

# Compton & Shawford Parish Council 2009 Annual Report

## Chairman's Letter

*Dear Parishioner,*

Once again we have compiled this leaflet to give you a summary of what the Parish Council has done on your behalf over the past year.

### 23 April: Annual Assembly

To learn more about past events and future plans, why not come and join us at the Annual Parish Assembly in Shawford Parish Hall on Thursday 23 April? You can question parish councillors on what/why they have/have not done things during the year and share your concerns and aspirations for the future.

### Parish Council

In May we were scheduled to hold Parish Council elections. Nine individuals stood for election so, as this is the Parish Council complement, elections were not needed. All nine were declared councillors. We were pleased to welcome four new Councillors, which is a rare event. Regrettably Susen Harding had to resign because of ill health, but we were delighted to be able to co-opt Jacqui Evans, who had already been helping to choose new play equipment, to

fill the vacant seat. We still urgently need new blood on the Parish Council both to help on projects and to be in a position to replace the older councillors amongst us. Please speak to any Councillor or the Clerk to find out what is involved.

We also had a change of Clerk and have been extremely fortunate to have appointed David Drake to keep us in order and also act as our Responsible Financial Officer, as required by law. Like his predecessor, Mike Langford, he is extremely efficient and knowledgeable; he has quickly settled into the new job and has made various improvements in our administration.

David is anxious to get involved with the community. If you have a problem or need advice about the parish, please do contact him (email preferred). You can also keep abreast of changes and look up councillor information on the parish website. See back page for details.

Snow forced the cancellation of the February Council meeting. Not to

be beaten by the weather, we held a "virtual" meeting and internet voting on motions. This proved very success-



Compton Street  
at school time

ful, such that we are now actively considering bi-monthly meetings. Most of our business is now done via the internet. This will be discussed at the Annual Parish Assembly and your views would be welcome.

### Parish Plan

The Compton and Shawford Parish Plan was published last year, and a copy distributed to every household in the parish. A copy with a welcome pack will be given to new households.

We owe a big thank to Peter Betts and his team for compiling such an excellent document. Councillor Una Stevens is now working on the 31 recommended points of the Action Plan. She needs help from parishioners to investigate and, if possible, implement as many of these points as possible. Neither she nor the Parish Council can do this without more outside help, which has so far not materialised. Would those that requested changes or improvements via the elaborate questionnaire that formed the Parish Plan please step forward!

The Village Design Statement (VDS) which will complement the



Shawford station parking

*continued overleaf*

Plan has yet to be finalised, again partly due to a shortage of volunteers to help compile various sections.

## Parking

The two dominant problems remain. Compton School has no control over "outside" issues, such as the volume of parking along Compton Street at school delivery and particularly collection times, although they try to influence this. We are again investigating whether Church Field, opposite, could be used as a temporary car park, but are awaiting the outcome of a questionnaire re parking issues associated with the school.

Parking in Shawford by those using the trains is increasing and causing problems. We have to balance restrictions on parking with the fact that it is the volume of "outsiders" that help keep the station open through good utilisation of the facility. Draconian parking restrictions or expensive pay-for parking schemes may drive away those regularly using the station. The consensus is that parishioner use alone would not justify the station remaining open.

We are still actively investigating extra parking on Railtrack property and also at the foot of the Downs.

## Park and Ride

The HCC scheme on Itchen Farm, the old Tarmac site, is now being constructed. Except for buses, there will be no access from Otterbourne Road. The only access for cars will be off the "motorway" roundabout.



We are hoping that this will reduce the queues at Bushfield roundabout in peak times and encourage commuters from Chandlers Ford to use the M3. We do not yet know whether there will be a dedicated bus service or whether it will be incorporated into the current Bar End service.

## Planning

As ever, planning applications and appeals continue to take up a disproportionate amount of the Council's time. Two notable decisions by an Appeal Inspector to allow large scale housing at Orchard Close, Compton Street and by HCC to allow further industrialisation at Four Dell Farm, Poles Lane, went against public opinion and evidence.

