

Compton & Shawford Parish Council Annual Review

April 1998

About this leaflet

At last year's Annual Meeting several people asked for more time to read the previous year's minutes before being asked to vote on them. So this year we put the 1997 minutes in with the April Parish Magazine to give you a few weeks to study them before the Annual Meeting. Now we are trying a new idea: instead of circulating the minutes long after this year's meeting, the councillors have provided summarised versions of their reports here. We hope this will be a much more timely record of the Parish Council's activity over the past year. Please let us know if you think this is an idea worth repeating.

Chairman's Report

One of the good things about living here is the way so many people contribute to the life of our parish.

The school, the church, the many clubs, societies and the fete committee all play their part.

But this is a Parish Council meeting so I'd like to give particular thanks to my fellow councillors who give so generously of their time to help keep the wheels of the Parish turning. Dennis Richman, our clerk, and Vanessa Smith, our caretaker, and Clive Barham, our policeman, also deserve special mention. Our school governor, Ray Wilmshurst, and Monty Dawson, editor of the magazine, are absent for health reasons and we wish them back soon.

This has been a year in which we have made much progress on the two major projects which we have in hand - renovation of the Parish Hall and replacement of the old pavilion on the playing field. But much remains to be done.

We have contracted to sell the land next to the Parish Hall for £162,500 - rather more than the £2,500 we paid last year to acquire the "return land" by the playing fields, and rather more than we had originally expected. But renovation costs are rising too and the money will be put to good use. Nick Campbell-White will describe our progress towards modernising the hall.

The design for the new pavilion was adjusted to take account of local feedback. We were granted planning permission in October, with conditions on use which should allay people's con-

cerns. We hope soon to reach agreement on a new lease and then grant application can begin.

It's about time that we began thinking about whether and if so how to mark the Millennium in the village. The City Council's Millennium Director will be talking to us later and we would like to hear your ideas.

As our dear late rector Philip Barrett reminded us in his sermon at the Civic Service in October, as elected representatives we should strive to serve you with integrity, consistency of image, with wisdom and with courtesy.

We remain committed to keeping you all informed of what the Parish Council is up to. We clarified the confusion over public participation in council meetings by standardising on a question session at the start of each meeting.

We will put a list of our sub-committees in the Parish Magazine after next Tuesday's Annual Parish Council meeting. Meeting reports are published in the Parish Magazine, the Hampshire Chronicle and on our web site. Since the Extra's supplement on Shawford last year, free copies of that paper have been in our Post Offices, and the Editor has agreed that she will print summaries of our reports.

Finally I would just like to remind you about the Welcome Pack - please ask us for a copy when anyone new moves in near you.

Adrian Walmsley,
Chairman

Parish Hall



Nick Campbell-White writes
The committee this year, as last, comprised Jean Millar, Tom Threlfall and myself.

As always, many thanks to Vanessa Smith for running the hall.

Last year we found that the Parish Council was ineligible for grants, so we started talking to CASCA about their taking it over after modernisation. CASCA, as a registered charity, can apply for grants and could involve more parishioners in running the hall.

They now have an active hall committee of eight, managed by Jo Pitt, secretary Mike Matthews, who are working on refurbishment plans.

A 30 year lease for the Hall and cottage has been agreed which will start when finances and plans are finalised.

We have been short listed for a £25,000 grant from the ACRE 21st Century Halls for England scheme, the most we can

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Planning

Jean Millar writes

The same Sub-committee as last year continued to monitor the 26 planning applications put forward since May 1997.

6 applications for work on protected trees were granted, 1 withdrawn.

Apart from home extensions, which were all granted, the appeal was upheld for the replacement of 'Wytchwood'

with two new houses in Highways. The appeal for an extra house to be built alongside Laurel Cottage was turned down as was an application for an Intech Centre on Badger Farm Road.

The Parish Council expressed some concern over the siting of a grain drier beyond Shepherds Lane.

During the last months we have seen plans to improve the Coach House to Appleshaw House, as well as plans to build Social Housing (9 flats) on the footprint of the derelict House itself.

Finally we saw the plans for the replacement Sports Pavilion approved in July and now the Shawford Hall renovation and extension drawings are being considered by W.C.C. along with the pair of semi-detached houses on the land below the Hall.

