

Compton & Shawford Parish Council Annual Review

29 April 1999

Chairman's Report

In starting this report I don't think I can improve on my opening paragraphs from last year in which I said that one of the best 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.

As this is a Parish Council meeting 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, Vanessa Smith, our caretaker, and Clive Barham, our policeman, deserve special mention.

A year ago, we were mourning the loss of our previous rector, Philip Barrett. Last night I was very pleased to attend the Induction and Installation of our new rector, John Widdows and I'm sure that I speak for the whole meeting in wishing him well.

When I was first nominated for the post of Chairman I promised my wife that I would only serve for three years - and that was four years ago. My day job is also taking me away much more than

in previous years and these two factors mean that I will not be accepting nomination for a further year as chairman when my term expires on Tuesday next week.

As I believe in open and consensus government, early on in my tenure of this office I encouraged the clerk to structure our reports in the Parish Magazine under sub-headings, to make them more readable. I created a web site in which you can refer to our meeting reports back to December 1994 and find much other useful information about our neighbourhood. And I instituted a policy of periodic open letters in the Parish Magazine to keep you informed of our progress on major projects.

One of the early successes of the past four years was the acquisition of the "return land" from the Highways Agency for a reasonable price and, after much negotiation, on acceptable terms.

During the past year we finally sold the land next door and are using most of the money, through CASCA, to fund the Parish Hall renovations.

We are also hoping to be able

to break ground for the new pavilion before too long. You will have seen the leaflet which explains the funding plan and reiterates much of the background behind the design. We do realise of course that some of you still have concerns about its design or the overall project and we will be happy to take questions later.

It may be that, despite several earlier local referendums on the subject, a further referendum to establish a current mandate for the design favoured by the Parish Council and the Sports Club would help to clear the air. I look forward to hearing your views on this later tonight.

It's been an interesting four years - culminating with the honour of an invitation to a Buckingham Palace garden party last summer - and I look forward to serving under whomsoever may be elected as the new Chairman next Tuesday.

In closing I would 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 sub-committee this year, as for the last two years, comprised Jean Millar, Tom Threlfall and myself.

As always, we must publicly offer our thanks to Vanessa Smith, who, with Frank, keeps the halls working efficiently. Her job this last year had been made more difficult with the uncertainty of knowing what bookings could be taken, and when the halls would close for refurbishment.

The whole of the year has been dominated by CASCA's imminent takeover of the Hall, now fixed for 1st August. We can say with certainty that had we not had the help of the CASCA committee, and in particular Mike Matthews, we would not be as far advanced with this work. The forward planning, application for grants, frustration of delays dealing with ACRE and solicitors, and the mountain of paperwork (still ongoing) had

continued on page 2

About this leaflet

At last year's Annual Meeting we tried an experiment of producing a document like this.

In earlier years all we had

circulated were the minutes of the previous year's Annual Meeting - news that was by then up to two years old.

You seemed to think that a report like this was a good idea.

So this year we have again gathered reports of this year's activities from Parish Councillors and other sources.

I hope you find it useful and informative.

Parish Hall (cont)

meant many very long meetings, always ending up with yet more work for Mike and, of course, confirmation of everything in writing. Mike is going to give a potted history of the renovation and rebuilding contract. The Parish owes him a great debt of gratitude.

The arrangement of the PC came to was to lease to CASCA the Parish Hall and the site for 30 years at an annual rent of £12.00, and CASCA would run the hall on behalf of the village, basically as at present. A formal lease has been executed, detailing all terms, and will become operable as from 1st August. 2 Parish Councillors will always sit on their management committee. CASCA will employ Vanessa Smith on the same basis as at present, as from 1st August.

The building work - eventually - started in February, with a finally negotiated price of £167,255, following three tenders, all of which were higher than we would have liked. SCI, because of their flexibility over changes, were chosen to do the work. The Parish Council are contributing £142,000 of this sum, a grant of £25,000 has been eventually gained from ACRE's "21st Century Halls for England" fund, and HCC and WCC have each granted £5,000, with CASCA funding the balance. The total overall project cost is £197,000.

Sports Club & New Pavilion

During the past year we made great progress towards realising the new pavilion which is so badly needed.

We established a good working relationship with the Sports Club under its new chairman, Martin Dearlove. Under their new rules, there is a Parish Councillor on their management committee and I would like to thank David Ellis for doing this so well.

