tackle this topic."*

7. Pinder Recreational Report

Cllr Whiting delivered a report on behalf of the Andrew Crowley – Chair of the Pinder Recreational Trust:

"Many of you will know the Parish Council acts as the sole Trustee of the Pinder Recreational Trust and as an added duty to being a Parish Councillor we make up the committee who takes care of the day to day running and management of the Portal Hall, Portal Cottage, Sports Club, Village Car Park with some overlap of the Recreational Ground and Millennium Garden.

Taking these in the order mentioned, the management and day to day running of the Portal Hall is done voluntarily. This is a role I can help with and deal with bookings, liaise with hirers, and deal with bookings at the weekends. I am pleased to say the Hall is constantly in use being used Mon – Fri in term time by Pre School, providing a valuable and important asset to the village. The local WI group and Horticultural Club use the Hall for their meetings and events plus every evening we have several different Clubs who use the Hall for various activities. At weekends we host many children's parties, local groups fundraising events, weddings, and private parties. We are pleased to say the Hall provides a welcome income just over £15,500 for the period April 22 to March 23.

Another substantial income received is from the rent we get from the Portal Cottage of £13,000. We are pleased to say that our present tenants have agreed to renew their tenancy for another two years.

We work very closely with the Sports Club and are pleased that they have had a very successful year. Their lease has been renewed for another 5?years. We are happy to support the Sports Club when and where possible and have recently had work undertaken to improve the sports pitch with the help of some S106 monies.

Richard has already mentioned work on the Playground and another initiative the Pinder Trust is working on in conjunction with Basingstoke and Deane is to install EV Charges in the Village Car Park. Funding this venture will be provided primarily through the infrastructure fund with some more S106 monies. Hopefully the installation should begin in the Autumn.

The financial benefit from the success of the Portal Hall and income from some investments that the Pinder Trust holds allows us to invest into its upkeep and enhance its use.

The installation of a new kitchen was undertaken during last year's summer holiday which involved new kitchen units, reconfiguring some of the electrics, new flooring and painting and decorating throughout that area inside and out at a total cost of £24,000. This has vastly improved the look and quality of the kitchen area.

A new 'Hive' heating system was installed at a cost of £3000 which allows us to control the heating remotely making it more efficient and effective. As Andrew mentioned last year, fortunately we have avoided the high electricity costs due to having a fixed contract before the price rise.

You will see the first 2 of 8 new wooden windows have already been installed here in the Hall with the others to be installed during school summer holidays. This is our largest expense and to help we are still seeking grant funding to minimise the use of our own cash. General repairs and maintenance including some small leaks and damp plus the need to cap chimneys and replace guttering and tiles are also needed. We are also looking into improving the lighting system here in the Hall.

Upkeep and maintaining these areas are an all-year-round activity, We are very grateful for the generous support and time given by all Parish Councillors and many parishioners. Richard is our regular gutter cleaner, Ian for electrical work. Alex has helped with windows and roofing issues and Geoff with the Portal Cottage. Thank you for everyone who help in so many ways and that includes our Parish Clerk, Jacqui who keeps us on the straight and narrow!"

8. Burghclere Sports Club Report

Three representatives of the club were in attendance and delivered a report covering:

- Another busy year for the club with member numbers on the increase.
- Challenging year with increased (and still increasing) beer and staffing costs.
- At Financial year close for 22/23 the club recorded a loss as a result of unexpected requirement to replace the boiler & hot water system.
- Obtaining Grants to cover maintenance/new building continue to be top of the Agenda going into 2023.
- Looking forward to more events that include the entire village.
- AGM to be scheduled in June.
- The Railway has continued to grow throughout the year in income and passenger numbers.

