

## Parish Council update report: May 2021

It has been another busy few months as the Parish Council continues with normal business amidst a range of effects of the pandemic. Meetings have been held on Zoom in March and May with a Planning Committee Meeting in April and an extra meeting of the Council early in March to consider the application for a Telecommunications Mast in Kiln Lane. It has been pleasing to see members of the public attending the majority of these meetings.

Climate Change was the main focus of the Annual Meeting of the Council, also held in May, with a presentation and discussion led by Greg Ford. Possible effects on Buriton were described along with ideas for how the community might respond. A number of parishioners took part on Zoom and it was agreed that a follow up meeting should be held in the latter part of June (preferably in the village hall if Covid conditions permit) so that more volunteers might join together in a new group to take things forward. Fresh blood is needed for this sort of activity and it is hoped that the community will rise to this challenge. Please contact Petra Norris, Parish Clerk, via 07943 536065 or [buritonparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:buritonparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk) to let her know that you might be interested in taking part.

In order to develop our other new project, it has been arranged for this year's Village Show (Saturday 7th August) to have "Pollinators and Pollination" as its main theme. We would like to involve as many households as possible in this initiative to help our bees, butterflies, bugs, bats and beetles. Many of these small creatures are vital to our lives (bringing us about a third of all of our food) but they are under threat and we hope that Buriton will play its part in improving conditions for them. There is more about this important project elsewhere in the magazine.

In the meantime, the Parish Council has planted more trees on the Recreation Ground and has altered its mowing regime to leave swathes of longer grass around the edges. Contact has also been made with the County Council's Highways team to discuss changing their verge-cutting regime as these areas can help to create important corridors for pollinators and other wildlife.

The busy period of planning applications has continued although we had success in the big proposal for the Butser Hill Quarry site, the application to change the Village Inn into a house was withdrawn and the plans for the EE Telecomms Mast in Kiln Lane were refused by the Planning Authority. Consultation on the detailed plans to build ten new houses on Greenway Lane is taking place during the lockdown period but the Parish Council is taking a number of steps to try to make sure that everyone can have their say before the Planning Authority makes its decision.

The Council has also tried to get problems with Rights of Way, littering, dog waste and rodents addressed by the district and county councils as well as asking traders who want to sell food or drink at the village pond to seek permission through all the proper channels. Councillors have turned down requests from traders for fear of making the village overly attractive as a 'destination': with adverse effects on tranquillity for residents, overflowing litter bins and effects on the viability of local businesses.

At very short notice (12 hours) Network Rail changed their plans to use part of the village hall car park in March and decided, instead, to park vans and vehicles around the pond, leading to a number of complaints. The Parish Clerk had to ask our MP to intervene on this matter so as to recoup costs that had been spent by the Council as it was not felt that parishioners should be expected to pay. Network Rail workers have also damaged fencing in part of the recreation ground and are being asked to pay for repairs so as to address any safety risks.

The Parish Council continues to provide local COVID-19 updates on the community website and in email newsletters. At the time of writing, good progress is being made on the Government's 'roadmap' out of lockdown but it will be important for everyone to continue to follow all relevant guidance.

The Parish Council is currently consulting on one other local matter:

### **The Changing Rooms on the Recreation Ground: what could they be used for?**

The Parish Council is keen to consider ideas to make better use of the changing room block, alongside the village hall – and any bright ideas can be considered.

In recent years the building has only rarely been used and it could soon cost the Council more to maintain than it earns.

Although there might be a need to keep some sporting facilities, people might have other suggestions for alternative uses.

Other villages are facing similar issues and some are considering office spaces, shops, cafes and other ideas.

If you have any suggestions, or if you know of anybody who might be interested in hiring the premises, please contact Petra Norris, Parish Clerk via 07943 536065 or [buritonparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:buritonparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk)

Details of Parish Council meetings continue to be posted on the noticeboard in the High Street as well as on the website and, as always, we say thanks to our Parish Clerk (Petra Norris), Hall Manager (Steve Franks) and Hall Cleaner (Darren Francis) for all their continuing hard work during these unusual times.