A year ago we were still bogged down over the terms of a lease which would allow the Sports Club to apply for grants while allowing the PC to retain some control in order to safeguard local interests.

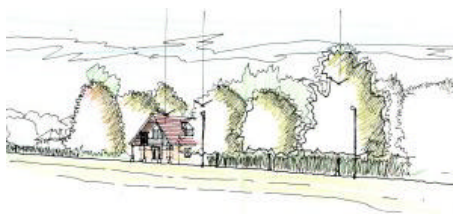
Our new architect, Michael Weakley, who has a track record of successful grant applications for pavilion projects, assured us that, contrary to earlier advice, the Sports Council would look more favourably on an application submitted by the Parish Council than by the Sports Club.

So the lease ceased to be a sticking point. We moved swiftly to agree the interior layout and some minor amendments to the exterior of the original, approved, design.

sign.

Unfortunately, the amendments to the exterior were turned down by the City's Planning Committee against the advice of their own officers in February of this year.

We now plan to submit a grant application on the basis of the approved design and in parallel appeal against the rejection of the amended design.



We have a project with an affordable funding plan which will meet the needs of its users (the Sports Club). We hope it will encourage more local people to take advantage of our lovely field.

Finally I'd like to say what a joy it has been to see the field so well used. It gave me particular pleasure to see the Cricket Colts practising on summer evenings last year and to see the enthusiasm which the new Tennis coach has generated.

Footpaths & Trees

Tom Threlfall, Footpaths Representative and Tree Warden writes

The Tree Warden's task is mostly reactive. He is expected to keep an eye on the health and safety of trees in the parish which are the subjects of Tree Preservation Orders, and to seek advice in difficult cases from the Tree Guru (Michael Edwards) at the Winchester City Council's Chesil Street office. Throughout the year that fine official has shown a refreshingly pragmatic approach to the parish's tree problems, such as

they are.

Footpaths, too, have enjoyed a happily hassle-free year on the whole. Your representative relies on reports from residents of blocked or difficult footpaths - he is too idle/busy to inspect all the paths after each winter gale. This system seems to work quite satisfactorily, and minor blockages are cleared by local posses whilst major ones would be attended to by the County Council's Rights of Way officer Peter Watson. He initiated the recent resurfacing of the path from Compton Lock westwards to the railway bridge, which has been most satisfactory.

cont. on page 4

Planning

Jean Millar writes

The same Sub-committee as last year (N.C-W, R.Wh, T.T.) continued to monitor the 32 planning applications put forward to Winchester City Council since April 1998.

The outcome of these were as follows:- 10 applications for work on protected trees were granted; Change of use returned "The Firs" in Highways to domestic dwelling as well as "Shawford Mill" (in Twyford Parish). "Kingsmere Acres" was granted permission to let its self contained annexe as self catering holiday accommodation

Apart from home extensions, which were all granted, plans were submitted and granted for a new house in Clease Way but were refused for the site to the rear of "Highdown", Cliff Way, and also for a subdivision of "Southgate", Crossway in Southdown.

An extra house in the grounds of "Ty Gwyn", Southdown Rd. is being discussed by the Planning Office.

An application for a self contained annexe with stables and garage attached has been made for the barn conversion beyond the end of Shepherds Lane. Your Parish Council have objected to this as we do not want to support a precedent for additional residential development in the countryside.

You will all be aware of Compton School's plans to renovate, as well as this Hall's - currently happening and due to be finished in the autumn.

As for the Pavilion replacement, I wonder what will be reported in 2000!

Highways, Byways & Environment.

Members of the subcommittee are: Ron Whitaker, David Ellis and Ken Staunton. Ron Whitaker writes:

Dogs - Fouling of Land Act (1996)



This has been passed through the WCC consultation and legal process and could possibly be implemented in June of this year. The aim is to encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets and to prevent fouling of grass verges and open spaces. Failure to do so could result in warning and prosecution although the aim is to educate not punish.

National Spring Clean week.

The Parish Council want to thank all the associations and residents who helped in this project, and Vanessa Smith who allocated bags and gloves for waste collection.

Noticeboards.

These continue to be vandal-

ised at an unacceptable rate. Nevertheless we have started a programme of replacing those in poor condition by new boards with high quality oak posts and surrounds with polycarbonate sheeting. Two such noticeboards are on order.

Accidents, Speed limits, Road Signing, Traffic Calming.