- The special events such as Xmas Cracker and Easter Egg hunt have been very popular with the village and fully supported.
- The Catering provided continues to be a good source of income and the “Burghclere `banger” and the “Burghclere Burger” is a firm favourite with all visitors
- Staffing of the railway can be a headache during holiday season and would welcome any new members regardless of experience to help.
- Attempting to build a small development fund to enable us (Subject to relevant permissions) to enhance the railway trip with some new attractions.
- Hoping that later this year they will take delivery of 2 new coaches to increase safety and passenger numbers for the future.
- Update on football teams.

9. Commons Reports

The following reports were given:

Neill Bruce: Herbert Plantation.

We still have the same two teams, and recently welcomed a new volunteer, Simon Smith.

“This last winter’s work period, which runs from Sept to end March, with only coppicing allowed in March, has seen Team 1 managing the completion of the opening up of the Glade Walk in 5A, although it needs some tidying up of log piles, most of which are unusable sawlog. They also took down 3 dangerous birch trees in 2A.

Team 2 started by clearing back some of the holly along the edge of path 1 on the boundary bank with 5A, under the two remaining larch. We have also opened up the northern end of the footpath No 6, in order to let more light in, in the hope it will help it to dry out a bit. Then - at the request of the Yateley Common ranger - Ian Findlay & I have coppiced many of the bigger hazels along the edge of the main track, and at the edge of path 11 through Cpt 3A. This will help to give a wider waney edge and encourage more wild flowers in the verges. Those who walk in Herbert will know that we had to have a lot of dead ash trees felled, where they were in danger of falling over paths. The long lengths are to be collected sometime around the end of May and will be taken to the collection area by the main gates, in order for Hants CC to try to recoup some of the huge amount of money it has cost them around the county. PLEASE NOTE. ALL wood left in Herbert is property of Hants CC, and ONLY volunteers are allowed to take it, from agreed areas, so if you see some unknown man with his chainsaw, (whom we want to identify), cutting up the ash lengths, please try and take his photo or note his car’s number to report to me. It is theft, and they will be reported to Hants CC - and maybe the police. He will probably be on his own and also probably won’t be wearing any safety gear, unlike our qualified operator volunteers!

For those interested in Herbert Plantation, a map is on the main gates, and you can download one from my village website <burghclerevillage.uk> to use on your phone as you walk round or print off.

We had a whole trail of plastic rabbit cut-outs nailed to some 23 trees in the middle of February, ending on a pile of rotting logs in the Glade walk. Whilst we appreciated that children loved it, a) it guided folk down a closed path that had had the sign removed by a vandal, and b) it's a local nature reserve and nail gunning plastic rabbits to trees is not appreciated by HCC, so they were removed on March 18th. after the Easter holidays."

Burghclere Common: Simon Melville

*"**July** - A pair of Nightjars were seen together on the Common suggesting that they may have been breeding here. Single birds have been heard or seen in recent years.*

August - I spent a morning spraying Rhododendron regrowth and scrub – litre dilute Glyphosate.

***September** - I spent a morning clearing fallen Birch and Holly from footpath between Cpts 1 and 9.*

***October** - I attended the Parish Council meeting to discuss the revised Management Plan and a proposal for Countryside Stewardship funding – both of which were agreed by the Parish Council. Sue and I pulled 1550 Holly seedlings from SE corner of Common (Cpt 10) in two afternoons.*

***December** - I met Harold Makant, of Natural England, on site to discuss proposed Countryside Stewardship application.*

***January** - I spent a morning felling some of the Sallows from the old pond area in the SE corner of the Common (Cpt 10).*

***February** - Volunteers from Newbury and Thatcham Green Gym spent a morning helping me to clear up the Sallow that I had cut in January.*

***March** - Sue and I spent a morning burning the cut Sallow. I pulled a further 820 Holly seedlings from Cpt 2.*

It should be noted that the majority of practical management work takes place on the Common during the winter months so as not to cause disturbance to wildlife. However, there are some activities, such as spot-spraying of scrub regrowth (or Bracken spraying), that have to take place during the Summer period when plants are in growth and when the weather is suitable.

