



## Buriton Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Buriton Parish Council held at Buriton Village Hall at 7.00pm on Monday 26 September 2016

Present: Cllr K White (chair), Cllr A Bray, Cllr T Crew, Cllr T Concannon, Cllr D Gardner, Cllr M Johnston, Cllr AD Jones, Cllr T Newby, Cllr S O'Donoghue.

In attendance: County Cllr K Moon, District Cllr R Mocatta, K Crookshank (clerk) and 9 members of public.

- 1 **To receive apologies for absence and declarations of interest** – No apologies, all present. Declaration of interest from Cllr Jones - as a Member of the South Downs National Park Planning Committee I wish to make it clear that any views which I express today are based on the information before me at this meeting, and might change in the light of further information and/or debate at the National Park's Committee meetings. This is to make it clear that I am keeping an open mind on the issues and cannot therefore be found to have predetermined any matter when it comes before the National Park's Planning Committee for decision. Cllr Mocatta made a similar declaration in relation to his role as an East Hants District councillor and as a member of SDNPA.
- 2 **Minutes of the last meeting held on 25 July 2016** – agreed and approved as accurate record.
- 3 **Matters arising from those minutes** –
  - Update on post box Kiln Lane. Cllr Johnston contacted Royal Mail, they will investigate. There is a plan to have one within ½ mile of dwellings. Will take 12 weeks to resolve.
  - Update on Chalk Pits. At last meeting Cllr Jones reported that co-ordinator had resigned. Cllr Jones has met with QECP, they question whether a replacement is required. They would like to arrange a weekend session in November to welcome new volunteers and encourage participation from residents and users. Further session January or February 2017 .
  - Roll of Honour. Clerk to write to PCC. Chairman to obtain quote for the box.
  - TAG Farnborough airspace change proposals consultation. Cllr Jones circulated report. Closing date for comments is before next BPC meeting. Cllr Jones will write to obtain further information and a response from BPC will be delegated to planning committee.
- 4 **County councillor's report** – Cllr Moon summarised his report, which had already been circulated to members, and is attached. Key points –
  - Household waste recycling charges and changes in opening hours. HCC decided to reduce opening hours and keep all sites open. Concerns were raised regarding possible increase of fly tipping. Cllr Moon reported that studies show this won't happen, however, if a person is seen fly tipping their vehicle registration number should be reported to Jo Edwards at EHDC or private landowner, who can ask Police to obtain registered keeper details.
  - HCC is supporting opportunities for young people, including traineeships.
  - Update on extending the life of Hampshire's roads and pavements programme.

Cllr Bray asked what has happened to single white line being changed to double yellow lines in the High Street, between the school and bus stop. Cllr Moon stated that he had pointed this out to EHDC, who stated they understood BPC no longer required this. Clerk to write to Highways to clarify.

Cllr O'Donaghue asked if HCC has considered the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sustainability and Transformation Plan, and asked about the Apprenticeship Levy, has HCC has any plans in place? Cllr Moon replied that HCC always maximises apprenticeships and trainees, as in above report. This has been included in the budget.

- 5 District councillor's report** – Cllr Mocatta reported that there has been a lot of discussion at EHDC regarding the issue of Devolution. Cllr Jones has written a report (attached and circulated to members prior to meeting) which Cllr Mocatta stated is very comprehensive. Councillors to submit a response.

#### **Public forum 7:45pm**

- No public toilets in Buriton, except at Five Bells when open. This caused a problem when pub was shut and children's football team playing. Cllr Crew to write to remind Clanfield Football Club that they do have a key to toilets in the village hall.
- Bus problems on Service 94 bus route reported. Ongoing problem.
- Stone setts outside The Village Inn are missing. It was reported that Highways were in attendance this afternoon.
- Slip roads on A3 at Buriton and BP/MacDonalds are very short and visibility is reduced due to overgrown vegetation. Clerk to write to Highways and Kier.
- In Weston, near Pickle Lane, vehicles frequently park inconsiderately near the junction reducing visibility for other motorists. Cllr White to contact PCSO to ask if owner's can be spoken to.

#### **Meeting reconvened 8:08pm**

- 5 District councillor's report continued**– Cllr O'Donaghue asked if EHDC has considered the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sustainability and Transformation Plan, and asked about the Apprenticeship Levy, has EHDC has any plans in place? EHDC are encouraging businesses to support apprenticeships. Cllr Mocatta will make enquiries about the Sustainability and Transformation plan. Cllr Moon asked Cllr O'Donaghue to write to him about this matter.

- 6 Village Hall** – Cllr Gardner had prepared report for BPC members and circulated prior to meeting (attached). In summary, and for agreement –
- Charitable status. Existing board of trustees still exists. It will need to go through a winding up process. Parish councillors need to decide whether to create a new charity or to run to village hall as part of normal day to day business. Advantages and disadvantages are outlined in the report. The committee recommend that the village hall is run by Buriton Parish Council, this was proposed and **AGREED** unanimously.
  - Objectives. These were read to the meeting. Parish councillors were asked to agree these as working objectives for the committee. These were proposed and **AGREED** unanimously.
  - Events license. The current designated premises supervisor intends to give notice 31/12/16. The village hall committee asked the parish council to give the committee delegated authority to undertake actions to transfer the license and agree an appropriate procedure and process with the EHDC licensing authority. This was proposed and **AGREED** unanimously.
  - Accounts. The committee will continue working with the board of trustees. Any surplus funds could be used to support the objectives of the charity.
  - Health and Safety. A report raising issue of legionella is being looked into and addressed.
  - Storage. Committee are meeting with regular users of the hall to investigate their current and future needs.
- The chairman thanked the committee for their hard work. Also thanks to Wendy Shone, Janet Crew and Ian Garrard.

## 7 Finance & General Purposes

a) **Finance report** – See attached reports which were circulated to councillors prior to meeting and unanimously **AGREED**. VAT refund and rental income received. It was **AGREED** to renew Open Spaces Society subscription (£45.00). It was **AGREED** to renew insurance for BPC and village hall with current insurer, with whom BPC are in a long term agreement until 30/09/18 (£2149.20). An invoice was presented at meeting - £2232.00 Butser Farms Ltd - and payment **AGREED**.

b) **Web site** – Cllr Jones prepared report, which was circulated to members prior to meeting (attached). It was unanimously **AGREED** to go ahead and make enquiries, and matter to be placed on agenda at next meeting.