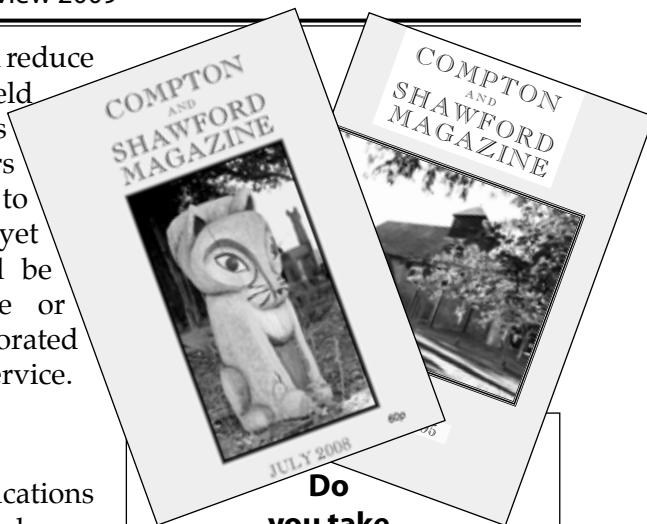
## The Church

At last we have a new Rector, shared with Otterbourne and now Hursley. I would like to put on record again how grateful the Parish Council and indeed the whole community are to Nancy Emmerson for the huge amount of effort she put in to keeping the Church alive during the interregnum.

## Sparrowgrove

We were pleased to note that the newly formed Sparrowgrove and Oakwood Conservation Trust has completed the acquisition of the woods for the community. The Parish Council has therefore recently handed over the £5000 contribution which we had promised towards the purchase.

*Nick Campbell-White, 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, as well as lots of very useful adverts.

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

## What can the Parish Council do?

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

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.

Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act allows a local council to spend up to £6.15 per elector (for 2009/10) per year on anything for which it has no express power, if the expenditure is for the direct benefit of the parish, or some or all of its inhabitants.

## Sports Club Summer Ball

**Correction:** The Summer Ball is on **Saturday 27 June**, not 21 June as stated in the April 2009 Parish Magazine. Details from Ken Staunton 713294 or see the April Parish Magazine.

## Annual Report from Highways and Byways

Several issues have arisen which have taken most of our energy during this year, alongside the normal responsibilities of this committee.

### Street Lighting

The Private Finance Initiative for the Parish lighting which we discussed last year, has just about come to fruition; the Parish Council's position is that we are interested if the cost is right. However, if we opt out of the scheme, it may prove difficult to find a properly qualified company to maintain the lights for us.

### Hedges and Vegetation

It has been really difficult to get hedges and vegetation cut back this year, and it was not until late into the autumn that the work was done. My thanks to Councillor Bailey for her support in finally sorting it out!

### Parking

There have been two areas in the village where parking has become an issue in the last year. The PC are investigating whether it is possible to use the church field for school parking on a regular basis – if the school wants it. Parking for the school extends along Compton Street, and up on to Hurdle Way, and is not always considerate.

The second area is of course, Shawford Village. The parking here creates many dilemmas, as there are many groups using the roads for parking, as well as residents. Train users, overflow from the village hall, small businesses, walkers both on the downs and the waterways,

to name but a few. The station is a valuable asset to the community, and we do not want to impose parking restrictions which would curtail its use.



To this end, we have done two surveys, one for the (very) local residents, and one regarding the use of the trains in the morning, and the parking that ensues. My thanks go to Pippa and Nick Wells who designed the latter, and were the guiding lights. My thanks also go to all those who turned out in one very cold week in February. I will report on our findings at the Parish Assembly.

### The Downs

There are now eight cattle munching away. I have been asked by David Ball, who manages the downs, to express many thanks to John Griffith who cleared the 'tarmac path' of mud a few weeks ago. On the subject of the downs, it was marvellous to see so many families enjoying themselves during the snow. There were

people there from dawn until very late.