New Pavilion

After listening carefully to everyone's views about the new pavilion, and taking note of the requirements of the sports club, our architect came up with the novel idea of turning the pavilion end-on to the field.



The design will minimise the visual impact on the field and allow the tractor and other service equipment to be stored neatly under the pavilion rather than in a separate shed. It also incorporates room for the snooker table which was kindly donated to the village by Mr. & Mrs. Dyble. We circulated a leaflet in the summer explaining how we had listened to your views.

After a site viewing, planning permission was granted in October subject to a number of conditions which reflect residents' concerns. Most of these the Parish Council had in any case intended to enforce through the

lease.

The Sports Club holds the field on a 5 year license which has rolled over a year at a time since its term ran out on 1995. To qualify for grants, the Sports Club needs a long lease rather than a licence. We have been

working with the club on the terms of a lease which would satisfy grant-aiding bodies but which will also protect the interests of the community, and we have still to reach agreement on this.

You may have read in the press that the Parish Council issued notice to terminate the licence. The licence needs to be replaced by a new lease anyway, but without the notice this could have dragged on until 2000. As it is, we hope to have an agreed plan within the next three months which will allow us to move forward with the new pavilion.

Playing Fields

The dead and dying trees have been removed from the edge of the Memorial Playing field and replaced with new ones, mainly flowering cherry.

The Parish Council continues to look after the cutting and weed-killing of the main field. The "return land" at the western end of Shepherds Lane bridge will be kept under control by strimming until we are ready to start work on the new

pavilion.

We'd like to remind readers that the playing field in Compton Street was acquired by the parish for the use of younger children - up to 14 - and their parents. Please respect the houses nearby.

Vandalism

This has been worryingly on the increase - for example cars driven over the cricket square at night and damage to the parish noticeboards. Please report any sightings to the clerk or the police

Parish Hall (cont)

get with a 30 year lease, and should hear in May. If successful, HCC and WCC will each give £5,000, making a total of £35,000 with some strings attached.

If we fail, WCC will give us £20,000, without strings, and HCC may still contribute £5,000.

The Parish Council at the January meeting had agreed to a budget of £150,000 for the hall refurbishment. The plans initially drawn up by Guion & Brown to a £125,000 budget had been modified with CASCA input and looked like costing £175,000. These were used for the planning application but will have to be scaled down. We will probably cut back on the wide staircase and upgrade of the upstairs Heathcote Players room. The aim is still to upgrade the hall to attract wedding hires which need the terrace and level access.

We hope to settle on an affordable plan once we know the grant position and have obtained planning permission. The drawings will be finalised and we will apply for Building Regulation permission.

The aim is to start refurbishment in July.

We ask for the understanding and co-operation of Shawford residents and hall users. This will be a difficult but exciting period.

Highways, Byways & Environment.

Members of the subcommittee are: Ron Whitaker, David Ellis, John West and Ray Wilmshurst

Traffic

Accidents as a result of road conditions have been normal, although we do not know the cause of the recent fatal accident in Otterbourne Road. Traffic flows from Integra through our parish are being monitored which is particularly important because of the traffic calming works underway in Otterbourne. We have agreed with the County Surveyor's Department to meet to discuss traffic calming in our Parish. Input to these discussions would be welcomed.

Traffic Signs



Last year we finally got the long awaited 30mph zone outside the school in Compton Street, but the 30mph limit in Shepherds Lane was less popular with residents because they didn't like the repeater signs.

This year the residents of the Southdown/Fairfield Road area were canvassed about a 30mph limit and turned it down to avoid repeater signs on their grass verges.

Following requests from residents of Hurdle Way, we have had a No Through Road sign erected to discourage casual traffic

down their road.

Bus Signs

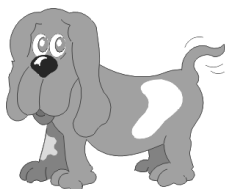
Ornamental columns have been installed but no information is available on routing and timing information so far.

Grass Cutting

Following organisational changes between HCC/WCC and the Highways Agency two years ago, the standard of service deteriorated. However following a number of discussions and on-site meetings the frequency of cutting was increased, and additional areas included in the schedule with much improved results last year. Face to face meetings with the contractor have been particularly useful.

