

# Compton & Shawford Parish Council Annual Review

April 2003

## Chairman's Report

The Parish Council has enjoyed a year of steady progress, with a high level of co-operation and goodwill between members. Having been elected Chairman in May 2002 (a position I had last held in May 1992), I was pleased the Nick Campbell-White, the outgoing chairman, agreed to lead the Finance and Administration Committee.

Martin Bell continued as Vice-Chairman, whilst taking on the challenging and difficult task of leading the Council's approach to planning matters.

Indeed, it is planning that must be seen as the important issue of the past year, and understandably also the year to come. Winchester's policies have been turned on their heads in response to government guidelines, and high-density development, often ignoring the local characteristics of the area, are being promoted, not only by developers, but also it seems by the planning authority.

As a statutory consultee the Parish Council cannot make decisions, but can constantly make representations to minimise the effects of these policies.

Assistance given by other parish bodies (Residents' Associations, The Compton Down Society, etc.) are most welcome, and the Parish Council seeks to liaise with such organisations to form a consistent and credible joint policy. More details of planning matters are reported elsewhere in this leaflet.

The Parish Council has, like so many organisations, been tangled in more "red tape" over the past year.

Reports appeared in the national press of parish councillors resigning in large numbers throughout the country when asked to sign up to the new "code of conduct" which involved an intrusive register of interests. Whilst the imposition of these requirements in some areas led to the collapse of councils due to lack of volunteers to take on the duties, it is pleasing to note that all members of Compton and Shawford Parish Council felt able to comply. This new imposition will not make it easier to persuade members



Sports Club secretary Gordon de la Mare hands over the club's £20,000 contribution for the Jubilee Pavilion to Parish Council Chairman George Beckett

of the public to stand as councillors in the future.

A new "audit regime" was imposed in the last year, whereby the Audit Commission passed their workload onto the Parish Council. We now have had to appoint our own outside auditors, at parish expense, whilst still passing the accounts and auditor's report to the audit commission and paying their fee as well!

Proposals entitled "Quality Town and Parish Councils", probably intended to apply to much larger bodies (such as Romsey or Alresford Town Councils), would involve us in enormous expense in compliance if imposed on our small council. We shall oppose

the imposition of any further administrative burdens. If we do not, we run the risk that the cost of actually being a parish council will soon far exceed the cost of providing our services.

On a lighter note, the Parish Council were pleased to support the most successful Jubilee celebration party on the Memorial Playing Field last June. Members have expressed their appreciation to Mrs Judy Harris and her enthusiastic committee for a well-run event.

The surplus proceeds were used to purchase and install a bench seat, commemorating Her Majesty's golden jubilee, on the Memorial Playing Field.

*cont on page 3*

# Tourism, Trees, Footpaths, and the Itchen Navigation

Tom Threlfall reports on his patch:

In an attempt to introduce a fresh note into this report, I will deal with these topics in a different order this time around, with the easiest one first:

## Tourism

The Parish Council was invited last December by Eloise Appleby (head of tourism at the Colebrook Street Winchester city office) to assist her with "An audit of Tourism Product" (sic) in each parish including accommodation, pubs, churches, attractions, footpaths, etc. On behalf of the council I submitted a list of possible such attractions, including the several B&B opportunities in our villages, to Ms Appleby. She has used some in the "Winchester Visitor's Guide" and on her website. If you have any suggestions for future entries in the Winchester Guide, Ms Appleby is on 848181. She is looking for "French Connections" this year. Bon chance.

## Trees

Arboriphobia seems to have taken hold of the officials who manage our local countryside this year, a condition to which this very Parish Council (PC) may have contributed.

I was asked by the PC to try to persuade Network Rail to decimate the trees on the railway embankment which were overhanging our freshly re-fettled Parish Hall, and filling its gutters with



Shawford Down with added tree stumps

their droppings, with detrimental effects upon our fine new building. After ten minutes on the telephone I ended up with Community Relations at Waterloo, in the person of a Hemla Inman who was most sympathetic to our cause. Since then many of the trees on each side of the railway to the north of Shawford Station have been felled. Apparently that job was about to happen anyway, and I can therefore claim no particular credit for having brought it about, but hope that "*Post hoc ergo propter hoc*" will be deemed to apply. On the whole the railway tree contractors did a reasonable job, but have left some piles of rubbish here and there. No doubt there is a plan for the removal of the debris in due course.

Having advised us rather generally at the end of last summer about its tidying ambitions for Shawford Down, last February the Countryside Agency removed most of the trees on the Down, as it borders Shawford Road. The site now

resembles quite closely (but with added tree-stumps) how it was a century ago (when the Down was a golf course) if contemporary photographs are any guide.