### Litter

The annual drive to pick up litter is upon us in the Spring Clean. I have had some sensible and interesting suggestions regarding this. We know that we all pick up the litter outside our houses and as we walk around. However, the 'public' areas – main roads, station and playing fields tend to be the places which are not tackled, and once a year does not deal with this situation. I hope for more suggestions, and will discuss this too, at the Assembly.

### Bus stops

Lastly, we have some initiatives, budgeted for in the next year. We intend to refurbish the remaining **bus stops**. The Parish has a policy of not replacing vandalised glass in the shelters. I hope you will bear with this, as it seems pointless to replace glass for it to be broken again. However, a lick of paint will improve their appearance.

### Flashers

A Parish Group of five Parishes, Twyford, Otterbourne, Colden Common, Hursley and ourselves, has been formed to share the cost and administration of a movable Flashing Speed Light. Each Parish will have the use of the light for ten weeks in two week periods. It

will be interesting to see what effect this will have on traffic speed. Watch this space!

*Tricia Caffyn,  
Highways and  
Byways convenor*



Aftermath of the incident at the top of Shawford Hill

## Parish Plan

We were all delighted when the Compton & Shawford Parish Plan was published last September, the result of many hours of hard work on the part of the committee and regular consultation with parishioners. From the moment of its publication, the challenge was that of implementing the thirty-one action points it raises (see box on facing page).

I am pleased to report that we are well on our way.

It is hardly surprising that the production of a Village Design Statement, with its six sub-sections, is the first action point, given that it is the obvious corollary to the Parish Plan. The VDS Committee is working hard to produce a design statement of the same high quality as that of the Parish Plan.

Much has already been achieved on the other action points, not least of all as a result of my meeting with the Winchester City Officer responsible for the overview of Parish Plans.

Amongst other areas raised, a letter in support of the highland cattle scheme has been written, the mobile library has been advertised

in the Parish Magazine, awareness of the police presence within the parish has been raised, as has the excellent work done by the WRVS. In partnership with All Saints' Ladies Guild, further links have been fostered with the two schools in our parish to explore how we can most effectively promote the highest levels of community cohesion.

Clearly, some areas of the Parish Plan will take longer to implement, such as lobbying for "quiet tarmac" when the M3 is resurfaced. I have already raised this issue with Winchester City Council and have asked for appropriate links with the Highways Agency to be explored. Obviously, the cost factor is a major player here, so we can only do our best to maintain constant pressure.

I am extremely grateful to the volunteers who have agreed to assume responsibility for certain aspects of the Parish Plan. When I agreed to be the Parish Council convener for this essential development for the future of our parish, I made it quite clear that I was prepared to oversee the action plans, but could not possibly take on responsibility for the realisation of all of them all single-handed.



Therefore, I would like to end with a plea for support, given that so many parishioners made their views clear in the 76% response to the questionnaire:

Please reflect upon point 9 in the Parish Plan, relating to litter removal, to which the Parish Council had just TWO responses to the relevant article in February's Parish Magazine.

Your Parish Council is here to serve the village, but we do need your support to realise all the points that you have raised.

*Una Stevens*



### CASCA 2009

Hall lettings continue to hold up well with our regular users and some new customers.

I'm very grateful to Frank Smith, our caretaker, who continues to do an excellent job of looking after our hall and our users.

Expenditure is in line with the anticipated costs and no unexpected

expenditure has arisen in the year to date.

We will lose interest revenue because of the drop in bank base lending rates.

The March year end should produce a healthy surplus which will be put in reserve accounts for the long term maintenance of the hall.

We have successfully concluded discussions about simplified funding with the Parish Council.