Dogs

Although many dog owners do clean up after their pets, some do not. The effects can range from the unpleasant to life threatening in the case of children. The Parish Council has discussed this several times over the years and has published health warnings in the Parish Magazine.



The recent Dog Fouling Act is being considered by the City Council, who will seek input from Parish Councils. Options include penalties for fouling by dogs, the expensive installation and servicing of bins or other means of encouraging dog owners to clean up. This is an important issue and we would like to hear your views.

Repairs to Parish Property

Vandalism to notice boards, bus shelters, and seats has affected us again during the past year. It costs the parish money and has also created traffic hazards. Normal wear and tear also takes its toll and we plan to replace two or three noticeboards in 1998 to 1999. Before we spend money replacing them, we would like your views. Do we need all seven noticeboards? Are they in the right places?

Hampshire Waste

The demolition of the old incinerator tower had to be deferred when they discovered essential electrical plant in its base.

We have been participating in a community liaison group run by Hampshire Waste (Integra) runs with Otterbourne and Hursley Parish Councils.

From our point of view we want to make sure that any traffic calming schemes in Otterbourne do not encourage diversions through Compton, and that the proportion of Waste traffic which comes through Compton does not exceed the agreed 20%.

National Spring Clean Week

We thank all individuals and organisations who assisted with the litter pick last year and again last week.

Parish Hall Site Development

David Ellis writes

The committee had to decide how to handle the sale of the land next to the Parish Hall to find funds for the Parish Hall and to replace the old pavilion on the Playing Field.

Some people hoped for an element of affordable housing, perhaps one or two units in which the Parish Council would have an interest. We contacted several Housing Associations but they could not offer a realistic price, and the Housing Association with whom the Parish Council had the most discussions had too many other commitments at present.

We also wanted the builder who developed the site to be able to handle the refurbishment of the Parish Hall at the same time. It should be less disruptive and more economic to have one rather than two contractors on site.

Finally we accepted an offer of £162,500 made by Messrs Goodall Barnard after Mr David Whitmarsh, Managing Director, had showed us plans of similar developments elsewhere. Goodall Barnard's plans for the site were shown to Shawford residents and considered acceptable.

Messrs Goodall Barnard have made a Planning Application and it is hoped that the development will be completed before the end of the year.

National Cycle Network

In November 1997 County Councillor Mrs. A Bailey passed



to us report of a study into possible cycle routes through Shawford to form part of the National Cycle Network.

The two options, starting from the Bridge Hotel, were a low level route along paths and tracks via the Malms Farm eventually joining Kiln Lane and a route following the footpath up over Shawford Down joining the Otterbourne Road via Southdown Road and Grove Road.

The Parish Council wrote to the County Council supporting the principle of a National Cycle Network but endorsing local objections that these routes had been chosen without any public consultation. In particular the rights of way and safety aspects of the lower level route had not been sufficiently investigated.

We heard in February that the County Council accept that they need to do much more research before it is worthwhile holding a public meeting. When we hear of any more activity on this project we will inform affected parties.

School Governor's Report

Report by Ray Wilmshurst, Parish Council Member on the Governing Body of Compton C of E (Aided) Primary School.

The school still continues to be very popular in the village catchment area and far beyond. Present numbers are 107.

The school had 23 applications for admission in September. The standard entry was 17, but to balance numbers some flexibility has to be exercised and 20 have been offered a places.

So in September we shall be taking in 20 and 12 will be leaving for Secondary school.

During last summer a pedestrian access was installed by the County Council to enable entry from the main road to avoid crossing Compton Street twice. Traffic in Compton Street still causes problems at school times. This is made worse when drivers ignore marked passing places (white lines by kerbs). The school tries to encourage parents to avoid using cars to bring children to school if at all possible.

The school has three temporary classrooms which are coming to the end of if not al-

ready past their expected life.

The school governors have employed an architect to design replacement permanent accommodation and these are about to be submitted for planning approval.

The governors have made an application for money from the New Deals for Schools government funds. The school has just heard that their application was not successful in the last round awarded to the Hampshire County Council. Forty-three schools received funds and we understand Compton was number 45 on the list. So we hope for next year. Like all grants now the governors have to raise a percentage of the contract sum. The target of the minimum £95,000 has been set. A major fund-raising project has been launched. The project is called "The Millennium Project (providing for our children in future)". Mr Dillon has been appointed Treasurer. I would not be surprised if the Parish Council were approached to make a donation.

