
Compton & Shawford Parish Council

Annual Report

April 2008

Chairman's Letter

Dear Parishioner,

It's that time of year again, when many of the village clubs and societies hold their AGMs.

Everyone is invited to come along to our Annual Assembly in Shawford Parish Hall at 7:30pm on Wednesday 23rd April to hear what the Parish Council has been doing, to ask questions and to make suggestions. Coffee and biscuits afterwards.

For the Parish Council, this is a special year because all nine seats on the council are up for election,

So it's appropriate to review progress and priorities, and other local events, since the current council was elected in 2004.

Parish Plan

The Parish Plan is nearly ready to be published. Peter Betts, who has been running the project since it was started two years ago, will talk us through the latest draft and invite comments at the Annual Meeting. It will be up to the Parish Council that will be elected on 1st May to follow up the recommendations of the Plan.

Planning

As ever, we face the challenge of balancing preserving the character of our community against the requirements laid down by central government and the wishes of owners to improve their properties or realise their investment. More on pages 6&7.

Parking

Residents have learned to avoid Compton Street at the beginning and end of the school day.

The county has kindly provided these "No Parking" signs outside the school: can you spot the mistakes?

Commuters attracted by the improved train service have made the parking at Shawford even worse.

We are checking whether any other area could be made available for parking. There would have to be other parking restrictions to prevent it filling up and overflowing onto the local roads again.



difficulty turning. We may reluctantly have to sacrifice some of the green to provide more spaces.

Play Areas and recreation

We continue to improve the Play Areas on the Memorial Playing Field and in Compton Street.

The City Council often reminds us that Shawford lacks a children's play area.

Developers must contribute to an "Open Space

Fund", controlled by the City Council, which we can call on for approved recreational projects.

Our policy has been to let this accumulate in the hope that we will be able to acquire some land for a play area in Shawford. However, if we can't find such a piece of land, the new Parish Council may wish to review this policy.

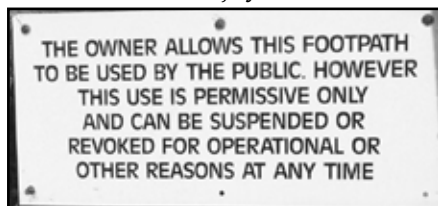
Southern Water is selling off various parcels of land including Sparrowgrove, on the southern end of the parish, on the border with Otterbourne. Although

continued overleaf



Parking in A t t w o o d s Drove and Martins Fields is so congested that the bus sometimes has

it was unlikely that the land could be built on, there was no guarantee that a private buyer would keep open the permissive paths (mentioned in the photo) across the copse which many of our residents enjoy. We therefore



agreed to pledge a contribution towards the community effort to purchase the land. See page 5.

Park and Ride

After extensive public consultation the County Council selected Itchen Farm as the site for the new South Winchester Park and Ride. Since last year, they have been getting financial and planning approvals and finalising the plans. We expect construction to start in 2009 and it may come into operation in 2010.

The Parish Council will liaise with the County Council to minimise disruption during the construction.

Policing

We are lucky to live in a fairly low crime area: the main crimes seem to be opportunist thefts of garden equipment and thefts from cars in car parks. Be vigilant!

I was pleased to see the police in Compton Street, near the school, at the morning peak the week before Easter, to encourage considerate traffic manners.

Panto

Like so many of our village activities, the now biennial and much appreciated panto depends on the time, skill and enthusiasm of a small band of volunteers.

I'm told that another is planned for the Christmas holidays this year. Buy your tickets early - it's

bound to be another sell-out!

Post Office

In 1997, with the help of Vanessa Smith, we were able to keep the Shawford sub post office going, but with two other post offices just outside the parish boundaries, the case wasn't strong enough to resist the latest round of closures.

Parties

Village parties are a good way of getting to know people.

We were delighted to see the CASCAC Christmas party combined with Parish Plan information evenings for the past two years and getting such good attendance. Watch the Parish Magazine for details of how to get tickets for the 2008 Christmas party.

Two years ago, the Parish Council was pleased to host a "welcome home" event, open to all, to celebrate Julia Beckett's silver medal at the Melbourne Games.

Parish Hall

The Parish Hall continues to flourish under John Griffith's leadership of CASCAC, and our excellent caretaker Frank Smith, and we thank Jo Pitt for all that she has done for the hall over many years.