Following agreement of the new Management Plan by the Parish Council and their agreement to pursue an application for Countryside Stewardship funding, I spent several days working up an application which was submitted to the Rural Payments Agency by the Parish Council in midFebruary 2023. If agreed, the Parish Council should receive c£1,200 each year for the (initial) 5 years of the Countryside Stewardship Agreement (starting in January 2024) to fund the implementation of the Management Plan for the Common"

Earlstone Common: Simon Melville (on behalf of Denis Mathews)

***April** - Green Gym volunteers spent two mornings cutting and clearing Holly from the west side of Cpt 1. I spent a morning felling larger Hollies for Green Gym to 'process'.*

***July** - I spent a further morning felling larger Hollies for Green Gym to 'process'.*

***August** - Green Gym spent two mornings processing Holly for future burning (in suitable weather). I spent a further two mornings felling Holly in advance of Green Gym visits.*

***September** - Green Gym spent another morning processing Holly.*

***October** - Denis and I met a representative from contractors Euroforest to revitalise the felling proposals that had been discussed with them before Covid struck in early 2020. He subsequently confirmed that they would be interested in carrying out the work. I spent a morning preparing 2 sites for bonfires of Holly. c20 Green Gym volunteers spent a morning burning up practically all of the Holly cut and processed in the previous months. I revisited the bonfire sites through the rest of the week to ensure they were safe, and at the same time Sue and I pulled 1,000 Holly seedlings. **December** - The Trustees had an on-site meeting to further discuss the felling proposals and agreed that there should be a further consultation with the village over the proposed work. I had an on-site meeting with Harold Makant, of Natural England, to discuss the Trustees proposals for a Countryside Stewardship application for Earlstone Common.*

***February** - Denis and I, on behalf of the Trustees, completed and submitted an application for Countryside Stewardship funding to implement the Management Plan for Earlstone Common. If successful, the Agreement would start in January 2024 and will pay c£2500 per year for the initial 5 years of the scheme."*

10. Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Richard Carrow

Cllr Carrow read the following report:

"I reported last year that we would have to review our Neighbourhood Plan. Thanks to our consultants, a few volunteers and the PC, we've done it. Just a reminder why: B&DBC still – frustratingly – do not have a 5 year land supply and have paused work on the Local Plan Update. Without a 5 yls the protection afforded a NP lasts only 2 years and was due to run out this month. We reviewed the original, identified policies for modification and added a Design Code. It will now be made by full Council on 18 May – no referendum is needed as we are not adding (and are not required to add) any additional housing. That's the good news. The bad news is that, unless Gove's levelling up reforms are accepted and the protection afforded to NPs is extended to 5 years, we (together with ESG and East Woodhay, who have recently made their first NPs) will have to start all over again in a year's time because Basingstoke's LPU will still be in progress. This is immensely frustrating. But having done so we are ahead of every other town/parish in the Borough.

We also very conscious of the politics of housing. Increasingly more politicians are acknowledging the numbers need to increase. We've said in our plan that if circumstances change – i.e. we are given a fresh housing target - we will look at this in a future review. Is this becoming more likely? Too early to tell, but I should advise parishioners that we are watching this very closely."

11. Footpaths – Cllr Richard Carrow

Cllr Carrow read the following:

“Last year we received tremendous support from Countryside Services and the charity Walking with the Wounded in laying new bridges, repairing old ones and laying additional walkways. We are very grateful for their efforts.

Very many thanks too to landowners, farmers and residents whose properties abut footpaths for their help in clearing paths and fallen trees, and to walkers who help snip back the odd twig or bramble. If you see something amiss e.g. a broken sign or stile, please report it on HCC’s website or let me know.

Again, the usual reminder: 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. Finally, an advisory. Footpaths are for walkers. Cyclists may use other routes such as BOATs or bridleways.”

12. Open Forum

The meeting closed to enable attendees to engage in informal discussions over refreshments.

