



Oving Parish Council, Chichester, West Sussex
Working towards "Quality Parish Council" status as per SALC reference 2009 -01-1

Oving Parish Council – Chair’s Annual Report - 21st May 2015

Introduction:

This year the aim of this report is to give a précis of the activities and hopefully encourage others in the parish to volunteer and become involved in some aspects of helping our community.

Parish Councillors:

Sophie Martins has now been our very effective Clerk for more than a year. She is the only paid member of the Parish Council. We can normally have 9 Councillors and for a short period last year, achieved this target. Unfortunately, Emily McKitterick has decided not to stand for re-election and we thank her for the years of support she has given. Eileen Saunders joined us in November 2014 but has also decided not to continue as a councillor, but has joined the Village Hall Management Committee instead. That left us with 2 vacancies and I’m pleased to report that Paul Southern agreed to stand for election on 7th May. We are now looking to co-opt a further councillor to bring us up to our full strength, so let me know if you are interested in helping. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all councillors who have contributed their time and effort to achieve the various activities covered in the report.

The Council Year:

The Council has met 6 times during the year. The Planning Committee meets in alternate months to consider the increasing number of applications being submitted in our Parish. I’m particularly pleased to tell you that since my last report, Ron Migliorini has done sterling work and completed the **Emergency Plan** for the Parish including a Winter Plan and identified volunteers to make it all happen. Our particular thanks go to our local farmers for their ongoing support. These plans can now be viewed on our Community website.

The following is a summary of the aspects covered by the Council:

Jubilee Hall

Paul Guest has worked incredibly hard as the General Manager for our Hall and once again we thank him for his time and dedication. Ron Migliorini has reviewed the existing Constitution and the draft revision is currently being considered. There may therefore be some changes to Management Committee subsequent to the date of this report. The Hall is there to serve our community and needs to be used by more residents in the parish for your parties or special occasions. The income from numerous fund raising events have assisted with on-going maintenance and improvements to the facility as a viable entity and we thank all the hard working volunteers without whom these events would not happen. Our thanks also go to the Woodhorn Group and John Pitts in particular for his support in bringing his band for a fantastic night of music and fun to raise money for charity. A mandatory reserve is gradually being built up and the Parish Council have again decided to pay for both mortgages for the next 12 months and not take any income from the hall. This should allow further work to be carried out.

Oving Youth Club

This Club is supported by the Parish Council and the Woodhorn Group. We are very grateful to Roger England and Chris Wood for all the hard work they have done for so many years. They are now standing down. We are pleased that Ian and Debbie Mann will be replacing them as Chairman and Treasurer respectively, joining the Management Committee and other members to support the leaders Tracy and Dan in running this club in the future. Attendance is still poor and more participants aged between 9 and 16 are required to bring those coming to the club regularly into at least double figures to ensure that the club's long-term future is sustainable. I'm afraid this is another instance of "use it or lose it".

Recreation Ground and Cycle Track

The council is responsible for these popular facilities and ensuring that they are maintained, safe and that third party liability insurance is in place. Maintenance issues raised by the latest annual RoSPA inspection are currently being addressed. A new wheel-chair friendly picnic table with attached benches has been purchased and installed by the playground.

Amenity Improvements

An oak bench will be installed shortly to replace the broken one, removed for safety reasons. This is being funded by the Parish Council and will be placed on the wide grass verge on High Street opposite the end of Church Lane and will have a plaque to mark the centenary of the First World War and to commemorate those from the parish who lost their lives in both wars. The Oving History Group is making a significant contribution to the Community Project for reinstating the historic Duck Pond in Merston, a project brought to the attention of the Parish Council by Paul Kopeček. The eagle eyed amongst you will have noticed that the pond has been cleared out (by James Langmead) and now has a very smart floating duck house. It will also be planted, have a fence (sponsored by James Langmead), bench and ducks when it is completed in July. The iconic Telephone Box at the bottom end of Highfield Lane is to be refurbished by Sally Waters and her team of helpers. It will be called "The Oving Exchange" as it will be used by residents to swap spare produce and books. We are expecting that Covers Ltd will sponsor the materials for the shelving. The old phone box is owned by the Parish Council and we are making a contribution to cover the cost of paint and purchase of a padlock. We have further funds in the budget and are keen to support other community projects and improve amenities or infrastructure anywhere in the parish.

Community Wardens and Police

Dawn White and Gareth Jones continue to provide an excellent service to our parish and to Tangmere with whom we share their time. Liz Smith is their point of contact with the Council and she holds regular meetings with them, providing input from us on what we would like them to do and ensuring we get the feedback we need. This continues to work well and has improved the service they provide. Their contribution to the safety and well being of the parish is much appreciated. Thanks also go to Richard Moorey, our Police Community Support Officer for his efforts on our behalf.