Parish Church

In the questionnaire, nearly 50% of respondents rated the church as moderately or very important; over 80% said that it was of some importance or more.

The extension, with loo, on the south side of the church, is taking shape, and it is good to know that the long wait for a new priest is

Stamp of success — in the ladies!

THIS POST office service in Shawford has been blessed with success ever since it relocated to the ladies' toilet of the village hall. Villagers have been queuing for their parcels in the slightly unusual surroundings since August last year, after the village hall caretaker took on the responsibility of running the sub-post office.

Vanessa Smith decided to run the service from the village hall after the closure of the shop that previously operated as the post office.

She said: "I decided to start operating from the village hall, and although it sounds odd, the toilet is ideal."

It is secure, and I can take the phone in there with me. A sort of stable-door has been put on by the parish council, and a serving shield attached, so it is business as usual."

She added: "The main service is for the older people in the village who cannot travel to neighbouring villages for their parcels."

"They were delighted at the decision to keep the post office, and they haven't missed an episode at the new location."



Vanessa Smith, who operates the Shawford sub-post office from the ladies' toilet of the village hall. ©22967196

nearly over. Our thanks to Nancy Emmerson and the team for keeping everything running during the interregnum.

Parish Council

After such a well attended meeting in February at the Scout Hall, the new Parish Council may wish to hold its meetings in different parts of the parish more often to make it easier for more people attend.

My thanks to our clerk, Mike Langford, and to all the parish councillors for their support and hard work. To the wider community, our thanks to everyone who helps with parish life by contributing to the various clubs, societies and other activities which flourish here.

*Adrian Walmsley, Chairman
Compton & Shawford Parish Council*



Do you take the Parish Magazine?

The Parish Council is happy to support the magazine, your best source of information about events run by local clubs, societies, the church and the Parish Council.

Contact John Richardson on 712124 to arrange a subscription (£6 a year).

Annual Report from Highways and Byways

The committee has been very involved in refurbishment and improvement throughout the parish this year.

All the notice boards have been cleaned and the wood protected; the notice board at the end of Compton Street has been demolished, and its replacement positioned opposite the school, where it is much more visible to the community. The bus shelters also have been smartened up.



It was decided that the area around the Victorian Memorial in Shawford Village should just be tidied and cleared for the moment, following its renovation last year.

Shawford Down

The Countryside Agency completed the fencing of Shawford Down, and installed the Highland cattle, to the pleasure of most people. We are told that their presence on the Down is proving cost effective as far as maintenance is concerned, and there will be further clearing of encroaching vegetation during the next year. A

hard path now connects the top car park with the Downs – specifically to make this accessible both for the children from Shepherds Down, and any other buggy or wheelchair users.

Horse manure

One of the problems reported to the Parish council this year has been the increasing amount of horse manure on pavements. Farms in the parish have been asked to tell the owners of horses using their premises that it is an offence to ride on pavements. Maps of the parish showing bridleways have been sent to the farms. Damage has also been done to fences and posts next to footpaths. This matter has been passed to Councillor Beckett, to see if there could be a permissive bridleway to enable horsemen to connect their routes.

Street Lighting

The next elected Parish Council will have to decide this year on the way in which it finances its street lighting. In 2007, HCC contacted all Parish Councils to announce an intended Public Finance Initiative (PFI) with regard to the maintenance and provision of lighting from 2009. This is in now its final phase, and firm proposals will be made at the end of the summer, with a final decision to be made. If the PC opts out, alternative contractors will need to be found.

Parking throughout the Parish continues to be a problem, with Compton Street and Shawford



Village the worst affected. Possible solutions are being discussed, with, hopefully, some firm proposals to follow.

Twyford Road closure

The essential repairs to Shawford Mill Bridge have been postponed to next year. We are now told to expect the road to be closed for 12 weeks from May 2009.

Spring Clean

Lastly, the Spring-clean is upon us, commencing April 21 for a week, with the Annual Parish Meeting slap in the middle. We hope for 3 areas for collection, and these will be advertised on the notice boards.

*Tricia Caffyn, Highways
and Byways convenor*



Parking in Shawford

Playing Fields

The play areas continue to be enjoyed by all the local community. Again we received a favourable report from the annual inspection.