## 8 Planning-

- Minutes of meeting 22 August 2016 circulated to members.
- Cllr Johnston reported that she and Cllr Gardner met with Mr Camping, and she updated members on possible future plans for Manor Estate. **Neither Cllr Doug Jones nor Cllr Robert Mocatta took any part in any discussions about the merits of any potential future planning application at this site.** Cllr Johnston stressed that there has not been a further planning application. Cllr Concannon referred to his formal legal opinion (attached) which was circulated to all members in April 2016.
- Water pressure. Some problems have been experienced. Cllr Johnston contacted South East Water who said that usually only get involved in new dwellings, not conversions. However, if post codes of dwellings with water pressure problems are supplied, they will have to investigate. Cllr Jones will put information on web site and ask residents if BPC can use their post codes to report the problems to South East Water.
- SDNP Local Plan. Cllr Jones reported that he will attend November meeting. Cllr Johnston will also attend if available.

a) **Dark Skies** – Cllr Jones prepared a report (attached) which was circulated to members prior to meeting. A letter has been sent to Ditcham Park School, no response received yet. It was unanimously **AGREED** to participate in a street light trial for one year from 12/11/16 - dimming all lights at all times by 10% and adjusting the time at which the night-time levels are introduced from midnight to 11pm. 4 emails have been received from residents supporting the parish council's attempts. It was also unanimously **AGREED** to take steps to obtain Dark Skies Community Status.

b) **Plan 'B'** – Report prepared by Cllr Jones (attached) circulated to members before meeting. April 2016 workshop comments have also been circulated. Next public meeting is on 15/10/16 from 11am – 2pm in village hall. **AGREED** no rental cost to Plan B group.

c) **Assets of Community Value** – Cllr Concannon read email exchange between himself (on BPC behalf) and a prospective purchaser of Dairy Cottage, who would like to purchase land at rear of war memorial to use as a private garden. Last correspondence was 15/08/16. Chairman proposed BPC obtain valuation of 1) value of land and 2) value to prospective purchaser as enhancement of dwelling. This was unanimously **AGREED**. Cllr Concannon will make enquiries and get quote for valuation. Maple Inn - No further developments since last meeting.

- ## 9 Playground
- The chairman read a report which had been circulated to members prior to meeting (attached). The scheme could cost around £70000. There have been successful fund raising events and generous donations from residents. She thanked committee members and volunteers. Special thanks to Elaine Bray and The Five Bells. She reaffirmed that has been no decision made to relocate the playground. Cllr Jones thanked the chairman on behalf of members for all her hard work. It is hoped to use s106 developer's contributions funding to replace swings. Broken fence reported - to be added to list for lengthsmen.

**10 Rights of Way – rail crossing public enquiry.**

Cllr Newby's report circulated to members prior to meeting (attached). Small access scheme could be used to fund suggestion that ROW numbers are put on way markers. Cllr Newby asked if she could contact the scheme administrator to enquire, this was unanimously **AGREED**. Cllr Newby stated that footpaths should be reinstated in ploughed fields within 14 days.

Network rail update – Proof of evidence is to be submitted by 15/11/16. Cllr Newby sought member's permission for working group to prepare report. This will be circulated to members. Proposed and unanimously **AGREED**.

**11 Dates of other meetings:** EHDC planning 29/09/16, EHATPC end November tbc.

**12 Correspondence:**

- Emails circulated to members, including support for dark skies/street light dimming.
- HALC re 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation, response to be circulated and agreed.
- Documents from HCC regarding 10 year licence for land to rear of Buriton Primary School, unanimously **AGREED** that chairman sign the licence. Clerk to return it to HCC.
- Email from school PTA requesting use of recreation ground for a travelling circus, concerns expressed regarding parking for a large number of spectator vehicles and damage caused by circus vehicles to the grass if spring is wet. Working group to respond.

**13 Date of next meeting:** 28 November 2016

Meeting closed at 9:35pm

THESE ARE AN ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Signed.....K White..... Dated .....28/11/16.....

**BURITON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**Report for the period 1 July – 31 August 2016**

**Annual return**

The external audit has been completed satisfactorily. The Parish Council is required to minute that the Annual Return has been approved and accepted. Notice has been displayed for required 14 days

**Bank accounts and financial summary**

Please see attached and sent via email to councillors.

**VAT refund**

£1783.05 received.

**Rentals received**

£394.00 from HCC in respect of car park use.

£363.00 from HCC in respect of school use of playing field.

£260.00 from Andrews Newby Partnership in respect of car parking.

**For consideration at meeting 26 September 2016**

**Insurance renewal**

The Parish Council has received an invoice for £2149.20, including insurance premium tax. The Council's long-term agreement (LTA) is due to expire on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The insurance now also includes insurance for Buriton Village Hall in its entirety. Renewal documents forwarded to councillors via email.

Note - All firework displays or bonfires to be notified at least 14 days in advance

**Open Spaces Society**

Renewal invitation received. £45.00 pa.

# **Report to Town and Parish Council from Cllr Ken Moon**

## **Member for Petersfield Butser Division**

### **August & September 2016**

#### **Local authorities work together on Household Waste Recycling Centre access for all Hampshire residents**

Discussions are continuing between the waste disposal authorities, Hampshire County Council and West Berkshire Council, to ensure residents have convenient access to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).

Hampshire County Council are having constructive conversations with their colleagues in West Berkshire, who, like all authorities, are looking for ways to live within their financial means when it comes to dealing effectively with household waste.

As waste disposal authorities the Council are working on a long-term, sustainable solution for residents in this area, and looking for a practical way in which residents can continue to use the HWRC site most local to them, without putting an unreasonable additional burden on Hampshire council tax payers.

In the interim, Hampshire County Council is examining potential transitional arrangements for Hampshire residents ahead of the West Berkshire permit scheme coming into operation at the end of September. This will include advice and work done by colleagues at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council who are exploring these options.

As part of Hampshire County Council's overall target to save £98million by 2017 as a result of cuts in funding from central Government, every area of spend is being closely looked at to see where savings can be made. Over the past few years, Hampshire County Council has made a voluntary contribution to West Berkshire Council recognising that some Hampshire residents use the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) at Newtown Road and Padworth. This was based on tonnages of waste deposited at West Berkshire sites by any Hampshire residents who chose to use them. These tonnages rose at a rate which was costing over £200,000 a year, and therefore the sum was identified as a saving against the County Council's overall target for 2017. It is important to acknowledge that any interim arrangement will be carefully targeted, and cost significantly less than the previous arrangement.

#### **Opportunities for young people - whatever their grades**

As young people received GCSE results, Hampshire County Council is supporting those who would like to continue their learning journey in the work environment - with places now available on traineeships. One of the options, called 'First Traineeship' offers opportunities for those who have not got a D or above in their Maths and English GCSEs.

The County Council offers two traineeships:

First traineeship is for 16 to 19 year olds (or individuals up to 24 years old with an EHCP - educational health and care plan), who have a grade E or below in Maths and English GCSE. It includes work experience, volunteering, support to develop the Maths and English skills that are crucial to the workplace, and help with employability skills such as CV writing and presenting well in an interview.

Traineeship Plus is for 16 to 24 year olds, who have a grade D or above in Maths and English GCSE. It includes a high quality work placement for 20 weeks and support with employability skills and preparation for work.

To be eligible for either of the traineeships, young people need to be committed and enthusiastic about learning and working. Both traineeships lead to a nationally-recognised employability qualification, supported

by Reed Employment Agency. Bursary payments are available for participants in both traineeships, which are calculated according to individual circumstances.

The types of work placements usually available include:

Business administration

Health and social care

Construction

Other industry sectors such as highways, countryside and catering

## **Extending the life of Hampshire's roads - ahead of schedule**

Hampshire County Council's 2016 surface dressing programme has been successfully completed early, prolonging the life of over 165 miles of roads across Hampshire.

The £7 million investment was completed two weeks ahead of schedule and has seen roads all over Hampshire being treated.

Surface dressing is designed to seal the road surface from water damage and maintain its skid resistance, keeping the road in good condition for as long as possible and preventing potholes and other defects from forming.

The County Council's Operation Resilience team has been working tirelessly over the spring and summer months to complete our annual surface dressing programme to ensure Hampshire motorists can keep moving. With an average of 140 miles of roads and footpaths treated each year, the team are already putting their skills and expertise into planning next year's programme.

