

## Parish Council update report: August 2020

It has been another busy few months since writing the last update with the Parish Council pursuing as many aspects of its work as possible whilst contending with a wide range of effects of the pandemic. Meetings have been held (using Zoom) in May and July – with extra Planning Committee Meetings (also on Zoom) in June, July and August to consider some complicated proposals (including a large application at the Butser Quarry) – and it has been good to see that a number of parishioners have joined these meetings and taken part. Details continue to be posted on the noticeboard in the High Street as well as on the website.

The shopping and prescription collection service, initiated early in March to help any residents in need during the pandemic, continues to be available although with the changing circumstances the extra volunteering has been suspended from 1st August. The usual Neighbourcare service remains so the message is: “there is still help: just phone 07769 691919 or 01730 269034 or email [pillmeadhouse@btinternet.com](mailto:pillmeadhouse@btinternet.com)”. Sincere thanks are due to all the volunteers but most particularly to Peter and J-M Nixon for all their work coordinating the service. The extra arrangements can be reinstated should the need arise and other information is still available via the special Covid-19 part of the community website: [www.buriton.info](http://www.buriton.info).

One unfortunate side effect of the Covid situation has been the loss of the Dottie Tots Nursery School as, with sadness, the organisers decided that they could no longer continue. The Parish Council hopes to be able to find some other nursery or childcare facility for the community but the loss of income will inevitably affect the finances of the village hall. Any new bookings could be very helpful and so if anyone knows of people who might like to run any adult courses or who might need temporary office space etc, please contact the Village Hall Manager, Steve Franks, via on 07878 027845 or [buritonvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:buritonvillagehall@gmail.com)

Time had to be spent carrying out detailed risk assessments and repairs before the playground or village hall could be used after the lockdown period but both reopened from July with extra guidelines which should be read, understood and followed by all.

At the time of writing (mid-August), the temporary Post Office continues to operate in the Village Inn car park every Friday (12.30-2pm) whilst it is not possible to use the Seward Room at the church. Other villages have, however, reverted to their pre-Covid arrangements and so the viability of the visit to Buriton depends on the number of customers. Everyone is encouraged to support the service as much as possible.

Unfortunately more reports have had to be made to the Police about problems of visitors' parking, littering and anti-social behaviour. In addition, the district council's litter bin emptying service was reduced, in error, to only once per week for a while until the Parish Council managed to get them to rectify the situation with three collections each week for the summer period.

Although delayed by the lockdown period, the Parish Council has managed to get most of the village hall car park improvements undertaken including modifications to increase capacity, provide protection for tree roots, retain a porous surface and add cycle parking facilities. At the time of writing the cycle parking has yet to be installed and some repairs to remaining pot-holes are also still to be done. The opportunity was taken to get the same workers to also remove pot-holes in the church car park area.

The County Council has decided to close the Halls Hill car park at the top of Kiln Lane for a trial period of about six months, in addition to the log barriers and signs which have been installed. They feel that this is the best option to try to dissuade people from parking in this area and to use the main QECP car park instead. The trial period will enable effects to be observed.

The Parish Council has taken steps to try to look after the future of both pubs through the 'Assets of Community Value' procedures. For the Five Bells, appropriate evidence was assembled and submitted to EHDC to re-register the pub after the five-year period had passed without any notification from the district council. For the Village Inn, which had submitted an official 'intention to sell' notice, the extended moratorium period has been triggered so as to provide the community with the opportunity to consider developing a bid to buy the business. This opportunity runs until 20th November and anyone with any interests in this matter can find out about the procedures involved from the Parish Clerk.

The Covid restrictions meant that it was not possible to arrange any sort of gathering to mark the 75th anniversary of either VE Day in May or VJ Day in August. None of the activities that had been planned could take place but the occasions were not overlooked. On both days the Parish Council Chairman and the Parish Priest, on behalf of the whole community, marked the events (suitably distanced!) at the War Memorial with short speeches and prayers. By VJ Day it was possible for the recently cleaned and restored memorial to be suitably decorated and flanked by eight silent soldiers, each representing one of the men from the parish who lost their lives during the Second World War. Sincere thanks go to Elaine Bray and Karen White for these displays which ensured that there was a fitting focus for people to pause and reflect on the sacrifices made by so many and to recognise everyone who had been involved from this community.

Thanks are also due to other parishioners who have helped with a wide range of projects reported at Parish Council meetings including the commemorative bench near the war memorial, the initiative to obtain a defibrillator, working parties in the Chalk Pits Nature Reserve and restoring the parish map in front of the church. These, and other voluntary efforts, help to retain the community spirit which has always been so strong in Buriton.

Having been selected as one of six parishes in Hampshire to take part in a pilot programme to help improve conditions for important pollinators, the Parish Council will be developing ideas with the County Council and we welcome inputs and ideas of all kinds. It is hoped that the scheme will help to improve and connect local green spaces across Hampshire for species such as bees, butterflies and beetles. These small creatures are vital for flowers, crops and food production. It may be possible to encourage more wildlife gardening, to plant native trees or shrubs, to build bug hotels, to reduce grass mowing and to increase areas of wildflowers. If you would like to take part in this project in any way, please contact anyone on the Parish Council.

Finally we pay tribute to our Parish Clerk (Petra Norris), Hall Manager (Steve Franks) and Hall Cleaner (Darren Francis) for all their continuing hard work and understanding during these strange times.