

## **BURITON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **During the year 2021/22 the Parish Council has:**

- Continued to help co-ordinate arrangements during the Coronavirus pandemic, including acting as an information hub during the third lockdown period; maintaining a special COVID-19 part of the community website with local and national advice and information; supported by e-mail circulations to alert parishioners to a range of issues including scams from fraudsters, requests from the Petersfield Foodbank and other useful information
- Continued with risk assessments for the use of the village hall and play facilities during the pandemic as well as developing a safe road-map out of lockdown for a range of activities and installing posters in a number of locations to encourage social distancing
- Adjusted its meeting arrangements to cope with the expiry of the Government's Legislation which had temporarily allowed Councils to conduct meetings on Zoom
- Received an unusual amount of correspondence during lockdown periods, generally not relating to Parish Council powers or responsibilities (in line with the experience of other councils)
- Considered requests from food and drink traders wanting to operate at the village pond but declined all requests for fear of making the village overly attractive as a 'destination' during the pandemic with adverse effects on tranquillity, litter and local businesses
- Kept its finances on a sound footing, continuing to build reserves for future work to enhance the village hall and for other projects, by obtaining grants to supplement the precept charge
- Commenced a transition to online banking whilst meeting public sector audit requirements
- Consulted the community and adopted a 'Climate & Nature Charter' to ensure that the Council's own activities consider climate change and to encourage others to act appropriately
- Encouraged work on climate change in the parish (to complement a focus on pollinators and biodiversity) with an emphasis on domestic measures and transport
- Purchased a Thermal Imaging Camera and offered basic home surveys to all households: helping to identify where heat is leaking out which could be adding, unnecessarily, to fuel bills
- Contacted social housing providers to establish their plans for improvements and retro-fitting
- Explored assistance from the Carbon Literacy Trust with Abri Housing
- Commissioned an inspection audit of the village hall by BuildPass to assess its sustainability and energy efficiency, with advice about measures and prioritisation that could be considered to optimise choices for cost and CO2 savings
- Begun to explore arrangements for a solar energy assessment of the village hall roof and potential for EV charging points
- Progressed its selection, by the County Council, as a pilot community for an important Pollinator Project, to explore low cost actions to improve conditions and help retain the vital roles that these creatures play in helping farmers produce crops
- Promoted the pollinator project at the Village Show in August and in each edition of the Parish Magazine and elsewhere to encourage increasing community involvement
- Changed the mowing contract arrangements for the recreation ground so as to leave swathes of wild areas at the margins as part of the community's pollinators and re-naturing initiatives: providing new visual interest, homes for wildlife and, by absorbing and storing more carbon dioxide, a small contribution towards tackling climate change
- Arranged an innovative Community Hay-Day on the recreation ground in September as part of the pollinators and re-naturing initiatives. The County Council came to record the activity and their film was shown on a number of occasions at their COP26 event
- Planted over 100 trees in the parish, including on the recreation ground and alongside rights of way in the Nursted area: with thanks to Harting PC and Cllr Bray
- Identified opportunities for further funding and support for its pollinators and re-naturing work and submitted applications to the South Downs National Park Trust