We have replaced the goal nets at Compton street play area and in the future we plan to replace the swing seats.

At the Memorial Playing Fields we plan to fill in the holes in the play area, provide a hard standing for cars near the Post box/Play area and Dragons' teeth along the west boundary to prevent further damage to the grass verges.

The reclaimed land on the eastern boundary is looking good and it is hoped that we will find a recreational use for it in the near future.

We, of course, would like another Play area in Shawford but finding a site has proved very difficult. These two projects should be possible in the near future as we



have £85,000 in the open space fund.

My thanks to our groundsman, Jim Kimber, who takes great pride keeping our playing fields looking great.

Mary Shaw

Playing Fields Committee Convenor

What can the Parish Council do?

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

Currently we cannot reclaim money from the City or County Councils when we organise such schemes for ourselves rather than asking them to do it.

The full list of council powers is summarised on the Parish Council web site. It covers playing fields, lighting, villages halls, burial grounds, as well as historic powers such as provision of public wash houses.

This is over and above the powers granted under Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act which allowed a local council to spend in any one financial year up to £3.50 (£5.86 for 2008/9) 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.



I see from the report which was written for last year's APM that the big problem then was posed by the presence in Compton Lock of a large tree which had fallen in the February gales.

Luckily there have been no similar

TREES, FOOTPATHS, AND COMPTON LOCK being Tom Threlfall's report for the 2008 Compton & Shawford Parish Council's Annual Parish Meeting

gales this year, and the tree has been attenuated by various firewood hunters and the Department of the Environment's cheerful staff to a condition in which it no longer seems to pose an aesthetic problem.

The same DOE staff has been conscientious all year in maintaining the Itchen Navigation's towpath and the other Parish footpaths in admirably walkable condition, and in attending promptly to any problems reported to them.

In some previous years I have felt obliged eventually to tackle

fallen trees blocking our footpaths with my chainsaw, but such direct action seems not to have been needed in 2007-8, since the DOE team has answered every call so promptly, and there have not been many significant tree-damaging winds in the last 12 months.

I have enjoyed my stint on the Parish Council with the footpaths, since it involves no financial stresses, and I will be happy to pass my collection of definitive maps to whomever is elected as my successor.

T J.T.

The Parish Plan

The Parish Plan was initiated in 2006 and is now nearing completion. A draft version of the final document can be seen at the following web address:

<http://compton.parish.hants.gov.uk/ParishPlan/Main/PPDraft>

The map and some of the photographs will be changed, but we would be grateful for any serious comments and notice of omissions. Please send them to me at Compton Down, Hurdle Way or email p.betts@doctors.net.uk.

Following consultation, including meetings with various groups and societies, Open Days and of course the big questionnaire (76% response rate!); we have now nearly reached publication stage.

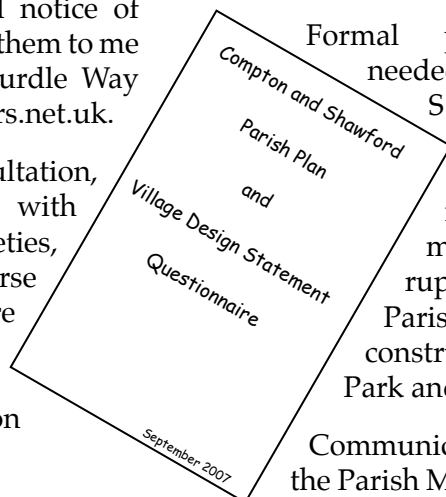
The main positive message from the Open Days was of a friendly rural Parish with a good community spirit.

The results of all these consultations identify that the majority in this community are in favour of

the following: Preservation of the Open Spaces and vistas, and the presence of cattle on Shawford Down.

A mobile shop received support and the WRVS needs more volunteer drivers. This and the mobile Library need more advertisement.

There was support for a Bottle Bank and more to be done about litter.



Formal parking is needed near Shawford Station and there must be minimal disruption to the Parish during construction of the Park and Ride.

Communication via the Parish Magazine was reported as excellent, but the use of the Web-site and the Notice Boards needs reviewing.

The sports and social activities in the Parish are numerous but more were suggested and volunteers for any new activities will be needed.