*John Griffith*



**Cookie and Landlady predict the digging up of the Otterbourne Road in this year's Shawford panto in the Parish Hall**



## Parish Plan Action Points

1. Produce a Village Design Statement
2. PC: support the highland cattle on Shawford Down, and request road and footway improvements
3. Prepare footpath maps, improve signing and stiles.
4. Footpaths to be well maintained.
5. Disabled access to more paths, stiles and gates.
6. Lobby for 'quiet tarmac' to be used when M3 is resurfaced.
7. Investigate noise reduction at the back of Mountain Ash.
8. Encourage Winchester City Council to adopt the Winchester Air Group.
9. Encourage parishioners to help remove litter and join in the annual Village Spring Clean Week.
10. Horses: Make sure stable operators know which routes horses are allowed to use, that planning consents are in place, and investigate ways of reducing horse dung on footpaths.
11. PC and VDS to ask Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council to keep a co-ordinated overview of developments on farmland
12. PC to be especially vigilant in assessing the possible impacts of development on farms and the surrounding country.
13. VDS team to pay particular attention to the industrial development at Four Dell Farm.
14. Join in Stakeholder meetings to minimise disruption during the Park & Ride construction.
15. Look for an agreed solution to the parking problems in Shawford.
16. Advertise the WRVS facility and recruit more volunteer drivers
17. Investigate and encourage a Farm Shop or Village Shop.
18. Advertise the mobile library.
19. Investigate the feasibility of a bottle bank and its best site.
20. Encourage residents to help in the annual Village Spring Clean Week
21. Advertise the Parish Hall and Scout Hall more widely in the parish. Parish Council to meet in the Scout Hall more often.
22. Parish Magazine to encourage additional content from parishioners.
23. Review the layout, content and awareness of the parish website
24. Review use of parish notice boards
25. The Welcome Pack to be publicised and available to all new residents
26. See whether email lists could be used for regular parish information.
27. Publicise sports and social activities in the parish. Increase use of existing communication channels to promote new sports and social activities.
28. Increase awareness of the police presence within the parish. Residents to look out for and report vandalism to police and/or Parish Council.
29. Identify opportunities for further shops within the parish.
30. Encourage the use of both schools for parish activities
31. Continue to work with young people on ideas for a further play area, better play equipment, and a Youth Group.



Signs of vandalism  
in Compton Street



## Footpaths and Trees

I consider myself lucky in being on the parish council and having footpaths and trees to deal with. I enjoy walking in our parish and hope that I am able, with the help of parishioners, to make all our footpaths more accessible and enjoyable to walk.

This last year the County Council's Rights of Way department has been very prompt in repairs to the bridge at Compton Lock, and also in the clearing of fallen trees and overgrowth on paths.

Hampshire Estates Dept are making headway clearing all the footpaths that are on their land, and are going to install

new access gates to prevent horse riders using the footpaths. They are also looking into the possibility of a permissive bridle path across their property.

On a slightly sad note, I believe our Hampshire County Council Rights of Way Officer is leaving our area. I only hope our next Officer is as helpful and that I can continue a good working relationship with them.

As for this coming year, I hope that with help from all the regular path walkers we can continue to improve the condition of our footpaths, as we do have some very lovely walks in our parish.

*Sarah Clay.*

## Planning

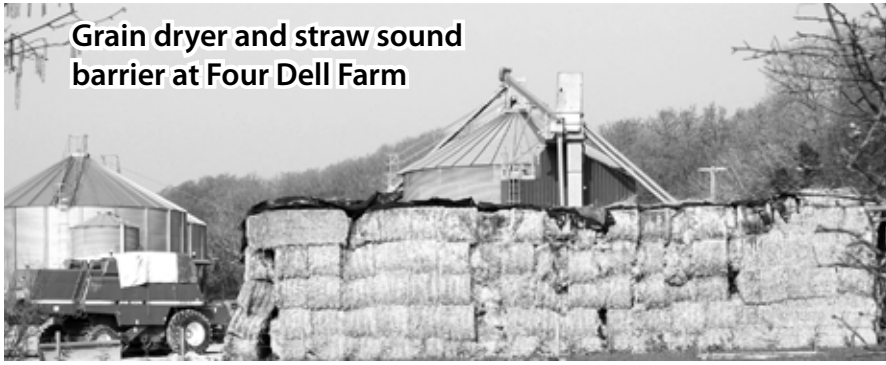
This year the depressed housing market has led to a much-reduced level of new planning applications. However several long running applications have reached appeal stage: the end of the line. Of note was the appeal for Old Orchard and several appeals about activities at Four Dell Farm. Unfortunately, the decisions went against the local interest. Despite a sustained local campaign the inspector ruled in favour of the Old Orchard development, overturning the City Council's refusal.