Accidents as a result of road conditions have been minimal with no fatalities or serious personal injuries reported. Traffic calming discussions with HCC have had limited success with road marking and signing at the junction of Otterbourne Road and Shawford Road and reflectors/markers installed at the Hurdle Way and Shawford Road bridge junctions with Otterbourne. More recent requirements include a 30mph restriction in Southdown and traffic calming in Compton Street.

Grass cutting

The same grass cutting frequency is anticipated as last year which most people considered satisfactory.

Bus Shelters

Vandalism is still a prob-

lem with broken windows and graffiti, which is particularly upsetting considering that they have only recently been treated with wood preservative and decorative stain. A new bus shelter has been requested southbound opposite Shepherds Lane bridge.

Integra Liaison Group (Hampshire Waste)

Meetings take place at six monthly intervals to discuss traffic movements through Compton, Otterbourne and Hursley, and future developments on any matters causing a nuisance to parishioners. Integra road traffic is unlikely to increase beyond the present level and may reduce slightly in the future. The old incinerator and chimney were demolished last year.

Romance (Stopwatch) Project.

It has taken a long time, over a year, to bring this project to the point of implementation. It is designed to provide information on bus routes and timing.

Aircraft Noise

Many thanks to Monty Dawson and Robin Tice for this report:

We have agreed with the management of Southampton Airport, that for a trial period

new arrival and departure procedures will be introduced to avoid overflying Compton and Shawford. More details in the June magazine.

A noise disturbance survey will be done in May and June. To ensure these changes are made permanent we must provide adequate information

on the frequency, times and where possible the rough height of aircraft penetrations. We need volunteers to help record this information.

We are most grateful for the co-operation from the Managing Director and Senior Air Traffic Controller at the airport.

Millennium Celebrations

Two initial meetings, chaired by Councillors Walmsley and Wilmshurst, suggested that we celebrate the Millennium with a week of activities in the summer of 2000 along the lines of the Parish Hall Centenary Celebrations. Commemorative publications, either printed, or on CD or videotape were also suggested.

No-one volunteered to chair the preparations for the Millennium, but we are grateful to Martin Bell who has been acting as ad hoc chair of a local Millennium committee.

This is a summary of the report submitted by Martin Bell - full report in the June Magazine.

Compton and Shawford Festival 2000 Committee met on 21 April 7.30 at The Bridge Hotel

Present: Jean Ferrington, Eric Caldwell, Martin Bell, Hillary Tudor Apologies; Lesley Harris

Hillary suggested involving the new Rector. Mr Cave-Penney will also be invited to the next meeting.

With a Fete type event being held this year, it is unsure whether one will take place in 2000 and enquiries into possible organisers and plans/intentions will continue to be made.

The Parish venues really should be used to the full.

Eric will talk to head of Compton School about a time capsule project, the school children decide what should be interred.

Next meeting 20 May same time and place

**Footpaths & Trees
(cont)**

If there is a cloud on the public rights of way horizon it is comprised by a national organisa-



tion rejoicing in the title "SUS-TRANS", whose worthy aim it is to establish and maintain a nation-wide network of cycle tracks. At a public meeting in this hall last September, chaired by Mrs Amies (the Senior Sports Officer of the Hants CC, and with SUSTRANS official Nick Harding in attendance, the line of the cycle route through Shawford was published. It followed number of public footpaths (on which cycling happens to be illegal) and used private drives whose owners had not been consulted nor given any consent to such use of their property - the Malms rest home and farm for example. I have constantly sought reassurance from Mr Harding subsequently that the reclassification of our footpaths into bridleways (on which cycling is legal) would be conducted by normal democratic means involving the planning process, but it has not been forthcoming. I last asked again on 18th March for confirmation that Sustrans would not use public footpaths or private drives, but have received no such assurance as yet, just a card saying that the matter is being dealt with by Mrs Amies. Some local residents whose businesses would be adversely affected by the change of use of the footpaths (despite the lack of change of classification) have been put in contact with the Local Government Ombudsman, whose task it is to explain the law to over-

Parish Hall Project - Progress Report

After all the years of debate and planning work finally started on the extension and refurbishment of our Parish Hall nine weeks ago. By that date (23 Feb) we had secured just enough funding to cover the contracted price for the work package plus



professional fees. Even though there were still some design aspects to be resolved and some grant release paperwork to be rendered, with our Builder available we made a considered decision to let him start rather than wait until all was tidy.

