

## **REPORT OF THE OTTERBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 18 APRIL 2006**

The Chairman, Cllr Michael Warne, welcomed all to the meeting which included representatives from the County and District Councils, Hampshire Constabulary, Langley House Trust and 41 parishioners. The Minutes of the 2005 Annual Assembly had been distributed to those attending and were signed as an accurate record.

Cllr Warne drew the attention of the Meeting to changes in the composition of the Council that had taken place. Mr Peter Walford had retired and Mr David Wilkins had resigned due to work commitments. Mr Keith Smith and Mr Richard Oldham had joined the Council to maintain full complement of Members. Mr Wilkins was thanked for his work in setting up an excellent Parish website and for his continued commitment to maintain it for the future.

At the 2005 Annual Assembly the Parish had heard a presentation from Otterbourne Sports Club setting out their proposals for the further development of the football facilities at Oakwood Recreation Ground. In view of the public reaction to these proposals the Council had indicated that it could not support them and would oppose any planning application. Similar problems had been experienced by several other village clubs and the matter had been referred back to the Football Association.

During 2005 there had been a tragic incident carried out by a resident of Elderfield. This had caused considerable local concern to the village regarding the type of resident accepted for Elderfield. The Council had followed-up with Langley House Trust and also the National Offender Manager at the Home Office to seek explanations and further assurances, but no definitive reply had yet been received. A report from an inquiry carried out by HM Inspectorate of Probation into the level of supervision applied to the offender was imminently awaited and any further action by the Council would be dependent on this.

Mr Ian Stockdale and the Steering Group for the Parish Plan were thanked. Some of the recommendations identified in the Plan had been implemented this year: the youth facilities at the Recreation Ground and two new notice boards. Work would also be started soon on the Village Design Statement under the direction of Mrs Suzanne Hudson.

Finally, Cllr Warne thanked his colleagues on the Council for all their work during the year and also the Parish Clerk.

The Chairman of the Planning and Highways Committee, Cllr Ian Phillips, presented a breakdown of the Planning Applications received during 2005/06 to the meeting. The Planning Committee continued to balance the needs of the village with the individual desires of Parishioners and the views of local people were always welcome. Winchester District Council was currently in consultation on a Draft Statement of Community

Involvement and it was noted that in future more discussion would take place before formal planning applications were submitted.

The proposed development of the recreation ground by the Sports Club had been an important planning consideration during 2005; the views of residents had been welcomed and acted upon and the issue was currently postponed.

Parking problems in Boyatt Lane reported in 2005 were becoming worse. The Council had given considerable attention to this but had been unable to find a resolution without large expenditure and a major redesign of the road layout. The Council would continue to explore various options to try to alleviate this worsening problem.

The cycle path from Otterbourne to Thornden School was currently being completed with the exception of a strip of Common land requiring government approval.

Areas set aside for development were becoming an issue in 2006 and there was also an increased trend towards infill development. New developments were welcome in the village to improve the quality of housing and village economy, but each application would be considered on its merits.

The Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee reported that a number of projects had been initiated. The youth facilities were well underway and although hindered by winter weather and site difficulties it was hoped these would be completed by the end of April.

Damage to the climbing frame had resulted in this part of the children's play area being out of commission for several months. Fencing and gates were also mended and extra bark chippings laid to this area. A lottery project plan was being put together this year with a view to a major refurbishment of the play area in 2007/2008.

A new contractor had been appointed to carry out maintenance of the Recreation Ground, the Sports Pavilion had been painted and a height restriction barrier is to be erected.

Two new dog bins had been installed following requests from the 2005 Annual Assembly. Two new notice boards had also been erected. The replacement of the bus shelter at Poles Lane had been delayed as it had been necessary to redirect the order to replace the brick shelter on the Common which had been unexpectedly demolished to accommodate the new cycle lane.

A grant of £1.6 million had recently been approved for works to the Itchen Navigation towpath in order to renovate the banks, remove overhanging trees and improve access on the Eastleigh/Winchester stretch. Works would commence from 2007 over five years.