Appendix A

County Councillor Thacker Report

Finances

The County has budgets for 23/24 and plans for 24/25;

- but the 4.99% increase in the County Council Tax is insufficient, by about £80million in each of those financial years.
- To meet commitments, we are drawing on reserves and asking central government for more support.
- Double digit inflation; massive increase in Social Care costs and maintenance of transport commitments are among the reasons for our current difficulties.
- Adjacent Counties are indicating a need for 15% rises.

Climate Change and the Environment

HCC requires rules require that a Climate Change Impact Assessment on every key decision.

Some issues are supported by our Countryside team who have been as active as they can be with limited funds upgrading some Rights of Way and Footpaths along with some impressive work on Country Park and Gardens development and tending nature. Hampshire CC is meeting its own targets for net zero by 2050.

I have the honour of sitting on the Hampshire Pension Fund Board as its Vice-Chairman;

- we have one of the strongest LGPS investment strategies in terms of supporting sustainable investment - at least to more than meet the statutory and prime objective of a return for our Pensioners.

Coastal flooding prevention is a massive expense but based on the 1.5% temperature factor used in our assessments, we will not have a problem until the next century.

Recently, many of our flooding problems have been caused by insufficient drainage.

- Some flooding comes from waterways, such as in the Bourne Valley;
- but it can also be caused by water leakage from old and inadequate drains;
- more frequent excessive rainfall and
- other factors suggest that revised efforts by the Water Authorities are needed.

HCC is reviewing its approach to the Water Authorities' right, without notice or in advance of a permit application, to dig up the highways in an emergency and then leaving HCC to make good the damage.

- Residents are generally never aware that most of the works on the road are because of the utility companies' activities.

Adult Social Care and Childrens Services

HCC has to spend most of its income – tax payers' money on Adult and Children's Services

- in excess of £1Billion per annum on Health and Social Care (HASC) and
- c. £800M on education in the County.
- Every year the County's population over 85 increases by about 1000 and
- with hospital discharges now being hastened, the County is continually having to find extra accommodation and extra staff
- We operate our own recruitment company with Kent CC to ensure we have enough, who need to be well remunerated, which can also be a problem.
- Recovering from the pandemic has at times dictated these activities. We continue to provide or procure various forms of sheltered accommodation for the aged.

In respect of Childrens Services, Hampshire is still the only County with an all-round Outstanding approval by HMG.

There is a substantial ongoing strategy of electrification and solarization at the schools across the County.

- We currently have some 10 schools on the drawing board across the County including,
- more Special Educational Needs (SEN) facilities to cater for the rapid expansion – from 5000 to 8500 cases- due to the impact of COVID on the young suffering mental health issues.

Energy costs and statutory commitments mean that

- HCC has had to increase its annual budget for Home to School Transport from £32M to £43Mpa, much of this due to demands for transport for SEN children;
- School Bus operators are loathe to bid for their franchise at anywhere near the budgets we wish to set;
- Due to cost increases of drivers' wages and energy costs, the contractors have no choice but to add inflationary level increases to their bids
- Parental contributions school transport charges for 16 to 18 year olds are to rise. Due to the above-inflation increases in costs over the past year, the service now costs an additional £3.7m per year to run. School transport for further education is typically offered only if the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a disability which means they require transport arrangements. The policy continues to allow for parental contribution charges to be waived when parents or carers are on a low income or on benefits.

Children's Services also includes caring for some 1800 children in care homes;

- some living in purpose-built accommodation;
- others in private care homes with costs met by the Council.
- Costs of providing this care often exceeds £2,000 a week per child.

Hampshire is one of the larger County recipients of Ukraine and Afghan refugees, although the costs are largely met by HMG.

Traffic

There has been a major review looking at a reduction in some 30mph limits to 20mph following on from two to three year trials across the County.

Public consultation drew in some 10000 responses; normal consultations usually yield some 2000 maximum.