I am your local Tree Warden, whose job is to offer parishioners commonsense advice and to pass difficult cases along to the City Council's Arboricultural Officer, Michael Edwards, on 01962- 848177. He is particularly knowledgeable and helpful in all matters concerning trees - both yours and your neighbour's.

## Footpaths

One of the more used paths is the towpath on the east side of the Itchen Navigation, which was placed on the Hampshire County Council's mending list after the serious flooding a couple of years ago. It was rebuilt last autumn, and withstood the winter well. It now carries large numbers of walkers on a fine day, some no doubt on their way to marvel at the reincarnated Twyford Meads Irrigation Scheme, which opened to visitors last autumn, and reveals how our predecessors obtained their milk supplies a couple of hundred years ago. See last year's report for more details.

## Itchen Navigation

The Itchen Navigation is considered by many to be the jewel in Shawford's crown, and is now

also two hundred years old, and its banks are giving way here and there.

The breach here last year was dealt with by Liz Giles, the area Rights of Way Officer (tel 02380-455157) who is always sympathetic to our footpath problems. She caused the towpath to be built up sufficiently to contain the Navigation, since she is responsible for the towpath itself. Which moved the problem down-stream to the Malms area. The recent breach there was caused by an elderly sluice gate failing, and is being dealt with by the Department of the Environment, which has responsibility for the Navigation itself. The breach is responsible for the relatively low level of water in the canal, and the high level in Michael Baird's fields at the Malms.

If you have questions on any of the foregoing, or would like further and better particulars of any topic in my portfolio, please ask at the Parish Meeting, or ring me on 712608. T.J.T.



Children at the opening of the Twyford Meads scheme



## Highways, Byways & Environment

*Convenor Celia Simmons writes:*

Committee members were Martin Bell and Jude Vallis.

**A**nother busy year with many topics taking our attention this year, including Street Lighting in Martins Field, Dog Bins in Compton Street, Car parking in Compton Street and a Bus Shelter in Attwoods Drove.

### M3 Campaign

Our committee is still working hard. At the mo-



ment our main concern is the petition. My grateful thanks to those who have been helping us circulate the parish with the petition and newsletter. If anyone has not yet signed and would like to do so please contact me, Celia Simmons Tel. 712622. We are also very keen to invite anyone who feels that they would like to help in this campaign to join us.

### Street lighting

We were asked by a parishioner in Martins Field to look into the possibility of further streetlights. However, after carrying out a survey, we found that the majority did not want more lighting and therefore we are doing nothing further at this stage.

### Bus Shelter

The parish council was approached by the Compton Tenants Association asking if it were possible to have a bus shelter in Attwoods Drove. I am pleased to say that we are now able to go

ahead with this, having been given a grant by the Rural Transport Officer. Provided that we are now able to secure a site for the shelter, which is currently being investigated, this should go ahead in the next financial year.

### Car Parking in Compton Street

It has been brought to the attention of the parish council that due to increased car usage, parking at school drop off and pick up times has become an even greater

source of aggravation to local residents. Some incidents of dangerous and aggressive driving have been reported. We are looking into various ways to alleviate the situation-among them car sharing and walking to school.

### Benches

The benches in Attwoods Drove and Hurdle Way have been repaired.



A quick word outside school while traffic waits

### Chairman's report (cont)

Exciting developments are reported elsewhere in this leaflet regarding the new pavilion project. It is satisfying to reflect that, following some disagreement initially, we have arrived at proposals which have broad community support, and indeed a large proportion of parishioners have been involved in fund-raising. A new lease arrangement has just been

concluded with Compton & Shawford Sports Club covering the occupancy and management of the new facilities.

I am indebted to the Parish Clerk for his patient, thoughtful and quiet advice over the last year. All members enjoy the benefits of his meticulous work, and without Mike Langford, with his accounting and computer skills, it is difficult to see how Compton

and Shawford Parish Council could operate.

Looking forward, Parish Council elections take place in May 2004. The Council would very much welcome new (dare I say younger?) blood to carry on this most local of institutions. Any interested persons requiring information could contact me, or indeed any of my councillor colleagues, for information.

George Beckett

**The Parish Magazine** carries reports of Parish Council meetings as well as other information of public interest from the Parish Council and other bodies.

If you are not receiving a copy and would like to - contact Barry Nicholson on 712201. The annual subscription is £5.