By undertaking this preventative maintenance work the life of the roads are extended, therefore allowing the County Council to use its limited funding efficiently and effectively to keep Hampshire residents and businesses moving on the road network.

Surface dressing involves the road being sprayed with bitumen which provides a new waterproof seal, and then a thin layer of stone chippings is applied to the surface to improve its skid resistance. It has to be applied to a dry surface, so the programme gets underway in earnest during the spring and summer months, and lasts until the autumn.

Surface dressing is a cost effective preventative maintenance treatment that extends the life of the roads and ensures they stay in good condition for longer. By undertaking this programme of work, it means the highways budget can be deployed across more of Hampshire's roads and footways with the more extensive treatments focusing on sites where there has been greater road deterioration and where full resurfacing is needed.

## **New charges for 'DIY' waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres from 1 October**

Hampshire's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) will be introducing a charge for soil and rubble, plasterboard and asbestos from 1 October 2016.

Soil and rubble, which is usually created from construction, alteration or repair of homes and gardens, will be charged at £2.50 per part or whole 30 litre bag, or per item.

Hampshire County Council will also be implementing a charge for plasterboard and cement-bonded asbestos. Plasterboard, which is accepted at all sites, will be charged at £10 per sheet, or £6 per 30 litre bag. Cement-bonded asbestos, which will continue to only be accepted at Andover, Basingstoke, Efford, Netley and Portsmouth HWRCs will be charged at £12 per sheet. No other type of asbestos is permitted. Cash and card payment options will be available at each centre.

Managing Hampshire's waste costs all the councils in the county around £100 million each year, and, coupled with ongoing reductions in Government funding, we needed to look carefully at how we deal with

and pay for waste. This type of DIY and construction waste is particularly expensive to dispose of, costing Hampshire's council taxpayers around £1 million each year.

This new charge is being introduced from October 1 to cover the additional costs of disposing DIY and construction waste compared to household waste, which we believe is the fairest way for as many as possible, and which residents told us they support. Many authorities elsewhere in the UK already charge for this type of waste to cover their cost of its disposal, and Hampshire will now be doing the same.

If you are due to start a large renovation project, I would suggest looking at the cost of hiring a skip versus multiple trips to your local HWRC with items that you will be charged for. However, I would stress that these charges apply to the specified waste types only and no householder will be expected to pay for normal household waste, green garden waste or recyclable materials such as scrap metal or glass."

Soil and rubble includes construction and demolition materials such as stone, rubble, clay, concrete, bricks, blocks, sand, tiles, paving slabs, and ceramic bathroom suites. There will be no charge for crockery or clay/terracotta flower pots. The limit of six bags of soil and rubble per household per month will be lifted.

The charges follow a public consultation in 2014, in which 6,500 members of the public responded to proposals on how to meet savings the County Council is required to make. A further consultation which took place this year, looked at cost savings in other areas such as changing opening hours, trade waste charges and the possibility of charging for other non-household materials.

Hampshire HWRCs will also be accepting trade waste from small and medium sized businesses on a chargeable basis from October 1, accepting the same materials that the sites currently accept from residents. More information will be available in due course.

**Cllr Ken Moon**

**September 2016**



## **Report to Buriton Parish Council - 26th September 2016**

### **Buriton Village Hall**

1. Since the Village Hall committee was set up at our July meeting, the committee members have met on a number of occasions to familiarise ourselves with all the issues relating to the management of the hall. We are dealing with a number of housekeeping matters and reviewing the accounts but also tackling some key strategic issues on which we would like the Parish Council's views. These include the charitable status of the hall, the hall events license, the hall's accounts, health and safety matters and the Parish Council's objectives for the Village hall as we take over responsibility for it. Our recommendations in respect of these issues are set out in the relevant paragraphs below.

#### Charitable status

2. The Committee has reviewed the Governing Document and other papers relating to the existing village hall charity. We have also been most fortunate to have been advised by Tim Houghton, Chief Executive of Community First Havant and East Hants, who attended our most recent meeting. At present the Village hall charity still exists in law, and the trustees of that charity are technically still responsible for the running and management of the hall and are responsible for winding up the charity. There is a formal process they have to follow to wind-up the charity; they cannot pass the charity or the responsibility for the hall to the Parish council until due process has been followed. The Trustees have to call a formal public meeting of inhabitants of the Parish giving at least 14 days' notice of the meeting, publishing the notice in a newspaper and conspicuous places, and including a draft resolution upon which attendees will be asked to vote. At least three-quarters of those present and voting have to agree the draft resolution and then the trustees can seek the consent of the Charity Commissioners to wind-up the charity. In addition any outstanding liabilities must be met and any remaining assets, including cash reserves must be transferred to another suitable charity or set aside for a clear charitable purpose, again as agreed by the Trustees.

3. The Committee has been liaising with Wendy Shone in her role as chairman of the board of trustees of the charity and she also attended our last meeting with Tim Houghton. We have agreed to work closely with Wendy through the process of winding up/passing over the charity. She and we would like to aim to do this by 31 December 2016 if feasible. In anticipation of the demise of the current charity, the Parish Council needs to decide whether it wishes to set up a new charity to run the hall; retain the existing charity but transfer responsibility for this to the Parish Council such that the Parish Council becomes Sole Trustee (we think the model used by Steep); or whether to proceed on the basis the hall is run by the Parish Council (specifically the Village hall committee) as part of our normal business.

4. The Committee has reviewed the experiences of neighbouring parish councils (Steep PC's village hall is run as a charity; Sheet PC runs their hall themselves), and received advice from Tim Houghton. There are clear advantages to charitable status which are mainly financial, including an 80% reduction in business rates and not having to pay commercial waste collection rates, plus the advantage of having potential access to more grant opportunities; and being able to reclaim VAT on purchases made for the charity; these are offset by the disadvantages of having to find trustees for the charity; having to have additional, separate meetings, an AGM, separate accounts etc and having to adhere to charity law; and not having full control of the management and running of the hall and

the application of the hall finances, the responsibility for which would be vested in the board of trustees. If the Parish Council was Sole Trustee, whilst parish councillors would have to wear two hats, it does give PC an element of control for managing the hall and its finances; certainly more so than compared to an entirely independent board of Trustees. However the sole trustee route can be confusing and there can be problems of conflict of interest if the PC itself wants to use/rent space in the hall for its own purposes as it would be acting as landlord and tenant. The Parish Council as sole trustee would also still have to adhere to charity law. The advantages of the PC running the hall as part of our normal business is that it is simpler to run and manage, and we would have full control over the running of the hall, including e.g. fees and charges etc, and the application of the hall's finances. The disadvantage of losing charitable status however would relate to the cost of having to pay business rates (estimated to be at least £1000), and to pay for commercial waste collection.

5. Having reviewed all the issues, the Village hall committee feels the PC should ask the former trustees to wind-up the existing charity and pass the management and running of the hall to the Parish Council as soon as feasible; that the PC should take over the running of the hall as part of its day-to-day business but that the PC should keep the matter of charitable status for the hall under review - this does not preclude us from setting up a fit-for-purpose charity or charitable arm in the future. If, however, councillors are attracted by the Sole Trustee charitable option I can supply further information at the meeting.

#### Objectives for the Village Hall

6. The committee felt it appropriate to decide on our objectives for the hall so we and users are aware of what we are aiming to achieve. We have discussed and agreed the following draft aims and aspirations which can be refined over time:

We want the hall to be a valued, well-used, well-loved, quality village asset.