I'm sure we wish our school continued success.

Footpaths & Trees

Tom Threlfall, tree warden, writes

The public footpaths and bridleways in our Parish which were used in earlier years for commuting and commercial activities such as smuggling are now used mainly for recreation. The surfaces of some paths have fared better in the recent wet weather than those of others. Footpath 23, between Compton Lock and Compton, has become puddled by the cattle which share it with walkers. The County Council has published plans to improve the surface of this path to the standard of those in the M3/Hockley Viaduct area. Plans are also in hand for a cycle track/footpath along the viaduct, and for the restoration of Compton Lock.

Please report footpath obstructions to 712608.

Recently-arrived residents have asked whether certain trees in their gardens have "Tree Protection Orders" (TPOs) on them. The Master Plan lives with the Arboricultural Officer at the Chesil Street city offices on 848177 or 848293. Unfortunately the Tree Warden has no such Master Plan, since it is on an Ordnance Survey copyright map, of which Chesil Street does not publish copies.

A team including two Parish Councillors and their spouses entered the City Council sponsored knock-out pub quiz to raise public awareness of the Rio Summit Agenda 21.

After fighting through the first two rounds to



reach the final on 22 April, the team narrowly missed out on the greenest prize - 60 bags of soil conditioner donated by Hampshire Waste - and had to be content with Whitbread vouchers for finishing third over-

all.

Charity Policy

The Parish Council is sometimes asked to make donations to charities.

We think that charitable giving should be a personal decision, and that we should not be giving taxpayer's money to charities, although we have helped village projects such as the Scout Hall.

Beryl Croker Centenary

In January we celebrated the 100th birthday of Mrs. Beryl Croker by dedicating a seat on Shawford Down.

It was especially fitting to do this because of all the contri-

butions the Crokers - four generations of whom live in the parish - have made to the community.

Many thanks to Ray Wilmshurst for organising the seat. It was Ray who, as Parish Council chairman, presided over the celebrations in 1982 when the Parish



last celebrated a centenary, in 1982.

Picture courtesy of the Hampshire Chronicle.

Mrs Jane Hazlitt has given a seat in memory of Barrie which we hope to install outside the refurbished Parish Hall

Finance report continued from page 6

diture, such that we have been able to save a considerable amount of money. Our current balance in the savings accounts adds up to about £70,000. This has not been by accident, as the PC has been planning to replace ageing Parish assets such as the Sports Pavilion for several years, and latterly the Village Hall has lost out on possible income by not meeting standards required by potential hirers of this fine building, hence plans to modernise and expand the facility.

The Future

These two major projects have been under discussion within the village for some time, and the thinking of the PC has been endorsed by the recent Parish Referendum and so plans are now developing apace. It is the job of this PC to make sure that the Parish facilities meet the needs of the villagers for the next 100 years, or certainly for the foreseeable future. With this in

mind we will continue to strive to achieve reasonable budgets and prudent spending such that we will have the funds available for other projects in the future. We aim to always be in a positive financial position, and to avoid going into debt. With this in mind we are not planning to spend all of our available funds on the two major projects, but to keep a small buffer in the savings accounts.

Adoption of Accounts

It has been traditional for the PC to ask the Annual Parish Meeting to endorse the audited accounts for 1996/97, and I invite a proposer and seconder for this motion. The 1997/98 unaudited accounts have been summarised for your information and you should all be able to see a copy. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding both sets of accounts.

Thank you.

In Memoriam

We mourn the loss of our rector, Philip Barrett, and two distinguished residents: John Large, who gave his expert advice to the Parish at the time of the motorway inquiry, and Austin Whitaker, teacher, archivist and local historian.

Austin, with John's wife Barbara, published the excellent booklet on the history of Compton & Shawford in 1985.

Also Gwen Compton, prize-winning gardener.



Transport

Our transport representative, Group Captain Monty Dawson, keeps tabs on the bus timetables - particularly the daily shoppers' round trip service from Compton Street to Sainsbury's and Tesco's.