There is a general presumption for development in our parish. An application will only be refused if it can be shown to go against specific planning policies. This is why the policies are so important. The parish council has closely monitored the policies as they have evolved and has participated in consultations. There are inevitably areas within these policies where opinion and interpretation are important, which is one of the reasons why applications can end up at appeal. At this stage, the appeal inspector is judge and jury.

WCC determine most planning applications: residential development, change of use, etc, but the Hampshire County Council will determine applications that relate to "Minerals and Waste". This is aggregate extraction and recycling/treatment of waste.

The activities at Four Dell Farm are mostly waste related and are being determined by HCC. HCC have a

**Grain dryer and straw sound barrier at Four Dell Farm**



broader remit and are less swayed by the interests of local people. HCC has a similar committee system to WCC. Representations can be made but seem to be less effective.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the replacement for the Local Plan (current planning policy). The LDF will be taking shape over the next few years and will consist of several documents. The Core Strategy is currently being formed and has been consulted on. This is about the broad aims, and it is significant. More details are available on the WCC website.

The more detailed part of the LDF will be formed later (2010-2011), and in the meantime, the Local Plan will be used to determine applications.

There have been criticisms of the consultation, which asked respondents to select from a list the most suitable areas for development or to suggest others. Respondents may have chosen on the basis of their own local interest, leaving areas with the largest numbers of respondents the least favoured sites for development (i.e. Winchester) and the more obvious but lesser populated areas being most favoured (i.e. Barton Farm). Arguably, it is not reasonable to expect local residents

to propose planning alternatives as they may not have the knowledge required. The consultation is now a matter of record and will be used to back up important policy decisions on preferred sites for development.

Our parish is not a preferred site for development, but there is a proposal for a "knowledge park" on Bushfield Camp in the northern part of our parish. Combined with the Park and Ride, this may represent developmental creep towards Compton and Shawford. The LDF permits other sources of planning policy to influence determination of applications, such as Local Area Design Statements (LADS), Village Design Statements and government planning guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statements (PPS1 etc). The former are adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and will be used in determining applications.

Whilst policies contained in SPGs cannot contradict main planning policy, they can protect in other ways (e.g. Character). The SPGs are a valuable way for local input to influence planning decisions. Compton Down has its LADS: this will be complementary to the LDF. A Village Design Statement is in production, and Conservation Area status is to be reviewed.

The parish council aims to be as involved and as influential as possible, but we welcome broader involvement of the community in the production of the SPGs, responses to consultations, and in whatever way you can contribute.

*Martin Bell*  
*Planning Convenor*

## Playing Fields

The 2008 Playing Fields Committee was very grateful to Mary Shaw and her team for handing over the job with all in order and running smoothly. John Richardson allowed himself to be co-opted to join George Beckett, Susen Harding and myself, thus supplying a bit of continuity.

Our Chairman instigated the major cut back of vegetation around both the playing fields thus ensuring that future maintenance will be more easily managed, right up to the boundaries. Jim Kimber continues to keep up the regular mowing essential to everyone's enjoyment.

Nick also has been key to the project to provide a bigger, better pathway to allow access to the Memorial Playing Field from Cliff Way which will benefit both able bodied and wheelchair users. The Parish Council are most fortunate to have a chairman who takes on preparing "specs" and overseeing

such projects to successful conclusion, as well as arranging the scrub clearance and pink tube removal around the Pavilion. Thank you Nick.