Village Design Statement

The Village Design Statement (VDS) is a separate document setting out clear and simple guidance for the design of all the development in the parish, based on our local character and distinctiveness.

The outline plan is to complete the draft VDS by late spring 2008 followed by consultation and formal adoption later in the year.

Terry Wilson

Sparrowgrove

After a public meeting in January, a combined working group from the communities of Compton & Shawford and Otterbourne was set up to explore the possibility of acquiring Sparrowgrove and Oakwood Copse.

The two areas of woodland border the two parishes and are being sold by Southern Water.

Members of the public have historically enjoyed access to both areas and there was a strong feeling that a community purchase would protect public access and conserve the woodlands as a local amenity.

Both Parish Councils have representatives on the working group.

The working group has been researching the structure for a community purchase and has been fund raising by requesting pledges of financial support for the purchase of the woodlands.

The level of support, including £5,000 from Compton & Shawford Parish Council, has been impressive and has encouraged the working group to continue.

Further funds are needed to complete the purchase and ensure continuing maintenance of the woodlands.

Anyone thinking about making a financial pledge should contact me as the Compton & Shawford Parish Council representative on the group.

Councillor Jeremy Dolphin

Some Questionnaire Comments

Likes

Peace and quietness, very friendly parish, Parish magazine excellent; some people don't know how to get it, several suggestions for additional content. Could it be free?

Concerns

Vandalism and anti-social behaviour, inappropriate infilling, inconsiderate parking, traffic speeding on side roads and main road. state of roads and pavements

Would like

More activities for the young, An annual village fete, Wider access to pavilion and tennis courts A facelift for the website (any volunteers?)

The two schools and pre-school were complimented but a meeting place and more activities are needed for young people locally such as a Youth group. A new Play Area in Shawford is suggested and the existing Play areas in Compton and Compton Down should have better and more equipment.

It is essential that the Parish Council have a Plan for the implementation of the actions suggested in this document

Thank you for all your thoughts and involvement.

Peter Betts 17.3.08

Planning

Keeping up with evolving central policy on planning continues to make my brain hurt...

A year ago, I reported on the government's Planning Policy Statement PPS3 which had replaced Planning Policy Guidance PPG3. PPS3 allows local planning authorities - in our case the City Council - to set different density targets for different character areas, although the overall average density still has to work out at 12 dwellings per acre.



I also reported on the new local plan which had been formally adopted by the City Council in July 2006. In it, Compton Down and Southdown were designated as H3 policy areas; the rest of our parish falls under the heading of "villages and settlements in the designated countryside outside the settlement policy boundaries of Policy H.3" for which Policy H.4 recognises that "there may be some scope for limited infilling."

Local Development Framework

The Government's Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the City Council to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will consist of a folder of documents to guide the development and use of land in the District, and will replace the Winchester District Local Plan Review adopted in July 2006.

To make matters more complicated, the LDF, being a series of individual documents, will gradually replace various sections of the Local Plan.

LDF consultation

As part of the process of developing its LDF, the City Council was required to consult widely and to show that it had evaluated all possible options, including those that many find unpalatable.

The Parish Council held a public meeting about the LDF, and we are grateful to the representatives of Residents' Associations and the others who came along to provide input to our response to the LDF consultation.

Parish Council policy

Faced with what seemed like constantly changing decisions from the City Council and higher authorities, the Parish Council adopted its own planning policy in June 2003 (see box) which has allowed us to take a consistent line in response to planning applications in our patch.

The new council which will be elected on May 1st may decide that it's time to review this policy in the light of recent developments.



On the web

Most of the documents referenced here can be found on the City Council's website fairly easily. Look for PPS3 on the website of DCLG, the successor to ODPM.

The City Council publishes a weekly list of planning applications on its website. Although it is not required to do so, the City Council also writes "neighbour notification" letters to residents.

It has been suggested that email notification of planning applications would be useful.

What do you think? Would this help? More importantly, can anyone volunteer to collate the information for a regular parish planning email?

*Adrian Walmsley
Chairman & acting
Planning Convenor*

Parish Council Planning Policy - adopted June 2003

The parish council accepts the inevitability of modest development in our parish along the lines described in the Urban Capacity Study.

The council will strive to obtain the maximum positive influence with the planning bodies over the longer term.