Monty - helped by Robin Tice - also monitors the traffic from Southampton Airport.

This year's good news is the phasing-in of noticeably quieter aircraft types.

Bus Shelters

Each year we can nominate a "Parish Project" to attract a grant from the City Council. For the 1997/98 financial year we chose a new bus shelter for the southbound stop opposite Shepherds Lane.

Unfortunately the cost of a matching shelter rose substantially, over the £3,500 limit for a WCC grant, so we had to drop this from our plans.

For 1998/99, replacement noticeboards are our Parish Project.

The Titanic connection



If you go to see the latest Titanic movie, look out for the replicas of "our" Parish Hall plates, held here by Jean Millar who did all the research into their background.

Photo reproduced from the Hampshire Chronicle.



Public sessions at Council meetings

Our Parish Council meetings - first Tuesdays at 7:15pm - are open to public attendance, as they have to be by law.

Although the law does not give the public the right to speak, we recently decided to take questions and comments from the public near the start of every meeting.

Any discussion on questions raised will take place after coffee, at about 9pm.

If you want to ask for any subject to be placed on the agenda, please give at least a week's notice.

Finding out about Council plans and actions

Minutes of meetings, as with most other Council paperwork, are public documents and open to inspection by arrangement with the clerk.

We publish summaries of all our meetings in the Parish Magazine and the Hampshire Chronicle and on our web pages at <http://compton.parish.hants.gov.uk>

Finance Committee Convenors Report

Tony Lockett writes: Introduction

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I thought that this year, due to the capital expenditure plans of the PC, it would be a good idea to concentrate on the role of the Finance Committee and to explain some of the decisions we make and the reasons why we make them. Going through each line item of expenditure for last year seems a pointless exercise, and you have the summary sheets to look at should you wish to raise any queries.

Role of the Finance Committee (FC)

The FC carries out several functions. Its major role is to prepare the budget and to set the annual precept upon the City Council, and to make sure that the cashflow throughout the year falls into line within that budget. It also makes plans to ensure that there is sufficient money to fund the major projects, and to maximise interest from savings accounts or any other investments. Lastly, working closely with the Responsible Financial Officer, in our case the clerk, the annual ac-

counts are prepared and sent for audit, whereupon the District Auditor will scrutinise the accounts for accuracy and prudent spending. Several copies of the 1996/97 audited accounts are available for you to look at tonight, and we will ask the meeting to adopt those accounts later.

Working out the Precept

The Precept is the money we request from the City Council, which is funded from the Council Tax and the amount is calculated from the annual budget. This Parish Council has a history of prudent budgeting such that the annual increases on your Council Tax are minimised. You can see from the chart shown in your Annual Review leaflet that by comparison to other Parish Councils, the WCC and HCC, we fall well below the average annual increase:

Current Financial Status

We have, for a number of years, due to prudent spending, managed to meet and exceed our targets for excess income over expen-

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Increased Powers for Parish Councils

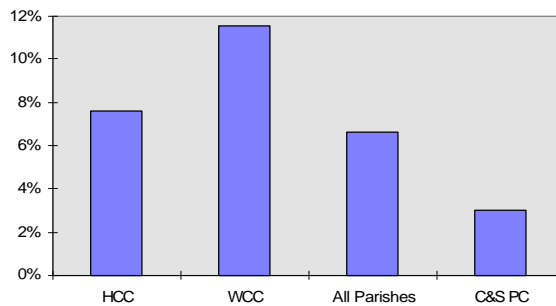
The 1997 Local Government & Rating Act which recently came into force gives Parish Councils additional powers to organise or contribute to car pooling schemes, local transport, traffic calming and crime enforcement.

This is over and above the powers granted under Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act under which a local council could spend in any one financial year up to £3.50 per elector on anything for which it has no express power, provided that the expenditure is for the direct benefit of the parish, or some or all of its inhabitants.

Of course, this is a bit of a good news - bad news story. The good news is that we have more control at the parish level. The bad news could be a hidden increase in the local precept if the County Council decided to reduce funding for certain, for example, traffic schemes now that parishes have more authority.

The Hampshire Chronicle reported on 24 April that 14 parishes - not us - were being asked to contribute £2,000 towards a radar gun.

1998 percentage increase in precepts



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