We want it to be properly managed and maintained.

We want the hall to cover its costs and make surplus funds that can be set aside for future maintenance and investment for future generations.

We want to actively market and promote the hall.

We want it to be for the benefit of the whole community; we want to help and support local village groups and parishioners by giving them a beneficial rate but we would not want this to impact the hall's long-term viability.

The Parish Council is asked to agree these as working objectives for the committee.

#### Village hall events license

7. The events license for the village hall is currently still in the name of the charity's Village Hall management Committee and Stephen Atkins is the designated premises supervisor. Steve has given notice of his intention to cease being the DPS with effect from 31/12/2016. We have discussed the position with Wendy Shone and with the Licensing team at EHDC. In order to ensure continuity in licensing of the hall, and with the support of the former management committee, we need to apply to transfer the events license into the Parish Council's name (it can be in the name of our Village hall committee), then we can disapply the designated premises supervisor provision and agree a process and procedures with the licensing authority which gives the village hall manager and the Village hall committee responsibility for vetting hall bookings. Obviously we need to do this before 31/12/2016. There is a cost involved in transferring the license of £46 which can be

met from the village hall accounts. The Parish Council is asked to give the Village hall committee delegated authority to undertake these actions and agree an appropriate procedure and process with the licensing authority.

#### Village hall accounts

8. Janet Crew has very kindly been working with the committee to advise us on the state of the village hall accounts and the forward financial projections. She continues to receive income, send out invoices and pay the bills for the hall in her role as treasurer for the trustees of the charity. The accounts for the hall show a working balance at bank of £5342 at 19/9/2016. Income and expenditure from Jan to end August has broken even with both totalling around £9k. Forecast income to end December is over £5k with forecast expenditure being around £2500. The board of trustees of the charity will need to seek the consent of the Charity Commission as to how they deal with any surplus funds at the time of winding-up the charity.

#### Health and safety matters

9. The committee - and the village hall manager in particular - has been trying to deal with routine maintenance and health and safety matters. At the last Parish Council meeting Judith Bee in her capacity as a governor of the village school, drew our attention to a report prepared for the school which identified some matters with respect to minimising the risk of legionella. Ian Garrard and I discussed this at our recent meeting with the school head and secretary and we have just recently received the school's health and safety report (dated June 2015) and recommended actions. With the agreement of the Chairman of the Trustees, Wendy Shone, we will seek quotes for, and action, the recommendations as soon as feasible.

#### Other matters

10. We are currently undertaking the following routine actions in preparation for the formal hand-over of the hall:

- The hall manager and I are meeting with regular users of the hall to introduce the committee, ascertain the user's current and future requirements of the hall, and to discuss their storage needs; these meetings are proving to be extremely useful and are very well received
- We plan to get users together to have a purge of stored items, to tidy up and rationalise storage whilst meeting user needs for security etc
- We are aiming to regularise booking arrangements and review booking conditions and will review the charging policy
- Ian is preparing an inventory of keys and key-holders and is preparing a spreadsheet schedule of users
- He is dealing with maintenance issues, including a faulty light, blocked drain and problem with the outside tap
- As stated above, we are dealing with health and safety issues, including replacement of a fire extinguisher and remedial action to prevent legionella in the hot water supply as stated above

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee for their support and hard work through what has been a huge learning curve for us - especially the hall manager Ian Garrard, who has immersed himself into the role with great commitment!

I should also like to thank Wendy Shone and Janet Crew for their ongoing help and support. We in turn will of course continue to support and liaise closely with the trustees as they seek to wind up the charity.

Daphne Gardner  
Chairman, Parish Council Village Hall Committee

## **Report to Buriton Parish Council: 26 September 2016**

### **Update about work towards an up-grade of the Buriton Community Website**

#### **Introduction**

At its May meeting the Parish Council agreed to commence work towards an upgrade of the community website (established early in 2011) and at its last meeting the responses to an outline brief / request to tender for consultants (Appendix 1) were reported.

Of the three prospective tenderers, only one had replied (providing a costed proposal): Ali Martin (who designed and set-up the original website).

It was therefore agreed that other bids should be pursued.

We have subsequently learnt that one of the initial companies, "Creative Little Dots", has ceased trading but we have also contacted another company: Wizbit.

And the Parish Clerk has very recently received more information on this topic from an organisation called "Parish Council Websites" which includes information about a "Transparency Fund" administered by NALC.

This report provides current details of all three organisations so that Councillors can consider providing a steer with regard to next steps.

#### **Wizbit has replied with the following information:**

- you seem to have a great website that is regularly updated and must be a very useful local resource
- advantages of combining your community and Village Hall sites would allow you to save hosting costs (by only hosting one single site), only having to login to one site to edit either the main or village hall content and would allow your site visitors to find all of the contents that you manage within a single site that should help to aid navigation
- we have done a few similar websites for Bramdean & Hinton Ampner ([www.bhapc.org.uk](http://www.bhapc.org.uk)), Corhampton & Meonstoke Parish Council ([www.candm-pc.gov.uk](http://www.candm-pc.gov.uk)) and Southwick Village Hall ([www.southwickvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.southwickvillagehall.co.uk))
- whilst none of the other local sites that we have produced are as large as your site, we have produced much larger sites for other organisations and companies, so the scale certainly wouldn't be an issue.
- other sample responsive sites that we have produced can be viewed from our portfolio: <https://www.wizbit.net/portfolio/clients/> -
- the main issue is that we are not Drupal specialists, we focus on WordPress instead as a content management system.
- to be able to give you best value for money, I would recommend migrating your data across into WordPress for which there are tools available to help easily move all of your content across into the new custom responsive width site templates that we could build for you
- we believe that the work involved in migrating from Drupal 6 to 8 would be of a similar magnitude to moving from Drupal 6 to WordPress, so the costs are likely to be fairly similar
- the question is whether your editors would be prepared to move to a completely different content management system (although WordPress is by far the most popular CMS system for updating websites and is used by 51% of all sites worldwide, whereas Drupal is only used by 2%)
- I would completely understand if you do decide to stick with Drupal though, in which case you best option would probably be to work with a company that specialises in Drupal development.
- if you do decide to go with us then your development timescale would be no problem at all and to give you an initial guide, you would be looking at about £1600+VAT in total for the

complete redesign with custom responsive-width templates for all desktop and mobile devices, migration of all your data and site launch and up to 2 hours of training here in our offices

- if you also wished to incorporate the contents from the village hall site within the main site, then this would add about £325+VAT. Our payment terms would be for a 30% deposit and the remainder only upon completion and site launch.