Extensive felling of trees had been carried out in Otterbourne Copse. Much of the brushwood was still remaining and there was concern over the effect on the bluebells this year. Southern Water planned to restrict some access to the woods by fencing while maintaining permissive paths.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Cllr Roger Gray presented the audited accounts for y/e 2005 and unaudited accounts for y/e 2006 which had been distributed at the Meeting. It was noted that the audited accounts had been approved without any issues. Reporting on the 2006 accounts, the Council had budgeted an expenditure total of £30,995 and pending receipt of reimbursement of the youth facilities monies and insurance repairs, expenditure had been £30,430 to-date but still required £1000 budgeted towards installation of the Allotment toilet.

The main areas of the budget which had been exceeded during the year were:

- i) dog and litter bins – two new dog bins had been installed and there had been a substantial increase in costs for emptying
- ii) wooden bollards – an ongoing maintenance problem to protect the Common and replacement with concrete bollards would be considered in the future
- iii) insurance for assets and liabilities - due to general increase in petty vandalism occurring in villages which is reflected in renewal premiums
- iv) legal costs – arising from securing the lease to the Recreation Ground for a further 21 years and also advice on parking on the Common.

Regarding finance for 2007, all of the Council's bank accounts had been transferred to maximise interest and a financial risk assessment of accounting procedures had taken place. Value for money was being examined: a new contractor for the recreation ground had been engaged and new internal auditor and alternative insurers were being investigated.

Expenditure for 2006/07 had been budgeted at £35,681 with a precept requirement of £25,693, the balance coming from interest on accounts and a planned reduction in the Council's reserves. The precept requirement for an average Band D household equated to £36.86 per annum or 71p per week.

A Police Report was presented by PC Mark Smith giving the breakdown of crime figures for 2005/06. 58 crimes had been reported which was still comparatively low.

Police Sergeant Curzon briefly reported on the restructuring of the Hampshire Constabulary effective April 2006. Twyford Police station had been retained albeit with reduced cover to 5 officers. The redeployment of officers largely reflected the low crime figures in the area.

Questions arising from Parishioners included concerns about the Cycle track, the use of bark chippings on the path by the transformer, reduction of Parish Reserves, Sports Club rental, floodlight stanchions in the Recreation Ground car park, Sports Club Licence Agreement, tree preservation orders on Poles Lane north side, reporting and analysis of crime, Elderfield.

Mrs J Ayre, Clerk  
18 April 2006

## **Questions arising from Parishioners**

Cycle track - A10m portion had been gained without Council's consent and this would be negotiated at a later date together with the remainder.

Use of chippings on the path by the transformer - This was outside Oakwood Copse and it was thought unlikely that Southern Water would agree to distribute chippings there.

Reduction of Parish Reserves - This was on the advice of the auditor. Reserves were currently running at x3 the precept and would be reduced to x1.5 over the forthcoming 3 years.

Sports Club rental - This showed a reduced amount on the accounts for 2006 vs 2005 and was not due to any reduction in rent but financial year end accounting.

Floodlight Stanchions in the Recreation Ground Car Park – it was noted that parts of these were still present, although the bulk had been removed. Council was continuing to have the remainder removed by the Sports Club.

Sports Club Licence and Rental Agreement – although the new Licence Agreement had not been agreed, the Sports Club was continuing to pay rental under arrangements of the expired Agreement. The Club would be given due consideration, given its association with the village over past years, but the Parish Council would hold for a fair settlement and arbitration would be used if required.

Tree Preservation Orders to Poles Lane north between motorway and Norlands Drive – TPOs existed on many of the mature trees in this line and were subject to consideration by WCC planning department for each application to reduce size. A recent planning application for two new dwellings at Tarka on Norlands Drive, would be carefully considered by the Parish Council with regard to mature trees and TPOs.

Reporting of Crime – It was noted that it was important to report all incidents in order to avoid redeployment of officers and maintain Twyford Police station. A new 101 number had been introduced which would replace the 0845 number later in the year. Email was also encouraged. A new IT system installed had not been a total success, particularly regarding logging of addresses against reported crime and analysis of figures/detection rates.

Elderfield – As far as known incidents reported against residents at Elderfield, other than the Anthony Rice case, were confined within the establishment. Hampshire Constabulary was part of the inquiry into the Anthony Rice incident and would be issuing a household letter drop to the village after the Probation Inspectorate Report if necessary.