- The main thrust of the responses was to question whether, without enforcement at the current 30mph, what was the point in reducing to 20mph?
- Expert opinion was taken from a number of sources, including
 - those responsible for the reduction to 20mph in Wales;
 - the Head of the UK Parliamentary Group on Transport;
 - the Minister for Roads;
 - Police- Joint Road Operations in Thames Valley.

Accident data over the past decade shows that:

- Actual average speed in 20mph areas was no different to when they were 30mph areas;
- The accident data at 20mph was the same as at 30mph;
- Electrifying all passenger vehicles by 2025 will reduce emissions, regardless of speed limits;
- With petrol and diesel vehicles, lower speeds can generate more emissions at lower speeds.

Hampshire's Task and Finish Group concluded with:

- An extension to the existing trials into many other residential/urban areas;
- Extending the 20mph limit in residential areas to be deferred until after the Summer and a Cabinet review.
- Without any enforcement, the problem of rogue drivers on B and C roads will continue. The Police has indicated that it will increase Community Speedwatch activity.

The Government viewpoint is that there is scope in residential and urban areas for implementation or extension of some 20mph schemes; it has indicated that that candidate roads would have streetlighting; at present that will be HCC policy.

For enforcement, Hampshire Constabulary has been focusing on strategic roads, but little activity elsewhere locally. The Police and Crime Commissioner's addition of 220 Officers, courtesy of our local MP, Kit Malthouse when he was Minister for Police, will be taken up with mandatory investigation of crimes, rather than traffic violations.

Highways

Just maintaining roads in the County costs approximately £46M (plus the extra £6M recently given by the Government, which is Hampshire's share of the £200M National handout.)

Nationally, the Local Government Association assesses that current issues need £50Bn to sort out. We have 5200 miles of road - much of it rural - to look after. The issues we are seeing around our local roads are also being felt across the county's highway network, following the weather conditions experienced during last winter.

Hampshire has taken over on-street Parking from Basingstoke and Deane; HCC was already handling parking throughout the County apart from 4 districts and the move is to standardize.

HCC is also looking at how to use unused S106 and CIL money. Some district councils in the County have upwards of £10M sitting in accounts waiting to be used. The County is looking at how and whether it can be used for improved road infrastructure.

The County has indicated that the dire situation across the county of potholes in the second half of the year has now been addressed with a different expenditure approach.

I have been pressing the County leadership to expand access to the new members' highways reporting and tracking system to residents and parish councils.

- I have made the point to the cabinet member concerned that the added information it gives will hugely improve our communications with Parish Councils and the public on the progress and tracking of issues that have been reported;
- Recently I was told that this is actively being examined now, but that there are GDPR issues that need to be dealt with, as at present Councillors can see the names and contact details of the person who makes the report, which should not be shown to the public;
- Hampshire is not considering using What3Words and for technical reasons cannot integrate its system with FixMyStreet reports;
- I understand also that, as I have requested, an app is being developed and will eventually be made available to the public so that reports, with accurate geolocation and ability to upload photographs can be submitted directly from phones;
- This would be very similar to the FixMyStreet app, the issue with that app being that it cannot be cross referenced with Hampshire's reporting and tracking database.

Grants/Local issues

Each year, I am given a moderate grant pool to help locally. Having ten parishes in my division, I try to ensure my grants are used evenly across my division to help local needs. If any legitimate community organization or group, including the Parish Council and the Portal Hall have any small projects that it might need help with, please let me know, either directly or through the parish clerk.

A legitimate organisation is one which has its own bank account, Groups and organisations can apply for funding for both revenue (one-off) and minor capital projects. Revenue grants should generally be used to support short term project related costs.

I am in discussions with Hampshire Highways; I am pressing for the culvert under the road from the drain cover on the right side of Rosemore Lane to be cleared, a job that is long overdue. The work order to get it is with the contractors and I am trying to get this expedited.

Tom Thacker
Hampshire County Councillor
Whitchurch and the Cleres Division.

