

BURITON PARISH COUNCIL

During the year 2016/17 the Parish Council has:

- Taken over the management of the Village Hall after the Charity, which had run the hall for almost twenty years, wound itself up following the resignation of committee members and failure to attract any replacement Trustees. This was a major exercise for the Parish Council during 2016/17 and thanks were recorded to everyone who has helped to run the village hall in the past
- Appointed a new Parish Clerk, Karen Crookshank, to replace Wendy Shone who stood down after many years of sterling service
- Appointed an interim Village Hall Manager, Ian Garrard, followed by a permanent appointment, Terry Doubleday, to help ensure good management of the premises into the future
- Coordinated a substantial response to District Council proposals to sell the areas of open space that it owns at each end of Glebe Road to a developer. The District Council had invited nearby residents to comment directly to them but the Parish Council took steps to ensure that there was wider awareness and greater opportunity for public comment. The Parish Council's submission to the District Council was instrumental in EHDC deciding not to continue with these proposals
- Expressed strong views to both Hampshire County Council and East Hampshire District Council about proposed changes in local government responsibilities and 'devolution' arrangements that were felt to be likely to have adverse effects at local level, as well as potentially grouping the rural areas of East Hampshire with the urban areas of Havant, Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham, Eastleigh and Southampton. The Parish Council's detailed views were echoed by other communities and the plans for these devolution arrangements were subsequently abandoned
- Responded to a number of other major consultations (including potential changes to aircraft movements over the parish, Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments, Forestry Commission proposals for the hillsides above the parish and BT proposals about the removal of public payphones) which could have adverse effects on the community
- Provided evidence to the Police Commissioner about the range and incidence of crime in the area so as to influence future priorities
- Provided detailed information to the South East Water company about water pressure problems in the parish with a request for improvements
- Identified a significant water leak under the railway embankment which was damaging the recreation ground. After months of correspondence with Network Rail and the water companies Network Rail found the source of the leak and arranged for South East Water to cap it
- Welcomed the successful designation of the South Downs National Park as an International Dark Skies Reserve (one of only twelve in the world), recognising that this might help to retain the beauty and tranquillity of our dark skies (with amongst the lowest light pollution in the South East of England)
- Supported a Dark Skies event in the parish in February 2017 led by the National Park's Dark Skies Officer, Dan Oakley, and continued with steps to obtain Dark Skies Community status by initiating a trial of amended street-lighting and agreeing to seek changes to external lighting on public buildings. The community's Dark Skies work was featured on the BBC Countryfile TV programme

- Continued to organise a series of events to raise funds for future play equipment and new playground facilities; raising over £16,000 by the end of the financial year
- Drawn parishioners' attention to significant planning applications at Buriton Manor to help identify issues to be included in Parish Council responses
- Expended considerable time and effort in considering and responding to planning applications at Buriton Manor once again: in the period March 2014 to January 2017 there have been over 30 applications (excluding licensing matters) in addition to a number of appeals against refusals and other applications to build new houses on the Maple Inn car park
- Presented evidence to meetings of the National Park Authority's Planning Committee to object to development proposals at Buriton Manor
- Studied all other planning applications in the parish and submitted comments to the District Council, drawing upon the Buriton Village Design Statement and Local Landscape Character Assessment which continue to help to deter out-of-character development proposals
- Assisted the District Council with information about planning enforcement investigations in a number of parts of the parish
- Continued to liaise with the South Downs National Park Planning Authority about draft Local Plan policies including designations of Local Green Spaces
- Noted progress with the work of the 'Plan B' group of volunteers towards up-dating the community's Village Design Statement and submitted the document to the Planning Authority for further public consultation and amendment prior to adoption
- Considered a range of other issues that were raised at 'Plan B' consultation events during the year
- Arranged a process, including consultations and a competition, to help mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War with something to complement the existing war memorial and give thanks to all those from the community who have helped the country in times of conflict
- Begun to consider a request to sell pieces of land near to the war memorial to residents for garden and car parking space (including seeking independent valuations of the land)
- Organised repairs and adjustments to the community car park at the village pond
- Contributed to a Public Inquiry to examine Network Rail's proposed extinguishment of part of Footpath 3 and welcomed the outcome, hoping that the decision will bring an end to a long-running issue which had, at times, split parts of the community
- Supported the provision of more kissing gates along the Hangers Way between Buriton and Petersfield so as to replace the last four remaining stiles on that route, taking the number of stiles removed in the parish to about 25 in recent years
- Explored the provision of hand-rails at both ends of Footpath 17 at its junctions with North Lane following requests from the local Walking for Health Group which the landowner was not willing to support
- Supported the clearance of vegetation from The Links in December 2016 with more initiatives planned for the future
- Reported problems on Rights of Way via the County Council's online reporting system, resolved minor issues with landowners and submitted cutting priorities to HCC

- Welcomed the opening of the new cycle route through the parish alongside the A3 with consideration of the promotion of a circular route between Petersfield and QECP so as to ensure passing trade for both village pubs
- Facilitated work by a group of volunteers to consider options for any community bid to buy the Village Inn (which had been registered as an Asset of Community Value by the Parish Council in 2014) but welcomed the new owners and the continuing presence of two Public Houses in the village
- Successfully applied to re-register the Village Inn as an Asset of Community Value and sought the same status for the Manor Barn so that popular community events might be able to continue at that venue
- Worked with the Police and District Council to prevent fish being removed from the village pond following a short series of incidents
- Arranged for the coordination of volunteer working parties in the Chalk Pits Nature Reserve to come under the auspices of Hampshire County Council / QECP as part of their wider responsibilities and welcomed the programme of regular events designed by new Ranger, Joe Williams
- Welcomed the natural planting scheme for the Greenway Lane roundabout which the Parish Council had sought from Hampshire County Council following suggestions from parishioners
- Oversaw the first year of a new 'lengthsman' initiative (in conjunction with other Parish Councils) so as to be able to carry out minor works on highways and footpaths
- Begun to explore problems of parking outside the Halls Hill car park in Kiln Lane with QECP and Highways officials
- Drawn the attention of the Highways Authority to a number of safety issues in the parish including potential risks to pedestrians walking up or down Kiln Lane following the closure of the footpath crossing over the railway line
- Drawn parishioners' attention to problems of dog fouling on the Recreation Ground and informed EHDC's dog wardens
- Pursued problems with bus service capacity with the County Council
- Organised repairs to the roof of the bus shelter in the High Street
- Pressed Royal Mail to replace the post box in the Halls Hill area
- Provided support for the Buriton Fireworks Event and annual Camp-Out
- Worked closely with the Weston Residents Association – particularly on a number of Highways and Rights of Way matters
- Funded an upgrading of the design and software supporting the community website
- Continued to provide small grants towards the costs of the Parish Magazine and St Mary's Church
- Agreed an unchanged precept charge to parishioners.