As these pictures show, the new extensions are being built first. The Main and Caretaker's Stores are almost ready for roofing while the larger extension to the south has been piled and is now up to window height. This will contain The Compton Room, the new toilet facilities and most of the entrance foyer.

Break-through between new and old is planned for early May and this is when the present Kitchen will be withdrawn from use. Designs for the terrace and



main approach and the replacement internal staircase are currently being finalised.

This recent sketch by our Architect gives a feel for how the complex will look from the front car park



when completed. It shows the new Post Office housed in a smaller structure than the present toilet block. The Shawford Hall itself will no change externally but will be smartened up inside and restored to something nearer its original looks. Apart from improving lighting, heating and access no refurbishment will be done

in The Heathcote Room. The new storage space adjacent will however be fitted out for use.

One of the lessons being learnt during this project is that it is not easy to take any short cuts these days. Health and Safety, Disability Discrimination and other recent legislation, modern Building Regulations and rigorous Grant conditions have to be complied with and effectively prevent doing

anything 'on the cheap' - especially with a public building. The paperwork involved is prodigious!

In summary the Parish Hall project is on track and construction is proceeding to a high standard. However we can afford no let-up in our fund-raising efforts if we are then to equip it with all the essential fixtures and fittings it will need.

Many thanks to Mike Matthews for this article

Parish Magazine

A year ago Monty Dawson retired from the post of Parish Magazine editor.

For many years, under Monty's wise editorship, the Parish Magazine has provided local people with essential news about activities and events in the village. The Parish Council happily contributes to publication costs each year.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Monty and to the band of volunteers who help with the publication and distribution of the Magazine.

We were lucky that Mike Eyre was willing to take over as editor. Mike's expertise with the latest technology has resulted in an improved magazine, generally more pages per



issue, and later deadlines for submission of copy.

The picture shows the presentation of a camellia to mark Monty's

retirement. With Monty are Parish Councillor Wilmshurst, who chose the plant, and chairman Walmsley

Footpaths & Trees (cont)

zealous public servants.

The planning requirement for a cycle track is that it be 2½ metres wide, with an extra half-metre it is also a footpath. The Sustrans brochures show such tracks to be surfaced in black tarmac, with a solid white line to separate the walkers from the cyclists. It is disturbing that it seems not to have been possible to establish a meaningful dialogue with either Sustrans or the HCC on this topic. There is, of course, a perfectly serviceable bridleway from Oliver's Battery to Silkstead (on which cycling is quite legal) which would take the cyclists happily southwards from Winchester towards Southampton. I invited Mr Harding to attend this meeting to explain the official position, but his schedule seems to have been too crowded to include it.

On a more optimistic note, Twyford Parish Council has recently purchased (with lottery funds) Compton Lock and the 10-acre field to its east, with the intention of restoring a late mediaeval irrigation scheme on the field, to enable two or three crops of grass to be obtained each year, so that our ancestors could have a milk supply from April to October. Work on the restoration will start very shortly, and the area will become an interesting visitor-attraction. Chris Corcoran, the Twyford PC's chairman, has co-opted me to represent the Compton & Shawford view, and I have been reporting the topic in the Parish Magazine. It promises to be a fascinating project.

Further and better particulars from Tom Threlfall

Finance report continued from page 6

we hope to start shortly.

As reported in the June 1998 Parish Magazine, "a review of the latest estimates for a revised plan had shown that, together with the grants already promised, a contribution of £142,000 from the Parish Council would give a realistic budget. Accordingly the Parish Council voted to contribute a maximum of £142,000". Later in the summer of 1998 it was discovered that a £12,000 to 13,000 retaining wall was required to be constructed before any other work could begin. The Parish Council took the view that CASCA could not be expected to fund the wall, and that it should be built with Parish Council funds. We warned in the September 1998 magazine that the impact of this unforeseen expenditure on our capital plans might be that we would have to borrow.

However when we came to set the 1999/2000 precept we decided that rather than borrow, we would replace the £13,000 capital by careful budgeting and a larger than normal increase in the precept.

Although the rise in our precept of nearly 40% sounds a lot, in absolute terms it is quite a small change. It's just 20p per week on the

Council Tax of the benchmark Band D property. Even with the increase our precept is almost the same as the neighbouring parishes of Twyford and Otterbourne, as shown in the table on the back page.

In order to support our Sports Council grant application for the new pavilion we needed to commit our part of the funds for the project plan. So in November 1998 we passed a formal motion to contribute £88,000. A breakdown of the pavilion project costings was distributed with the Agenda for this meeting. At this stage we believe that the plans are achievable without further large fund-raising or increases in the precept by the Parish Council.