- Helped arrange the theme for the 2022 Village Show: pollinators, climate and nature
- Confirmed regular, 18-monthly, inspections of trees on parish council land
- Requested that EHDC addresses deterioration at the village pond, with replacement trees and other works
- Studied all planning applications in the parish and submitted comments to the planning authorities, drawing upon the Buriton Village Design Statement, which continues to help to deter out-of-character development proposals
- Objected to the proposed change of use of the Village Inn into a dwelling and a potential breach of planning control, leading to the withdrawal of the application and subsequent sale to the Bird family who reopened as the Nest Hotel
- Given evidence to the National Park's Planning Committee on a number of occasions, in relation to the housing site specified in the South Downs Local Plan for new homes on Greenway Lane and also proposals for 60 holiday lodges with shops, cafes and about 125 parking spaces as well as a re-charge centre for electric vehicles at the Greenway Lane roundabout
- Arranged for the developers to attend a public exhibition meeting (as well as a leaflet drop, posters, website and Facebook coverage) when the planning application for the Greenway Lane housing site was submitted
- Made representations about the planning application for the Greenway Lane housing site to try to influence a range of important matters including designs, layouts, affordable housing, parking, drainage, water supplies, landscaping & biodiversity, energy & sustainability, lighting, highways matters as well as the inclusion (for safety and amenity reasons) of the footpath referred to in the 2019 Local Plan from the site to the railway bridge
- Pressed unsuccessfully to try to obtain a footpath from the new housing site to the rail bridge
- Noted that the development of new houses in Greenway Lane meets the policy requirement that four of the ten dwellings will be affordable homes for local people and that the developers (Metis Homes) have promised a similar provision for the private housing, too
- Considered another proposal for an EE phone mast close to the village, primarily to serve people on trains passing through the parish, and submitted detailed comments which influenced the decision made by the planning authority
- Commented on proposals for other EE phone masts at the Causeway and Head Down
- Continued to try to protect the Dark Night Skies via representations on planning applications
- Been show-cased in a National Park on-line webinar of good practice relating to Dark Skies
- Been featured on BBC World Service radio about light pollution and how it can be tackled, followed by the publication of a South Downs National Park 'Case Study' report about Buriton which highlights dark skies achievements
- Responded to a number of consultations, including: SDNPA Parking and Design Guidelines; drought management proposals; and Government ideas to change the roles, governance and powers of National Park Authorities
- Responded to continuing interest in Buriton's innovative traffic calming and de-cluttering work (undertaken over ten years ago) by assisting other communities including some in Dorset, Sussex and North Yorkshire
- Contacted the school in relation to parking safety issues and the school's Travel Plan
- Continued to employ the services of the parish lengthman (in conjunction with other Parish Councils), carrying out a programme of minor works on highways and footpaths
- Reported problems on Rights of Way (including offences by Network Rail) to Hampshire County Council and resolved minor issues with landowners
- Pressed for damaged Byways Open to All Traffic to be included in HCC's 'winter closure' scheme
- Welcomed HCC's work to re-establish the route of the Hangers Way along the Links
- Encouraged the South Downs National Park Authority to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the South Downs Way National Trail here as it originally started / finished in Buriton

- Continued to try to reduce dog-fouling around the parish by arranging patrols from the District Council's enforcement officers which can result in Fixed Penalty Fines
- Supported a community litter-picking event with thanks to Adam and Hannah Griffiths again
- Reported incidents of fly-tipping to the District Council and arranged for them to take action to remove a number of abandoned cars in the parish
- Arranged for increases in the frequency of litter bin emptying in the village to cope with greater numbers of visitors during the pandemic
- Arranged for a new litter bin to be installed on the recreation ground
- Arranged repairs to a number of the seats on the recreation ground and commenced discussions to provide one new one thanks to the generosity of a donor
- Encouraged QECP to explore ways of repairing the pond in the Chalk Pits Nature Reserve
- Monitored the parking situation at Halls Hill throughout 2021, ready to liaise with the County Council and the Queen Elizabeth Country Park should there ever have been problems
- Used grant funding to complete the resurfacing project at the village hall car park in September
- Commissioned replacement windows and doors (and other improvements) for the village hall in spite of problems faced by contractors during the pandemic period
- Reinstated Wi-Fi coverage in the village hall and continued a wide-ranging programme of maintenance and testing of equipment and facilities, including health and safety assessments
- Begun to explore on-line booking software for the village hall
- Continued to search for new uses for the Changing Rooms on the recreation ground by leasing the building to the Tennis Club for a year and discussing enquiries for a café, a Men's Shed, office uses and a Health & Wellbeing hub
- Arranged a structural survey of the Changing Room block to confirm that internal dividing walls are not load-bearing
- Supported the Buriton Ducklings Childminding group in the village hall after the departure of the Dottie Tots Nursery School
- Increased the frequency of professional inspections of playground equipment
- Undertaken significant repairs to play equipment in the playground
- Begun to explore the establishment of a Friends of the Playground Group
- Welcomed the completion of the Portland Stone Memorial Bench near the War Memorial to commemorate activities of a wide range of parishioners through a number of generations
- Retained the phone box in the High Street as a prospective site for the defibrillator and set up a financial reserve to build a fund so as to be ready to replace the defibrillator whenever needed
- Facilitated a BT broadband connection to the church through the car park at the pond
- Improved and upgraded the community website with an SSL security certificate and new sections on nature and climate care
- Continued to provide small grants to St Mary's Church and to the Parish Magazine
- Been featured on local radio a number of times, highlighting local initiatives
- Facilitated planning for activities to mark the Queen's 70th Jubilee in 2022 with funding available
- Thanked all the teams of volunteers who assist with community projects, including: those who work regularly in Local Nature Reserves; those who helped obtain a defibrillator; those who have been planning activities to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee; and everyone who has helped support vulnerable households during the Coronavirus pandemic.