### **The response from Ali Martin included the following points:**

- buriton.info is built on the Drupal 6 platform. This platform is no longer in development and support from drupal.org will cease early 2017. Drupal 6 has been superseded by Drupal 7 and Drupal 8. Drupal 7 is highly established with, arguably another estimated four years of support; it has a wide range of tried and tested community modules which extend the functionality of the core software – something which is essential to any development.
- Drupal 8 was released November 2015; it brings many new features with a longer life span but the module support is still in its infancy. However, this module support is improving on a near daily basis as the Drupal community embraces the new platform.
- nevertheless, it is anticipated Drupal 8 will be a suitable platform for the upgrade given the current requirements and specification of the current site, although a period of due diligence to research and study its feasibility is highly recommended. Drupal 7 will provide all the required tools as a backup alternative so it's more an issue of protecting the Parish Council's long term investment
- regardless, the new website will consolidate and build on the current website's success for the next four to six years. The rest of this document assumes Drupal 8 as the chosen platform.
- the current website is currently hosted on virtual private server (VPS) provided by Flynn Computing. VPSs are extremely common, sharing memory, processor and storage resources between numerous different websites hosted on the one virtual server
- as with many other major software upgrades, the migration from Drupal 6 to Drupal 8 will require additional server resources and it is recommended the Parish Council considers relocating its hosting to a more resilient environment. Hosting packages change as often as mobile phone packages but indicative costs can be seen at <https://www.lcn.com/webhosting>. This migration can be managed as part of the upgrade process
- with regard to visual design, it is notable that the current website does not support mobile devices but there are two possible paths here: (1) either choose a pre-made theme off-the-shelf for about £75 which broadly meets requirements and then customise (this was how the current website's look was developed), or (2) build a custom theme based on the common "Twitter Bootstrap" framework. Both take about the same time and cost to develop but it should be pointed out that it won't be possible to develop an exact match of the current website. For example, the rolling banner headline feature would need to be adapted to work on mobile devices
- with regard to Buriton Village hall, it makes perfect business sense to migrate the functionality and content of the current village hall website to the new main website. Not only will this save annual hosting costs and ease administrative overheads, but also the village hall element will theoretically gain increased publicity and exposure by being part of the more popular main website. It is recommended to still maintain ownership of the domain name buritonvillagehall.co.uk but to point to a special area on the new website which could either be a subdomain (e.g. villagehall.buriton.info) or off the main website (e.g. buriton.info/village-hall). Either way, functionality and development costs will be the same and the exact name can be confirmed at a later date
- the Parish Council is absolutely correct to identify the issue of data migration and, in essence, this won't be an issue. Although the tools to migrate from Drupal 6 to Drupal 8 are still in active development, many other websites have already gone through this process and their methods can be identified and reused. User accounts and passwords will also be preserved and a secure, reference archive copy of the website made prior to any work. However, some community modules may no longer be available in Drupal 8, or there may now be better ways of doing things. As many of these will be identified in the feasibility study previously mentioned and discussed with the Parish Council prior to development

- total cost would be £2,100 and work could commence in Q4 of 2016.

**Information about "Parish Council Websites" is as follows:**

- the Parish Clerk received an email from this company on 21<sup>st</sup> September, promoting that "Funding is still available for a new website" and encouraging Parish Clerks to "Take the opportunity to upgrade to a new site" with the Transparency Fund providing grants for web design and hosting costs
- the email says that a Transparency Code came into force in April 2015 and requires all smaller councils with a turnover of less than £25,000 to provide taxpayers with a clear picture of Council's activities, spending and governance by publishing information on a website. More can be found on this page: <http://www.parish-council.website/the-transparency-code/>
- the Transparency Fund is providing grants of up to £500 to cover the costs of setting up a new website or updating your existing one so that it complies with the Transparency Code. The fund will run over three years (2015-18) and is administered by NALC
- the email then hopes that Parish Councils will seek a quote from this company – with details (and examples of Parish Council websites) available via this link:
- <http://www.parish-council.website/>
- it may be useful to find out more about (a) the requirements of the Transparency Code; (b) whether the Transparency Fund would apply to Buriton Parish Council and (c) whether this company would be able to quote for an update of our community website (and what the costs might be).

## **Up-grading the Buriton Community Website: Request to tender**

Buriton Parish Council established a community website ([www.buriton.info](http://www.buriton.info)) early in 2011 and is now considering an upgrade so as to keep the facility (and convenience to users) up to date.

The website is built on the Drupal 6 content management system which, we understand, is no longer maintained either in terms of functionality or security updates.

We understand that Drupal 8 is now available, tried and tested – and this would be our preferred choice.

There may also be considerations for the server elements of the installation. We understand that Drupal runs on the PHP programming language and this, in turn, is continually evolving.

The Parish Council would like to consider taking this opportunity to consider a new visual design, i.e. one that works on mobile screens.

In addition, the Council is likely to be taking over responsibility for Buriton Village Hall which currently has its own website: <http://www.buritonvillagehall.co.uk/> We are considering the advantages and disadvantages of merging the two sites and we would like this to be borne in mind in your response.

The main 'community website' has been designed so that a number of users can log-in and add, amend or delete content of 'their' pages (Cricket Club, Church, School etc) with permissions for a website editor to have access to all content. We would like this format and arrangements to continue.

We are also generally content with the structure of the site, with 'News', 'What's On' and rolling banner headline features. It is possible that some changes to some of the contents of some of the drop-down menus may need to be changed.

We envisage that a large part of this piece of work will be migrating data to the new database structure / format although we recognise that a new visual design is likely to be required for use on mobile screens.

We would want the new site to be built and prepared ready for a seamless switch-over, perhaps around the beginning of 2017.

Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, the Parish Council is not necessarily opposed to doing anything differently and would welcome any ideas or advice at this stage. Examples of other sites may be of interest to us.

We would welcome your reaction to this brief and an initial estimate of the likely costs involved.

The next meeting of the Parish Council is on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July and it would be helpful to receive an initial reaction to this brief by then.

If, in the meantime, you have any queries, please contact Doug Jones:



Report for the planning meeting of the 26th September 2016

Update on planning applications

SDNP/16/01715/HOUS	Side extension to Meadow Byre	in progress ?
SDNP/16/01766/CND	minor amendments Ditcham School	in Progress now
Superseded ?		
SDNP/16/02902/FUL	Ditcham Park School	Approved
SDNP/16/03575/TPO		No Objection
SDNP/16/03605/TCA	Prune 3 trees and fell 9 trees at the Manor Barn	Approved
<b>SDNP/16/03784/TCA</b>	– fell one yew tree. <b>Rock Cottage Bones Lane Buriton</b>	Pending Decision

**SDNP/16/03538/HOUS** - Two storey extension to side, single storey extension to rear, attached garage to side following demolition of existing garage, disabled access ramp to side and rear. **North Lodge Sunwood Lane Buriton** In Progress

**SDNP/16/03650/HOUS** - Replacement of existing pool building, creation of a walled garden, erection of a greenhouse and adjoining potting shed, extensions to the northern and southern wings of the existing stableyard building group (alterations and additions to the scheme previously approved under ref: SDNP13/05062/HOUS & SDNP/16/01264/HOUS). **Buriton House Pitcroft Lane Buriton** Approved

**SDNP/16/03704/HOUS** - Single storey extension to side/rear of dwelling, detached double garage and store following demolition of garage and shed, and widening of driveway access and rebuilding of driveway wall. **Rock Cottage Bones Lane Buriton** Approved

- **SDNP/16/03534/LIS** - Detached double garage and store following demolition of garage and shed, and widening of driveway access and rebuilding of driveway wall. **Rock Cottage Bones Lane Buriton** Approved

•

**SDNP/16/03378/LIS - Listed Building Consent** - Single storey extension to side/rear, replacement of centre rear window on first floor with 2 no. 9-pane windows, refurbishment or replacement of all other windows, removal of 2 single chimneys on north side, removal of door in front (east) elevation on right, removal of door in side (south) elevation, window removal in kitchen/breakfast area and alterations to shower room/wc to create separate cloakroom/cupboard. **Rock Cottage Bones Lane Buriton** Approved