We also agreed to contribute £6,000 to the school building fund spread over the three financial years starting with 2000/2001.

It has been traditional for the PC to ask the Annual Parish Meeting to endorse the audited accounts for 1997/98, 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 questions regarding either set of accounts. Thank you.

In Memoriam

Among the people to whom we said goodbye this year were June Ducker, champion gardener, and Caroline Harman, our representative to the Winchester District Rural Welfare Trust and former Parish Councillor

50 Not Out!

Ray Wilmshurst keeps clocking up the records.

In addition to his excellent work as a school governor, his 32 years on the Parish Council and his dedication to the Horticultural Society, Ray has just completed 50 years' service as an officer of the Sports Club.

Congratulations and thanks for all you have done for the village.



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 decided in 1998 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.pariahants.gov.uk>

Finance Committee Convenors Report

This report was prepared by the Chairman, Adrian Walmsley.

Introduction

I'd like to start by thanking Tony Lockett for all his work as Convenor of the Finance subcommittee for the last several years. Tony resigned from that post a couple of weeks ago. Tony's mastery of computer spreadsheets has been a big help in setting budgets and tracking expenditure.

We will appoint a new convenor at the Annual Parish Council Meeting next Tuesday when all subcommittees have to be re-appointed.

Accounts

I'm pleased to report that the auditor gave us a very clean bill of health and complimented the clerk on the 1997/98 accounts. He did make some helpful suggestions and one task for the new convenor is a revaluation of our assets.

The subcommittee

Its full name is "Finance and Admin" to cover the procedures, processes and office equipment used by the clerk. I would also have liked to have designed some new stationery for the council with a letterhead a little more eye-catching than what we use at present. Are there any artistic people who would like to turn their hand to this?

The Precept

The Precept is that very small part of your council tax which comes to the Parish Council to enable us to carry out our duties. The City Coun-

cil collects it as part of the Council Tax and passes the precept to us.

Funds

Parish Councils are not allowed to build up surplus funds for unspecified purposes. If we did, it would mean that we were collecting too much in Council Tax and the auditor would object. When we need to fund major expenditure we can either borrow (with approval) or save up. As reported in previous years, the auditor does accept that we are building up capital to replace the tumbledown pavilion. We opened a fund expressly for that purpose in 1982 and have been building it up gradually over the years when uncertainty about the M3 route made it unrealistic to start any detailed planning. And this year we received £162,500 from the sale of the land next door.

But as most of you know, we have two ambitious capital projects on the go and we have had to balance expenditure between them.

The Parish Hall was surveyed and given a good structural report when Bob Jordan was Chairman. I don't think anyone would claim that our pavilion was in good shape structurally so the new pavilion project was arguably more urgent than the Parish Hall renovations. As things have turned out, we have been able to start work on the Hall first, but as a finance subcommittee we needed to preserve the capital for the new pavilion project which

Continued on page 5

Parish Council Powers

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

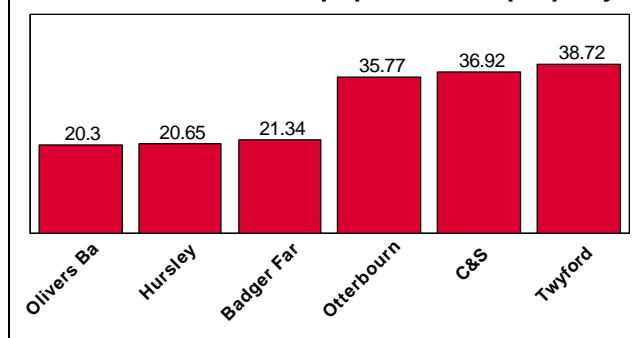
This is over and above the powers granted under Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act under which a local council could spend in any one financial year up to £3.50 per elector on anything for which it has no express power, provided that the expenditure is for the direct benefit of the parish,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

The list of areas where the council has power to spend money ranges from Allotments and Baths through Playing Fields, Ponds and Public Lavatories to Traffic Calming, Transport and Village Greens.

In some cases the Council is empowered to spend the money itself - in other areas the Council has the option to pay another body to provide the service.

The full list is defined in a NALC leaflet which with their permission I intend to summarise on the Parish Council web site when time allows.

1999/2000 Precept per Band D property



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