Travellers

I'm pleased to report that after the problems we experienced with illegal encampments in 2013, I am unaware of any incidents in our Parish in 2014. Hopefully, we will not have problems in the coming years as construction of the Temporary Transit Site at Westhampnett has now been completed and will make it easier for the police to enforce eviction once it has been officially opened.

Neighbourhood Watch

This scheme continues to operate in the Parish with the grateful help of all the appointed Street Coordinators. A couple of these have changed recently to replace those that have moved away. The Police issue a weekly Bulletin of reported incidents. Fortunately, there are few in our Parish but there is no room for complacency. One resident had his petrol cap removed and fuel syphoned from his car with a length of hose stolen from a nearby neighbour! There was one attempted burglary when fortunately nothing was stolen. The Parish Council had 2 Grit Bins stolen – this is the second time this has happened. So I appeal to all residents to continue to be vigilant and to report anything suspicious to the Police on their 101 number or 999 if a crime is in progress.

Community Watch

Whilst the Oving Parish Community Watch Scheme is not a council initiative, we are very grateful to Liz Smith and her team of helpers for the excellent work that they continue to do in the Parish to provide help and mobility to our needy residents. The Council has contributed funds and help during the year for the purchase and installation of Key Safes to facilitate entry to properties in the event of an emergency. The flooding and sewerage problems, that have been ongoing for the last 20 years in the village, have now been resolved by Southern Water. Liz Smith won the 2014 Positive Partnership Working Award from the Hyde Martlett Group for all that she has done over the last 2 years in relation to sorting out the flooding problems to their residents in the St Andrews Close bungalows in Oving.

Oving Parish News & Website

OPN continues to be published three times a year and delivered free to every household in the parish. The quality of this publication improves with every issue and is a tribute to Ron Migliorini and his Editorial & Production Team. They have been producing this “must read” magazine for almost 5 years and have indicated that they intend to “step down” after the Winter 2015 edition. They believe that it is time for “new blood” to produce our magazine. It may sound like a long way off, but I request that anyone who is interested in volunteering should contact one of the team as soon as possible as they play such an important role in keeping parish residents informed. The Community Website is being regularly updated by Sophie Martins and should be used as a source of information between receipt of the OPN issues.

Oving Traffic Lights

In May 2014, the Parish Council submitted a planning application to remove the condition to close the Oving Traffic Lights from the outline consent granted to Hanbury Properties for the Shopwyke Lakes housing development. The validation process required us to engage a consultant to prepare a Transport & Traffic Report funded jointly by the Parish Council and Westbourne House School. Despite the nearly 2000 signatories on a second e-petition, a lot of publicity in the Chichester & Bognor Observers and the support of 8 surrounding parish councils, Bognor Town Council and Chichester City Council (all of which will be affected by the closure of the lights), the Highways Agency have a veto that has prevented our application being considered by the Chichester District Council (CDC) Planning Committee. Extensive correspondence, meetings and negotiations have not been successful and we cannot currently meet the Highways Agency's requirements. We have been advised by CDC that our application will be cancelled in May unless it is withdrawn. The fight will continue despite the prospects of success not looking promising.

The Parish Future:

In a break with tradition, I believe it is now important to also look ahead to the coming years. Groundwork has started for the Shopwyke Lakes development. Permission was granted for the Glenmore Business Park and a planning application has been submitted for a mixed business and retail development on the former MOD site by the A259 Bognor Road Roundabout. In addition we know that Osborne are preparing a planning application for an unknown number of residential properties on the land they own on the northern side of Shopwyke Road adjoining the Shopwyke Lakes development. We also know that Eurequity has plans for an as yet unspecified mixed residential and business development on the jointly owned 90 acre site on the south side of Shopwyke Road. Many of these developments are not included in the Local Plan, but will effectively isolate our parish from Chichester and closure of the Oving Traffic Lights will exacerbate this. Studies are currently underway for the proposed improvements to the A27 Chichester Bypass that is already heavily congested. The availability of finance for such works may need to be approved again by the future government. The 500 houses of the Shopwyke Lakes development will double the population of the parish and although not yet specified, the other developments could treble or quadruple it. There is a possibility that these new developments will be annexed into greater Chichester. However, if not then the Parish Council will have many challenges that it will need to meet to provide facilities and services for such a population growth. Increasing polytunnel and solar panel developments on currently agricultural land plus the prospect of fighting against proposed gravel extraction again just add to the tasks ahead of us. These are developments and issues that I know many current residents oppose. If you do, then it is important that you let the parish council have your views and volunteer to help if possible. We have a volunteer and are again considering preparing a **Neighbourhood Plan** or another **Parish Plan**. We need further volunteers to join working groups set up by the council to tackle these or other specific issues; complaining and doing nothing is not an option! We need your help.

Sjoerd Schuyleman

Chairman, Oving Parish Council

5th May 2015