## Playing Fields

*Mary Shaw, convenor of the Playing Fields Management Committee, writes:*

The highlight of the past year has been the completion of the new Play Area in Compton Village. It is being enjoyed by the local children and the Playgroup held in the Scout Hut make full use of the new safe Play Equipment. It has been disappointing to note that graffiti has appeared on the new Play Equipment, however, this has been in chalk, which the rain will hopefully wash away.

The local boys in Compton Village, together with their Mums and Dads, have put in a lot of work on the football pitch goalmouths, which are being refurbished with new turf kindly donated by George Beckett. It is planned to purchase some new Goal Posts with nets in April of this year. The local boys really enjoy the

football facility in the Compton Street playground.

A new rubbish bin has been purchased which encourages the Compton Street Playground to be kept clear of litter and this, together with plans to purchase a new gate, will help to ensure that the Playground is kept tidy and safe for the children of the village.

The Memorial Playing Field play area continues to be enjoyed. A new bench seat, with commemorative plaque, has been installed which commemorates the Queen's Golden Jubilee. The cost of this has been met with surplus funds accumulated from the Golden Jubilee celebrations held on the Memorial Playing Field last summer.

Plaques have been installed at both Playgrounds which detail the names of the sponsors

who made it possible to construct the new Children's play areas.

The football and cricket pitches on the Memorial Playing field are in a good state of repair, as is the surrounding outfield. The boundary hedgerows and vegetation has been cut back and tidied thereby keeping the whole field tidy. Of course we are looking forward to the building of the New Pavilion, which will prove to be an asset to the village to be enjoyed by all members of the Sports Club and Parishioners alike.

With the completion of the new Pavilion and construction of the third Tennis Court, plans are in the pipeline for landscaping of the old car park and existing pavilion area. The Tennis Club are planting trees together with adding trellis to an adjoining Parishioner's fence to provide screening of the Tennis Courts.

As soon as the New Pavilion and Car park are completed, we plan to work with the Sports Club to re-think how we can manage and use the reclaimed land on the eastern boundary of the Memorial Playing Field.



## Jubilee Pavilion Project

*Paul Murray Chairman Pavilion Building Committee writes:*

It has taken a long time but we are at last getting there! The planning and preparation of this new concept and the funding thereof has taken a lot longer than we had hoped.

It has involved a lot of people in a lot of work, but it should be up and built before the year is out. Now there's a promise! On the bright side, let's look forward to a wonderful new pavilion that will see the influx into the community of nearly a quarter of a million pounds of lottery money.

£246,025 to be precise. This is the sum that is being provided by Sport England. We formally accepted their offer during the first week of April. During that week we also received the £20,000 that had always been promised by the sportsmen and women themselves, under the guise of the Sports Club, who have now signed the new lease with the Parish Council.

The Pavilion Building Committee have recently handed over to the Parish Council another £6,360 to add to the £15,040 already made available. This produces a total of £21,400 and represents all the fundraising done locally and includes all the generous donations from many within Compton & Shawford as well as outside. This is in addition to the £100,000 provided by the Parish Council.

It is therefore interesting and reassuring to note therefore







## Memories of the Jubilee

that a total of £141,400 has been raised by local people and organizations. Apart from the Sport England money, the balance has come from Winchester County Council (Open Spaces Fund) who put in £10,000 and the Hampshire Playing Fields Association, who provided £1,800.

The project will cost just over £399,000. We hope to arrange a small ceremony to mark the start of construction which is set for 19 May. Completion is committed for Boxing Day but expected by mid December. Wilding & Butler are the company who will be building the Pavilion, with Gentle Associates acting as our agents. STA Design are the Architects.

The development of the project has been in the hands of the Pavilion Building Committee for the last two and a half years and under the chairmanship of Paul Murray with Jo Lockett as Secretary, Lyn Brace as Fund Raising Chairman and Anthony Lewis as Treasurer. Ian Gray, John Evans, Brian Marchmont, Martin Bell, Adrian Walmsley and Martin Dearlove were all

members of the Committee, who have met regularly throughout this period. It is intended that the committee will stand down as soon as the Pavilion has been opened.

The Pavilion will consist of four changing rooms, complete with showers and toilets. All specifications meet Sport England requirements and are therefore to a high standard. Officials will have their own changing room.

There is also a medium sized Clubroom with a kitchen and bar. Additionally there is a separate Groundsman's Store separate to the main pavilion to store the mowers, rollers and other equipment.

The pavilion is set in the treeline on the eastern boundary of the playing field with the car park on the reclaimed land behind the treeline.

It will look good! Just wait and see! After nearly twenty years, the Jubilee Pavilion will be built in 2003.