- **SDNP/16/03802/HOUS** - Two storey rear extension and replacement entrance porch. **16 Glebe Road Buriton** Application in Progress

**SDNP/16/03446/HOUS** Conservatory to rear of 36 Petersfield Road Approved

To Consider at tonight's meeting:

•

Daphne Gardner and I have had a meeting with Bob Camping to review his latest proposals for the remaining parts of the Manor Estate. Although there are no new applications on the SDNPA lists we understand that Bob intends the following:  
The Tithe Barn should be converted to 1 new dwelling which will utilise some of the existing garage space for storage and a bedroom. a garden will be created to the side of the Barn going out beyond Old Spot Cottage. Monks Walk will still be converted as before and the Garages would become one single storey dwelling. At present it is thought by some of the planning committee that we are going to be better off accepting some of these changes rather than see the whole site fall into rack and ruin. Our thoughts are to object to this application but only on the grounds of the conversion of the garage to a dwelling. We would accept the principle of the single dwelling in the barn and the (already carried out) conversion of Monks Walk (with a longish list of conditions) but look to the garages being used as garages for Monks Walk. As this is potentially contentious I am looking to the whole Council for their views on this matter. Of course this is not an application as of yet so it may be completely different when it does come to the planners, however Bob Camping is keen to know how the Council will stand on this idea and it is just possible he may be swayed by our initial thoughts before it goes to the planners.  
I should say that he also intends to appeal the rejected applications. He claims that he will withdraw these appeals should his latest proposals be accepted!

Maggie Johnston  
25/09/2016

## Report to Parish Council: September 2016

### Dark Night Skies

#### Introduction

Discussions at previous Parish Council meetings have noted and approved:

- the creation of an International Dark Skies Reserve for the South Downs in 2016 (one of only 11 in the world) – following written support from the Parish Council to SDNPA in 2014
- the crucial 'pinch-point' location of the parish in the International Reserve (illustrated on the map below)



- the range of effects of light pollution: wasting energy, costing money, impacting upon wildlife and affecting human health as well as preventing people from enjoying the night skies
- close examination of all future planning applications, hoping that parishioners will do their best to prevent light pollution
- increasing awareness of these matters via the community website and parish magazine
- opportunities to become a Dark Skies Community with a Dark Skies Discovery Site with the potential to help pubs and B&B establishments
- the potential of an Article 4 Direction to help with planning applications
- exploring potential dimming of street lights between 11pm and 5am
- setting good examples of appropriate lighting on public buildings.

## Recent development and next steps

Following the discussion at the July Parish Council meeting a number of actions have been undertaken:

- letter sent to Ditcham Park School early in August
- further consultation on the topic via the Plan B stand at the village show
- information published in the Parish Magazine
- more discussions with the National Park's Dark Skies Officer and
- a meeting with the street-lighting authorities (HCC & EHDC).

Feedback at the village show was very positive and, at the time of writing this report, all responses to the Chairman's article in the Parish Magazine have been supportive.

The National Park's Dark Skies Officer believes that the narrow pinch-point in the International Reserve is of great importance and he is very interested in the idea of Buriton becoming a Dark Skies Community (DSC) area.

He emphasises that achieving DSC status should not be very onerous, that it is unlikely to require any significant changes to any current lighting in the parish (a DSC is more about raising awareness, minimising adverse changes in the future etc), that it is likely to be helpful with planning applications and that he would be willing to provide a lot of help himself. An outline of steps involved in obtaining DSC status are included as Appendix 1 so that Councillors can see what would be involved.

A meeting with Julian Higgins (HCC) and Natalie Meagher (EHDC) was held on 21<sup>st</sup> September to explore the street lighting ideas discussed at the last Parish Council meeting. Julian deals with street lighting matters for the County Council and Natalie is responsible for community safety matters (as well as street lights) at EHDC:

- Julian explained at the outset that, subject to agreeing details, he was very supportive of the Parish Council's ideas and anticipates that many places are likely to want to do this with their new street lights. It is also possible that HCC (and EHDC) might want to introduce changes in the future to save energy and costs as well supporting Dark Skies aims
- he explained that some County Councils (including West Sussex) do not have street lights in villages during the hours of darkness at all, and have not done so for decades. He is not aware of any evidence of any safety or security risks in such places
- in Hampshire, however, he felt that the approach being explored in Buriton (to retain lighting but at slightly lower levels) would be a sensible way forward – as long as there was support from the Parish Council and parishioners and no objections from the emergency services. A one year trial was suggested and Natalie concurred with these views
- looking at the village in detail, Julian said that he would not want any changes to the lighting at the roundabout at Greenway Lane at this time because of the status of the roads in the county's hierarchy. He said that HCC would be considering the principle of these matters in the future
- he felt that the same changes should be made to all parts of the village (the newer parts of the village (north-west) which have HCC lights and the older streets and lanes which have EHDC lights). He felt that adjusting only some, not all, of the lights would not be wise or advisable
- he felt that it was unlikely that anyone would really notice any changes. In the older (EHDC) areas the lights are not equally spaced and in the newer (HCC) areas the spacing of the lights meets modern standards and so could cope with the relatively small changes being discussed

- the adjustments to light levels, timings etc that had been suggested by Dan Oakley were felt to be very suitable for a trial with no adverse effects anticipated: dim all lights slightly (by 10%) at all times and adjust the time at which the night-time levels are introduced from midnight to 11pm
- it was explained that making these changes would only take HCC a few minutes and that the adjustments were felt to be sensible 'baby steps' not requiring any huge readjustment from people
- in the meantime (and subject to PC approval) the Police, Fire and Health authorities should be contacted and EHDC would provide contact details, potential wording etc so that the Parish Council can do this
- it was suggested that, subject to satisfactory conclusions to the above, it would be sensible to introduce the adjustments from around 12<sup>th</sup> November. This would be for a trial period of one year with the opportunity to reconsider at that time.

It is suggested that the Parish Council forms a view on the idea of this trial and on the idea of continuing to explore Dark Skies Community status.

## APPENDIX 1

Steps involved in acquiring Dark Skies Community status include:

- include relevant policies in our forthcoming Village Design Statement about standards for any future new developments (a threshold of 3000 Kelvins) along with a reference to the guidance due to be adopted by the National Park as part of its South Downs Local Plan
- provide details of street lighting (which Dan Oakley already possesses and which he knows is compliant)
- identify publicly owned buildings (Village Hall, Schools (including DPS), Church, and perhaps local businesses such as pubs) – and say whether they meet good practice guidelines (anything over 1,500 lumens should be fully shielded ('cut-off') to prevent unnecessary light spillage)
- aim to change any lights on these buildings that are not compliant (1,500 lumens is very bright – so probably very few would need any attention; funding may be available...)
- hold a couple of Dark Skies awareness events each year – could be good things for the pub(s) to host...
- include dark skies awareness information in Parish Magazine, Welcome Packs, website etc
- see if school(s) might be willing to include a lesson each year?
- get letters of support from local organisations (Village Association etc)
- conduct a roadside survey of brightness measurements (like Dan has already done in some other parishes) – perhaps with a couple of volunteers accompanying him (about 2-3 hours in total; no details of individual dwellings would be required; nothing would be published anywhere etc)
- consider the potential of the Halls Hill car park as a 'Discovery Site' (could be promoted with Five Bells etc) [Dan's colleague: Laura Deane]
- consider adding to the attractions of local B&Bs [Dan's colleague Sandra Grant]

The status achieved should be very helpful in planning matters, should be very helpful to wildlife and can help attract extra visitors to pubs and B&Bs (as well as kudos for the community). Designation is permanent although revocation could happen if principles are completely ignored etc in the future ...