Susen Harding started investigating what playground additions should be made to the Compton Street area. A well attended gathering of interested children, parents and grandparents at the Scout Hall helped us to decide on:

- a toddlers' slide with climbing complex,
- a roundabout (which can be accessed by wheelchairs) and
- an "Encounter" meeting point (see example in photo) which will be erected away from the rest of the equipment – plus
- a solid metal rubbish bin, fixed to the ground !

Installation of the new equipment is due to start on 20 April.

Jacqui Evans kindly stepped forward to help with this project



and has agreed to replace Susen on the Parish Council when she had to stand down because of health problems.

The committee will now investigate how to improve the range of Play Equipment on the Memorial Playing Field – hoping sincerely that the rabbit population has been reduced by the admirable efforts organised by the Sports Club and Ken Staunton.

*Jean Millar*

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Sparrowgrove (passed in March 2008) and £1500 to the PCC towards the expansion of the graveyard (passed in May 2007), expenses associated with the changeover of clerk (advertisement costs, statutory gratuity, and double salaries for the handover period), as well as major expenses on the playing field carried over from the previous year.

Some of these costs will be offset by the clerk's foresight in advising us to place some of our funds on six-month deposit with the Bank of Scotland, just after the government had underwritten the bank and just before interest rates plunged.

Rather than give us our full precept at the beginning of the year, the City Council is now going to pay it in two six-monthly instalments. This, together with the drop in interest rates, means that our interest income in 2009/10 will be minimal.

Going forward, we are going to

show outstanding committed expenditure on our accounts each month. This will include items such as the sinking fund for pavilion maintenance (to which we contribute £2000 each year), a general maintenance fund of £5000 to cover unexpected and unbudgeted items and would have included the Sparrowgrove £5000. Above that, NALC (the National Association of Local Councils) recommends a reserve equivalent to six months' turnover.

### CASCA

We have always accepted that the Parish Council, as owner of the Parish Hall, bears the ultimate responsibility for the building, but we made sure that CASCA set up a sinking fund to cover reasonably foreseeable maintenance expenses.

The Parish Council was making an annual contribution of £1000 to that sinking fund, but we agreed in the autumn of 2007 that this contri-

bution would be waived in years when CASCA made a substantial operating surplus. Although CASCA and the Parish Council were happy with the principle of this agreement, the calculations were done yearly in arrears, which proved complex to budget and operate. We now have a simpler agreement: the Parish Council will pay CASCA a lump sum of £1000 every year to cover our contribution to the sinking fund and our use of the Hall for PC meetings.

### And finally

My thanks to my colleagues on the Finance and Admin committee and especially to David Drake, our new clerk, whose fresh eye has helped us streamline and simplify the way we work, while at the same time making more information publicly available on our website.

*Adrian Walmsley, Convenor  
Finance & Admin committee*

## Finance and Admin Committee

### Administration

A year ago, our parish clerk, Mike Langford, had just resigned to take up a consultancy job in Norway. With his banking background, Mike had sorted out and computerised our accounting systems. We owe him a big vote of thanks for this and everything else he had done for us since his appointment in November 2000.

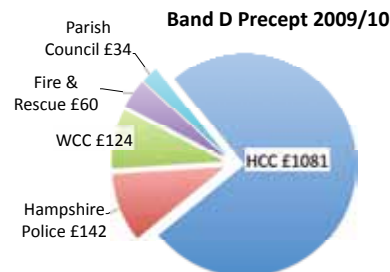
Out of a very strong field of 14 applicants, we were delighted to appoint David Drake, recently retired from the FCO, as our new clerk.

David's very considerable diplomatic skills mean that not only are we operating even more effectively than before, but, as I hope you will agree, the Council's reports in the Parish Magazine are now much more readable.

One major change has been to move away from

specialised accounting software, which was perhaps overkill for a parish of our size. Our yearly accounts are now held in a large spreadsheet, which any of the councillors can read. It also means that when the latest monthly figures are emailed to the Finance Committee, an offsite backup is automatically created.