Pony rides



Dog show



games



Vintage cars

### In memoriam

**Hartley Honeyman**, who had looked after the organisation of the Parish Magazine, played a crucial role in the establishment of the Tennis Club, and acted as treasurer to the Tennis and Sports Clubs;

**Monty Dawson**, champion fund-raiser for (amongst others) the PCC, editor of the Parish Magazine for much of the 1990s, and secretary of the reborn Horticultural Society;

**Marjorie Abraham** who was born in Shawford and lived all of her 92 years locally.

### Council documents

Under recent government legislation we have had to prepare a Publication Scheme actually listing all the documents we hold and the charges we will make to provide copies of them.

The publication scheme itself is available on request and, together with summaries of all our meetings, can be viewed on our web pages at [compton.parish.hants.gov.uk](http://compton.parish.hants.gov.uk) or [shawford.parish.hants.gov.uk](http://shawford.parish.hants.gov.uk)

## 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 can 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 full list of council powers is summarised on the Parish Council web site.



Mike Matthews writes:

Shawford Parish Hall - as CASCA's primary activity - has enjoyed another successful year. Occupancy, and therefore income, has increased gradually and last year's small surplus looks on track to be repeated this year. However the hall has not yet shed all its renovation teething troubles: problems with the electrical installation, main drains and some kitchen equipment have needed expensive rectification actions. We now have a regime of biannual inspections in place and this is used to assess priorities for ongoing maintenance and repair. Top of the list at present is the Caretaker's Cottage. Good progress was made with the eradication of damp last year and this summer the Bathroom will be refurbished. A further monitoring activity will be put in place

soon when a Risk Assessment is conducted throughout the premises.

We review our hire rates annually with increases

the charitable sector, most of which have been generally welcomed, but whether a draft Bill will be introduced later this year is not yet known.

We've added three flip chart boards to our props portfolio recently and are in the process of purchasing an electrically driven screen for



Woodland animals in the panto

made effective from the beginning of October. We now have a better handle on running costs and on how to keep these under control. Of current concern however is the sharp rise in insurance premiums being experienced by many organisations, especially for public and employer liability. This spin off from the now prevalent claims culture could have quite an impact on our financial status.

the Shawford Hall east wall thanks to generous donations from three of our regular user groups.

The highlight of the year culturally was undoubtedly 'Snow White & the 7 Dwarfs' - the third pantomime created by Simon Theobalds - which was much enjoyed by all who saw it and, self-evidently, by the cast as well!

CASCA now has 18 very supportive Trustees who represent a wide range of the customers using the Parish Hall. I thank them all. Vanessa, our caretaker, and her supportive family also deserve our thanks for all their labours in the Hall.

Also being watched with interest is what follow-up action is taken on the government's report entitled 'Private Action, Public Benefit'. This proposes some significant reforms to



Snow White sings to the Dwarfs



# Planning

*Martin Bell writes*

## What's going on at the moment and where we stand.

In order to avoid building on greenfield sites and to meet government targets, the Winchester City Council Planning Department is encouraging development of "brownfield" sites.

In Compton and Shawford, that means our gardens. Our previous EN1 protection is to be lost. The planners and the City Council Planning Committee (referred to hereinafter as the City Council) are requiring any new planning application to be of a minimum (very high) density. This density is being "encouraged" by the government but it is only one of a number of material planning considerations.

The City Council is refusing applications that do not meet what they see as a high density "requirement". The only realistic way to achieve these densities in Compton and Shawford is to build blocks of flats, such as the proposals expected for Longacre.

This is said to be in response to government guidance "PPG3", but this "guideline" is being applied far less rigorously by other authorities.

The City Council engaged professional plan-

ning consultants to produce an "Urban Capacity Study" to indicate how housing target numbers could be achieved by encouraging brownfield development. The report showed modest development in our parish, with a degree of backfilling but showing single dwellings on reasonable plots.



Despite this being against what we had traditionally sought to achieve in our parish, the parish council recognised the need for additional housing and supported the study.

Having broadly supported this study itself, the City Council has since decided that it wasn't really what they wanted and are now pressing vigorously for high density developments, flats etc and refusing the traditional additional single development opportunities (e.g. Mawdlam Lodge) on grounds of insufficient density, citing PPG3.

The parish council can see how a number of additional dwellings can be rea-

sonably accommodated on our patch, along the lines of the Urban Capacity Study, to contribute toward additional housing needs. The WCC planning officers and the elected councillors on the WCC Planning Committee, however, now seem to want out of character, high-density developments more appropriate to a town centre. Whilst conceding that we lack infrastructure in the

area, the City Council seem to be intent on achieving numbers at all costs.