## **Report to Parish Council: September 2016**

### **Progress with "Plan B for Buriton"**

Discussions at Parish Council meetings at the beginning of 2015 led to the explanation and launch of the *Plan B* project at the 2015 Annual Parish Meeting and progress reports have been produced for subsequent Council Meetings.

Responses to the *Plan B* 'pop-in' event held at the end of April were circulated to Parish Councillors early in June and were attached to Plan B Report to the Parish Council Meeting in July for formal consideration.

The July report to the Parish Council also set out the proposed timetable for next steps with the *Plan B* work:

- August: consultation at Village Show
- September: produce draft text for new document
- October: hold a 'workshop event' with draft text followed by a period for comments / responses
- November: final text to Parish Council for agreement
- December: submit to SDNPA so that it might be adopted by about February 2017

### Progress and next steps

Since the last report to the Parish Council the *Plan B* team has hosted a consultation stand at the village show, arranged to meet the National Park's new Design Officer and booked the village hall for the next workshop event on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October.

There were a range of consultation activities at the village show including:

- a summary of points about local landscapes, buildings etc made during earlier consultations (to gauge levels of agreement etc)
- copies of relevant pages from the current Village Design Statement (so that everyone could see what has been in place for the last few years and add comments / ideas)
- copies of a number of maps (including centre-pages from the current Local Landscape Character Assessment and general OS base) so that people could indicate important views and / or other issues
- some "rogue's gallery" photographs from other villages to prompt the question: would you be happy to see this sort of thing here?
- some photographs showing effects of light pollution on dark night skies and on doorstep security etc.

There was some very useful feedback at the village show (in spite of poor weather conditions) with about 140 comments / contributions in total. A summary of the findings is as follows:

- there were high levels of support for the issues being identified as potential additions / amplifications to the current VDS / LLCA with only six comments contrary to the views that had been compiled thus far (out of a total of 139)
- there were no comments suggesting that any of the existing VDS guidelines should be removed
- the other inter-active exercises indicated that people were in favour of the Dark Skies ideas, did not like photos of tall fences in other villages or of rows and rows of horse-paddock fences; and contributions on the maps helped to identify some important views.

Following up on the meeting with the National Park's Community Planning Officer, Chris Paterson, in July, the *Plan B* team met with SDNPA's Design Officer, Genevieve Hayes, on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Genevieve was very supportive of all the work to date and of the proposed next steps.

It was felt that bringing all the four aspects of work together (1999 VDS, 2008 update to VDS, 2008 Local Landscape Character Assessment and findings from the 2015/16 activities) into one Supplementary Planning Document would help conserve and enhance the special qualities of the parish whilst giving clear guidance for any potential new development.

The meeting helped to crystallise the potential layout of the community's new document based on the principle of using the landscape to inform layout and design via components such as routes, blocks, plots, and materials/details. Genevieve's contribution also helped in the development of focussed activities for the next phase of consultation.

The Group's aim is now to produce draft text of all the important 'design guidelines' for another consultation event on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October (11am to 2pm in the village hall) and to follow this event with a period for further comments. This should enable the group to adhere to the current timetable as envisaged.

Although the Group has booked the village hall for 15<sup>th</sup> October, no payment has been made and it would be helpful if the Parish Council could confirm that this event can be one of the Council's free bookings.



## Playground report September

As you are aware the committee has been raising funds for some time now. We have been doing this in various ways including a toy sale, car boots sales and the last venture was a family fun day. These ventures have made roughly £3,000 but it has also bought the project into the public domain and in doing so we have received donations of £5,750 with additional £7,000 promised. Giving a grand total to date of £15,783. The 106 or builders contribution, which we will use to replace the swing or swings

I'm sure the council would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members and the volunteers for all their hard work because without them we couldn't do it.

A special thanks must go to Elaine Bray who carried out all the organisation of the fun day including a very detailed event plan and to Fran from the 5 bells for her help in obtaining the food for these events. I would also like to thank Beaver Tool Hire and Travis Perkins for all the items they let us borrow or gave us for the fun day.

While carrying out these fundraising events I have heard various rumours that we have decided on a final position of the playground. I would like to dispel these rumours or misunderstandings and have it ratified at this meeting that the parish council have no plans to relocate the playground.

We have various things planned for the remaining of this year and in 2017 including

A film night on the 28<sup>th</sup> October and possibly a Christmas party

In June 2017 a Farm fun day at Bolinge hill farm (the stocks will make a return)

## Rights of Way Sub Committee report for Buriton Parish Council Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

1. The Parish Clerk was recently contacted by Abby Sullivan of the Countryside Access Team, based at QE Park, concerning the Small Grants Scheme – for which there is available funding of £47, 500.

At the last PC meeting I suggested that the PC might like to consider adding the Definitive path number to the existing waymarkers. This would be useful in the event of the reporting of incidents or accidents etc occurring on any of the paths within the parish, much easier than trying to describe the siting of any such occurrences. The Committee agreed with this suggestion but queries were raised about costs to the parish.

In the light of the possible 50% funding of this improvement, I would like to propose that the PC contacts Abby Sullivan to tell her about our idea.

2. Since the last PC meeting we have received [inter alia] Network Rail's Statement of Case for the Public Inquiry, due to take place in December. NR's basic arguments for closure remain the same, although somewhat augmented by reference to various reports; facts and data, consistent with the national rail network and inferences, relating specifically to FP3. NR holds to the view that *"it is not reasonably practicable to make the crossing safe by means of mitigation measures"*.

The sub-committee considers that the mitigation measures have still not been fully explored within this document, nor does NR's Statement of Case present information as to the cost/benefit analysis and budget figure for any mitigation measures.

The Parish Council will have to submit its Proof of Evidence by the deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> November and approval is therefore sought for the Sub Committee to continue to work on this matter and produce the document for submission to meet this deadline. It is envisaged that the submission will contain a critique of NR's Statement of Case and an amplification of points that the Council feels NR has yet to make to prove their case. It is not anticipated that the PC will pass any comments on any other submissions to the Public Inquiry.

3. We have learnt that the Petersfield Ramblers have been successful in their application for funding to replace the remaining stiles on the Hangers Way in the north of the parish with kissing gates and we look forward to this work being undertaken.

## **Report to Buriton Parish Council: September 2016**

### **Hampshire Devolution Proposals**

#### Introduction

This continues to be a fast-moving topic and there may be further updates to discuss by the time the Parish Council meets on 26<sup>th</sup> September – particularly from our County or District Councillors.

The Parish Council considered a detailed report on this topic at its meeting in March 2016 which summarised:

- Background to the Government's 'devolution' agenda
- The Hampshire-wide bid submitted to Government in September 2015
- An HCC / HALC Conference held in Winchester on 1<sup>st</sup> March
- The concept of 'deeper devolution'
- Information about the then emerging 'Solent' bid presented to an EHAPTC meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March.

Updates were provided at the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> July and the Parish Council agreed that it did not want to sign up to the Solent proposals. Further information was to be sought.