David is now distributing the papers for our monthly meetings by email rather than in hard copy. This saves time and cuts down council expenses, but it means that councillors are using their own PCs for printing. We have agreed that it is reasonable to reimburse



councillors for the cost of paper and ink cartridges.

We are also leading the way by formalising procedures for electronic voting, which were trialled successfully when the snow forced the cancellation of our February meeting.

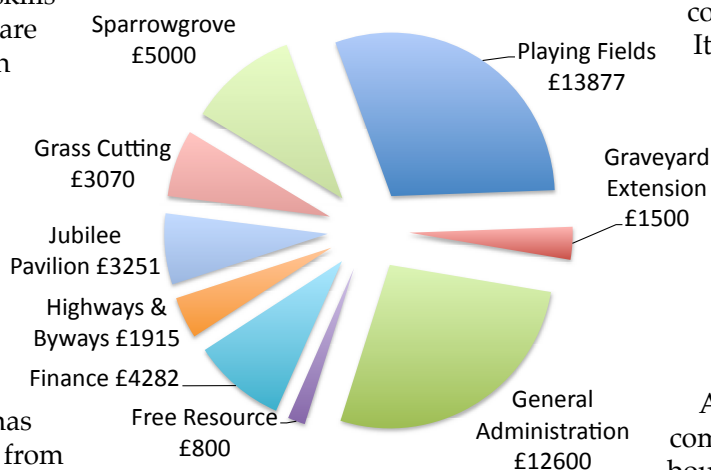
### Budgets and Precept

The precept is the posh word for the amount of your council tax bill which the City Council collects for the Parish Council. It's not a huge sum. In round numbers, our precept is £27,000 for 2009/10.

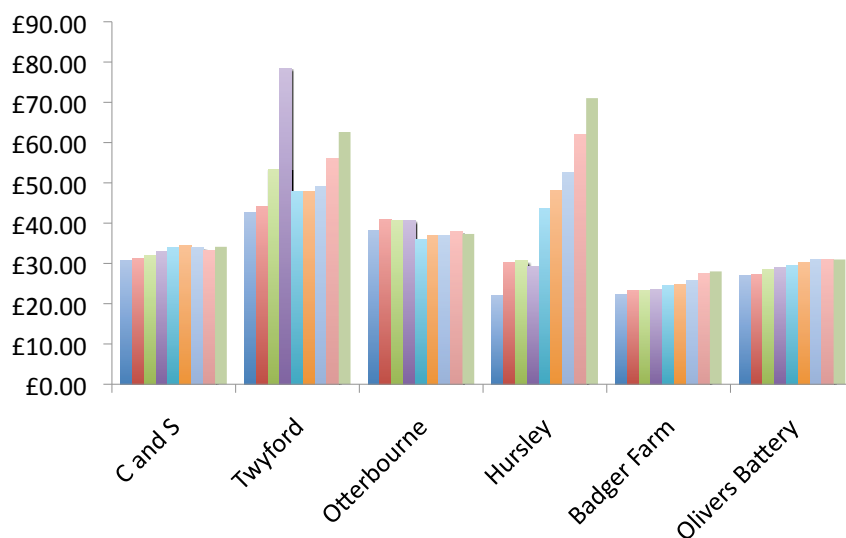
The precept per property, £34.13 for the benchmark Band D dwelling, is less than it was in 2006/7. Put another way, for every £1 of your council tax bill, 2.5p comes to the Parish Council.

As you can see from the chart, it compares favourably with neighbouring parishes.

**Parish Council Expenditure 2008/9 (projected figures)**



**Precept per Band D property vs our neighbours  
2001/2 to 2009/10**



### Finance

Our expenditure for 2008/9, based on preliminary year end figures, is shown in the pie chart: the Playing Field total includes the initial payment towards the new Compton Street play equipment for which we have already been reimbursed from the Open Spaces Fund. Fuller details will be available at the Annual Parish Assembly on 23 April.

This year's accounts show several one-off expenses: contributions of £5000 towards the purchase of

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