To this end the council should adopt a reasoned and consistent policy towards new developments.

Within those constraints the parish council will specifically oppose developments that do not reflect and preserve the character of the area.

We also recognise that we are a low sustainability area with minimal infrastructure.

The parish council will oppose any extensions to the current policy boundaries within the parish.



Cliff Way



Major developments in 2007/8

Shawford

After permission was granted early in 2007 for a detached house in the garden of Red Lane House, we are not aware of any further new dwelling applications.

However Shawford Close is still in the hands of a developer and there are concerns over the felling of trees at The Down House.

Compton Down

In two separate appeals, Inspectors have upheld City Council decisions that no more development can be permitted on Compton Down because of the substandard junctions at Hurdle Way and Shepherds Lane Bridge. Several previously permitted developments are under construction, in Cliff Way (shown above) and at the

old Southdown School, but no more are being allowed.

Compton Street

The long-running saga at Beechcroft continues, and the delays are being investigated by various authorities. The construction is now being completed by a different company, who assured me that the beech hedge will be reinstated.

After the bulky and, in most views, out of character, developments permitted at Beechcroft and Martins Close, there is hope that the City Council will accept the arguments against further damage to the Conservation Area, and reject the application for two very large houses at Old Orchard.

Southdown

We are seeing pressure for subdivision of large plots. Thankfully the City Council is no longer insisting on uncharacteristically high densities, but we

are concerned that the new dwelling permitted at Greenmead Cottage should not be taken as a precedent for backland development throughout the Southdown settlement.

Otterbourne Road

Infilling continues; although an application to convert Lundy into a block of seven flats was refused.

Four Dell Farm

After the concrete crusher was permitted by The County Council's Regulatory Committee on the casting vote of the chairman, at their next meeting (under a different chairman) the same committee refused an application for the use of land for storage and transfer of waste materials. This refusal is being appealed.

Meanwhile the new access road required by the County Council is taking shape..

Planning: lessons learned

You need facts

If you wish to support, or object to, a planning application, you should quote specific planning policy in support of your arguments. The members of the WCC planning committee know that if they reject an application without valid policy reasons, they are likely to lose an appeal and have costs awarded against them. Such costs feed back into our Council Tax bills.

When objecting, use as many arguments as possible

When a planning application is turned down for a single reason, if the developer can address that one reason, the application is likely to go through next time.

It probably won't work to raise objections to a re-application that you should have brought up first time around.

Local groups make a big difference

The Parish Council is spread too thinly to make a concerted response by itself to potentially damaging applications. The Compton Down Association, and more recently the Compton Village Association and the Otterbourne, Compton & Shawford and Silkstead Association have shown that grass roots movements can have an impact.

Shawford residents have done much valuable research into the covenant which may protect The Island, and the Compton Tenants' Association has been making a difference.

We are happy to support all these groups.

Talk to your neighbours

If you are planning an extension, or a new building in your garden, the Statement of Community Involvement strongly advises you to discuss it with your neighbours. If you can show that your neighbour does not object it will certainly smooth the path through the planning process.

Finance and Admin Committee

The Parish Council's overall expenditure of £24,386 was spent as shown in the pie chart. Mainly because of delays in completing budgeted items, there was a small surplus which has been transferred to reserves.

For next year, we have budgeted for a small rise in total expenditure (1.4 %). Thanks to the increase in the number of dwellings in the Parish, this means a reduction of 2.3% in the Parish Council's part of your Council Tax bill.

The other charts show how your overall council tax bill is split between the various authorities, and how we compare with other local parishes over recent years.

Land Registration

We are continuing to make progress with the Registration of land owned by the Parish. The rightful ownership of some small areas of land has been difficult to