#### Some recent updates

The Parish Clerk circulated details of a County Council consultation on 'The Future of Local Government in Hampshire' with a deadline for responses at the end of this month. The County Council has been holding a series of workshops for Parish and Town Councils throughout September and the Leader of East Hampshire District Council addressed the September meeting of the East Hampshire Association of Parish & Town Councils (EHAPTC).

This note provides some information from those events – but other Councillors may have also attended some of the County Council's consultative workshops.

### **The County Council's Consultation**

The consultation sets out potential options for how Hampshire County Council and the 11 district councils in Hampshire could change, or be reorganised, "to meet the huge challenges they face from ongoing cuts to their funding from central Government - and from rising demand for services such as social care for children and vulnerable adults from a growing population."

Respondents are invited to answer questions on a number of options involving proposals to create combined authorities, elected mayors and unitary councils, as well as the status quo. The County Council says that it will listen to responses before taking decisions and that findings will help them consider what recommendations to make to central Government, to ensure that any proposals for change or local government reorganisation that might be taken forward are informed by the preferences of Hampshire residents and stakeholders.

The main choices in the consultation are:

- do you want to leave things as they are or
- do you want you want a combined authority or
- do you want a unitary council.
- with a combined authority do you want a mayor you elect?

Responses can be emailed to: [servinghampshire@ipsos-mori.com](mailto:servinghampshire@ipsos-mori.com)

## **The County Council's Workshops**

A number of workshops for Parish Councils have been held across Hampshire during September (details circulated by Parish Clerk on 21<sup>st</sup> July). As well as discussion about the range of options for how Hampshire might be reorganised, the events were also designed to explore "what opportunities there may be for parish and town councils to have greater influence over local services".

Points made by HCC representatives at the event in Chandlers Ford on 20<sup>th</sup> September included:

- in any proposals that may emerge, Parish Councils will remain
- additional roles / responsibilities for Parish Councils may be available
- the consideration of new local government structures was a result of: Funding Pressures; the Devolution Act 2016; Potential Freedoms from Government; and Increases in Demand for Surveys (eg. Social Care)
- HCC had not agreed any proposal to become a Unitary Council: this idea was only being explored because of actions taken by others
- an opportunity to negotiate with Government had been lost in January 2016 when the Solent bid was launched
- there were worries about inaccuracies in information provided by others
- HCC was in the top quartile of quality across all services and provides good value for Council Tax. Some options for new local government structures would disrupt these situations significantly, when no spare money available
- HCC already accounts for 80% of all Local Government expenditure in the County – a Unitary County would only be a bit bigger
- an analysis of options by Deloitte had indicated that a Unitary County would be the most cost-effective; but would it be too big or too remote?
- there are now Unitary County Councils in places like Cornwall, Durham, Northumberland, Shropshire and Wiltshire but no fixed model for 'locality working': Wiltshire has 18 Area Boards; Shropshire has 28 Joint Committees; Durham has 14, Cornwall has 19 ...
- Hampshire could perhaps build upon existing good practice (Lengthsmen) and deliver more services via Parishes (or clusters of parishes) and perhaps with / without Local Area Teams, Local Area Boards ...
- deeper devolution would not be mandatory, there would be choices and opportunities. One size (solution) would not fit all, there would be a range of options on a spectrum from 'light-touch' monitoring of services through to full service or asset transfer
- but non-statutory services may be at risk
- there was subtle encouragement for the Lengthsman initiative to continue without any funding; subtle encouragement for community minibuses to replace regular bus services; and a suggestion that planning decisions could be delegated to parishes if parishes would like that quasi-judicial role.

Steven Lugg of HALC explained:

- there is only one pot of money (with people living longer) and any reorganisation would only be reallocating that money
- it would not be possible for funding to always follow function so parishes are likely to be faced with choices about putting precepts up (or not) or collaborating with others on projects (maybe even merging)

Workshop discussions revealed contrasts between those Parishes / Towns with precepts of around £250,000pa (Bishops Waltham, Hamble, Fair Oak) who might be

willing to take on more services (from County or District) and deliver them locally compared with smaller parishes (Wellow, Bighton, Kingsworthy) who did not have that interest or capacity.

After the current consultation, HCC would feed out information in October.

### **Cllr Cowper's presentation to EHAPTC meeting (14<sup>th</sup> September)**

Cllr Cowper (Leader of EHDC) spoke for about 30 minutes and then took a number of questions. His talk was primarily a series of criticisms about the County Council's 'unitary council' proposals followed by a selection of positive points about the Solent 'Combined Authority' which he hopes EHDC will join.

#### Criticisms of the County Council's position

- he suggested that the County's estimates of financial savings were false
- he suggested that 'tax harmonisation' across the County (to the lower levels in Eastleigh) would cost a lot of money over a lot of years
- he said that there would only be 78 Councillors to cover the whole County and that all Planning Decisions would be made in Winchester [he didn't mention that there are two national parks in the county who would continue to be responsible for planning applications and for some unexplained reason he ruled out the idea of area committees taking decisions more locally]
- he suggested that a unitary county would mean that parishes would have to deliver more services which may not be what many parishes want to do
- in questioning it became clear that he was basing some of his assertions on information which the county council has rebutted at recent meetings

#### The potential 'Combined Authority' with Solent Councils

- he is hopeful that Portsmouth, Southampton etc will be granted Combined Authority status in November and that EHDC will subsequently be invited to join (about May 2017)
- he thinks that the new Government will still be insisting upon a directly elected Mayor – but the Councils in the Combined Authority will ensure that he/she is a 'constrained' Mayor and that the Cabinet of the Combined Authority (the Leaders of each of the existing Councils) would have to vote unanimously on all important decisions before anything was agreed
- he acknowledged that a number of county-wide services would have to be split but suggested that this has already happened in a number of places and cited an example of Yorkshire
- he said that one of the perks of the Combined Authority with elected Mayor is that it would be able to retain all the Business Rates in its area (worth £178 million across all the Councils: Southampton, Portsmouth etc)
- he said that the role of Parish Councils could remain unchanged – if that is what they would like

#### Question time

- in questions he suggested that there was perhaps now more scope for a "stay as we are now" option
- he did not really explain why there was no option of joining with other rural councils (across the middle of Hampshire) rather than with urban ones
- there was scepticism about whether the 'unanimous voting' was really going to be practical and fears that it might lead to lowest common denominator decisions
- asked about the number of houses he stressed that the numbers in East Hampshire's plans would remain unchanged – but they would be "forward phased"

- asked about whether EHDC would formally consult Parish Councils and / or the public he said that they would have to do so "by law" – but it would not be a referendum (results would not be binding)
- asked how the overall decision about the future of local government in Hampshire would be decided he said that it was, in effect, a race ...

#### Deeper devolution

- in a discussion about 'deeper devolution' (regardless of whether there is a Unitary or Combined Authority outcome [or stay as we are]), parish reps considered whether or not they might want to take on extra services currently provided by the District or County
- the general mood of smaller councils mirrored that in Buriton when this matter has been discussed: people not generally volunteering to be Councillors with the intention of running services or managing people or contracts; they don't want those responsibilities; parish councillors are looking to 'add value' and ensure their parishes are not just 'places', but are real 'communities'
- some of the larger Councils (including Petersfield) could be interested in taking on more responsibilities – and could offer to provide them for neighbours
- clustering of parishes was also discussed and seemed to be the only way that most small councils would (with some reluctance) consider taking things on ...
- but there were fears about losing local sense of place ...