Appendix A

Borough Councillor Izett Report

- 1) Good evening. I am sorry not to be with you but I had booked a holiday abroad many months ago before the date of this parish assembly had been announced. As many of you will know I am one of the 3 borough cllrs representing Evingar. The 3 of us- that's Cllrs Carr, Falconer and myself, divide up the ward and one of my responsibilities -luckily for me- is Burghclere.
- 2) I've represented the ward since 2011 and am delighted to have been re-elected by ward voters on 4th May. The number of votes I received- 1516- was a strong affirmation which I will do my best to live up to in fighting for your interests.
- 3) The overall result following the election, which was for a third of the standing councillors, one for each of the 18, three member wards, means there is now no one party with a majority. The number of councillors is 23 Conservatives 10 Labour, 9 Liberal Democrats, 8 Basingstoke Independents, 3 Independents and 1 Green. There is some uncertainty about whether the 2 Independent groups are in reality one group. Who will be the leader of the council and forming an administration should be decided this Thursday at the council meeting. It could be a coalition, or a minority administration, we shall see. With this uncertainty I will deliberately not refer much to the future though I do maintain that the current administration has a clear set of objectives including a new aquadrome and leisure park, a spectacular new Indoor Water resort to be built by Great Wolf Resorts from America, an approved council plan to 2027, and strong finances. I will be disappointed if we are not in a position to take these forward.
- 4) So, looking back over the past year both from a borough -wide perspective and most importantly with a focus on this parish, the dominant activity locally has been new housing and how this is allocated by the planning system.
- 5) The overall position on these important issues in this country is unsatisfactory to say the least. We have, on the one hand, an assessed need for some 300k new homes a year ~~and immigration that is presently largely uncontrolled~~. On the other hand we have areas of the south of this country including this borough where many residents say that there has been too much development in recent years and numbers of new homes need to decrease substantially. These 2 forces are currently irreconciled by government with no party offering an answer.

- 6) Add to this a planning framework that decides that because housing targets haven't been fully met, there is a presumption in favour of development for housing sites preferred by developers but not allocated under the Local Plan and you have a very unhappy state of affairs.
- 7) The administration in Basingstoke responded to the strong views about high levels of house building by delaying the Local Plan Update to see if evidence can be established that will support a lower housing number in future. There is some doubt that given government planning methodology this will ultimately be allowed to succeed.
- 8) In this difficult context it is highly commendable that your parish council has taken the initiative of using the Neighbourhood Plan framework to extend the protection the existing Plan provides for a 2 year period. The modifications are due to be approved by BDBC on Thursday. As the first parish to do this I congratulate Richard Carrow and his colleagues.
- 9) The administration recognises the importance of enabling strong communities like this one. We have therefore reinstated the Local Infrastructure Fund, now called the Community Infrastructure Fund, with funding of £2.2m over the next 4 years. This will allow communities and groups to bid for funding for capital projects. Last week, this year's Strengthening Communities Grants Scheme was launched. Grants of up to £15k can be bid for out of a pot of £188K for projects such as conservation, swimming clubs, scout groups indeed anything that makes communities more self reliant.
- 10) This last year has been blighted by a big increase in inflation which has made things difficult for many residents and their families. Because our council finances are strong we were able to direct help to those on lower incomes. In the last financial year we allocated the £1m fund to 1500 households. In February we announced another round of COLAF (Cost of Living Assistance Fund) of £1m.
- 11) Finally, more resources have been put into areas we know by surveys are priorities for local people. The expanded Green Team will help the borough meet its climate change targets and residents wanting to save energy. The new Ranger team will work with groups on biodiversity projects.
- 12) That concludes my update which I think goes some way to summarising an eventful year. Depending on what happens on Thursday maybe 2023 will be a quieter time for me but I do hope not but in any event I look forward to maintaining the good working relationship I have with Cllr Carrow and the rest of the parish councillors serving Burghclere's residents.