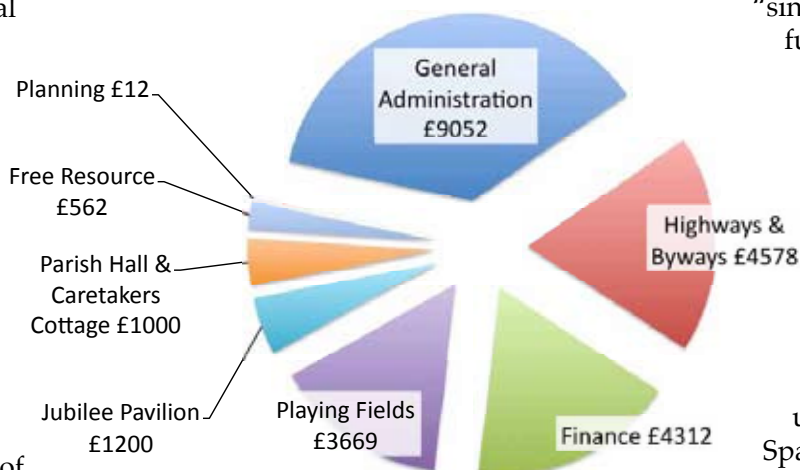
establish but we hope to complete the registration process next year.

Pavilion

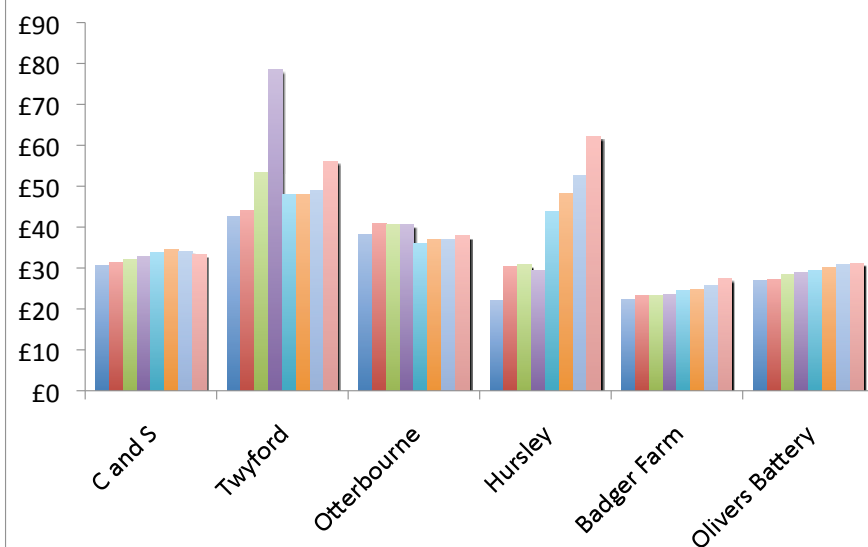
The Sports Club leases the Jubilee Pavilion from the Parish Council.

For the first five years (since April 2003), they have had the benefit of a nominal rent while they were building-up the facilities and bar trade. We have agreed an increased contribution from the Sports Club for the next five years which better reflects the cost to the Parish, whilst recognising

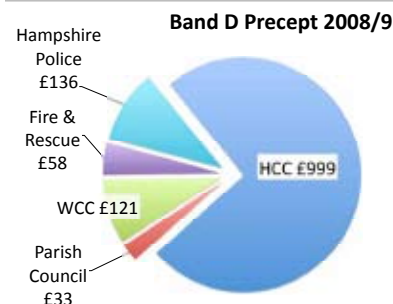
Parish Council Expenditure 2007/8



Precept per Band D property vs our neighbours 2001/2 to 2008/9



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1 Meadowcroft Close, Otterbourne, Winchester,
Hampshire SO21 2HD.
Mike Langford, Clerk



that, in common with most sports facilities, some degree of subsidy is required.

We commissioned a professional survey to establish the long-term requirements for a sinking fund to cover the cost of potential future maintenance and repairs and both the Sports Club and the Parish Council have established "sinking funds" to cover future expenditure.

The timber cladding of the pavilion and the implement shed will be treated in the Spring.

Sparrowgrove

We had hoped to use some of our Open Space Fund allocation to assist in the purchase of Sparrowgrove and Oakwood Copse. However, WCC eventually ruled that, as currently defined, the Fund could not be used for the purchase of "recreational land" (unless it was directly for playing sport or for children's play areas). It was subsequently agreed, subject to conditions, to make a contribution of £5000 from reserves.

I would like to thank Mike Langford for his continued help and guidance and preparation of the annual accounts which successfully passed the required external audit.

*John Richardson, Convenor
Finance & Admin committee*

Prepared for the Annual Parish Assembly
23 April 2008
Editor: Adrian Walmsley