## The past year and immediate prospects

It has been a busy year, but the overriding feeling is that pressures have been building up and some very important landmark decisions will be made soon. These decisions will determine how our parish will change. There are a number of very high-density applications being considered and the approval of these could lead to major and undesirable changes to our area (blocks of flats, underground car parks etc).

Whilst granting a rela-

tively low-density application at Highdown, the planners refused a single dwelling application at Mawdlam Lodge. The applicant is appealing this decision and, in as much as it argues for low-density development, the parish council is supporting that appeal. There are mixed feelings about this in Southdown, with some residents arguing against even one dwelling. Over the main road in Hurdle Way at Longacre, a previous application for three houses having been turned down, we are expecting an application for 18-19 dwellings. We are told the planners have been making encouraging noises.

There is a high-density application for a plot made from two gardens off Highways Road, adjacent to the motorway. We may expect similar high-density applications for Silkstede Priors. The planners will be "requiring" this. A four bedroomed house was shoe horned into a gap between houses on Otterbourne Road.

This may be a sign of things to come. There has been a sea change in planning policy from discouraging developers to encouraging developers. As these are uncharted waters, policies are rather "fluid" and we must do what we can to resist undesirable developments whilst we get a clearer picture of what lies ahead.

We must encourage our elected representatives on the City Council to do their best to support us.

A list of planning applications and decisions can be found on the City Council's web site at <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/applications/>



## 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.

Like many other councils, we have a formal public question session near the start of every meeting.

If you think research may be needed to answer your question, or you want to ask for a subject to be formally placed on the agenda, it helps if you can give notice of your question before the meeting.

Council committee meetings are also held in public. Watch the noticeboards for times and dates or talk to the committee convenor. The convenors' names will be published in the Parish Magazine after the May Parish Council meeting at which all committees have to be reappointed.

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## Finance convenor's report

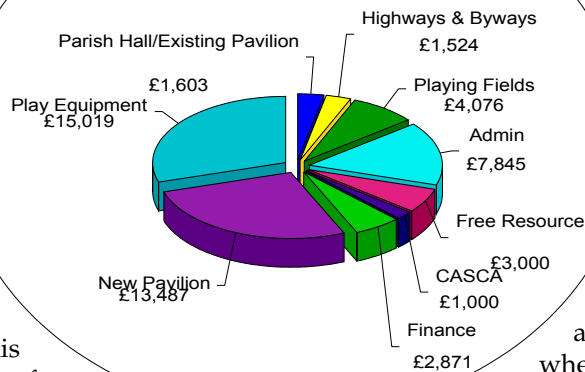
Nick Campbell-White  
writes:

The main issues over this year were the negotiation, drawing up and then finalising leases with the Tennis Club and the Sports Club. The lease for the 2 tennis courts and provision for the third was finalised in June via White and Bowker. The lease with the Sports Club for management of the Memorial Playing Field and the new Pavilion, once built, has just been signed after protracted and difficult negotiations, and help from council solicitors White and Bowker.

At long last our application for Lottery funding to Sport England has been agreed and a replacement pavilion will shortly be built. This Committee is particularly indebted to Paul Murray and his committee for all the work they have done on our behalf to bring about this momentous result. We have been kept closely informed but have been spared the negotiations and constant form filling with revised Lottery forms, architects specifications, builders' tenders etc. All funding is now in place and we await a start date from Wilding and Butler to build the new pavilion.

The stream of directives, forms to fill in and irritating legislation contin-

### Council Expenditure 2002/2003 (to 5 March)



ues unabated from Central Government. All of these increase the Parish overheads and Clerk's time. We have successfully been "audited" under the new, more complicated "lighter touch" audit regime, but have been obliged to employ an internal auditor to supervise/check our forms and accounts. The Clerk is more than capable of doing this unaided.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, our proposed method for compliance has been approved by the Commissioner for Information (Yes, there is one!) Apart from having

to publish lists of all documents that are available the public, we have been obliged to publish a list of charges to be made for providing documents. For the previous 15 years all Parish documents have been available to the public and in the rare case when copies of a specific document have been requested, we have not made a charge.

The War Memorial (Stone Cross) on Shawford Down was twice defaced during the year. The damage has been made good, and £762 was provided by the insurers. We also had the memorial cleaned at the same time.

We have increased the precept this year to £23,298, only a 2.2% increase, which has been achieved by careful previous budgeting and tight financial controls this year.

### Precept per Band D property

