



STROUD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Monday 11th April 2016
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Parish Councillor Update

Since last years Annual Parish Meeting two new Councillors have joined the Parish Council, Carl Foulston and Oliver Howe.

Your Parish Councillors are:

- Alan Burges, Vice Chairman, with responsibility for Langrish School, bus shelters and planning;
- Ony Rogers, with responsibility for footpaths;
- Carl Foulston is our tree warden with responsibility for the Recreation Ground;
- Dave Paul, with responsibility for Communications (website and newsletters);
- Oliver Howe with responsibility for the Community Forum;
- David McKinney, Chairman, with responsibility for the Parish Plan;
- Liz Foulston is the Parish Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking our County Councillor, Vaughan Clarke, and District Councillor, Nick Drew, for their support during the last year. In particular I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors and the Clerk for their support and work they have done on behalf of the community.

All though not a Parish Councillor I would like to thank Judith Wright who supports the council as a volunteer tree warden.

Finance

The precept, which is the amount of money requested to run the affairs of the Parish, was £12,795 in the financial year 2014/15, and has been a decreased of 0.5% to £12,733 for the forthcoming financial year. The precept covers the salary of the Clerk, hire of halls for Council meetings, training courses for the Clerk and Councillors, mowing contracts for the recreation ground, dog waste bins, cleaning of the bus shelters, play ground safety inspections and for general maintenance and repair of Parish assets. Under the new 'Transparency Code' regulations, further information regarding the Parish Council's accounts are available on the website (www.stroud-pc.gov.uk) or can be requested from the Clerk.

Grants

In the last financial year, the Parish Council have also applied for and have been approved grants to help towards the costs of repainting the bus shelters, recreation ground improvements, replacing the footpath stile on the A272 opposite Finchmead Lane with a kissing gate (to be replaced in June) and improving the footpath between North Stroud Lane and Ramsdean Road. A total of £1,243 has been received in grants from East Hants District Council and £532.50 from Hampshire County Council. The Parish Council are always keen to look for alternative sources of funding to reduce increases in the precept while still making enhancements to the Parish.

Footpaths

The Council regularly reviews the footpaths in the Parish and where able, makes general repairs with the permission of the landowners. As I have mentioned we were successful in obtaining grant funding and made some resurfacing improvements to part of Footpath 703 (which if any of you try and walk to Langrish School from North Stroud Lane you will know is very muddy). Cllr Rogers is in discussion with other local landowners concerning trying to improve access over some particularly high stiles in the Parish.

Planning

The Council reviews every planning application submitted in the Parish. The Council would encourage anyone who is considering submitting an application to engage in early dialogue with the Council.

The Council's role is only akin to that of a local planning officer and can only support or object to an application as to how closely or not it meets local planning policy guidelines, including our own Parish Plan. In the last year there have been 12 applications.

Meetings and Forums

Members of the Council attend various forums and meetings. These include the Hampshire Association of Local Council meetings, South Downs National Park Authority meetings and the East Hampshire District Council Community Forum for Petersfield and the surrounding villages.

Littering in the village

Litter is an unpleasant nuisance and a topic that has been discussed at recent Community Forum meetings. I would like to thank Cllr Rogers and all the volunteers who carried out this litter picking exercise, an annual event that this year saw 20 villagers taking place.

Lengthsman scheme

Parish Lengthsmen were deployed in Hampshire until the late 1960s, carrying out routine maintenance works across their allocated parishes. Lengthsmen were given lengths of highway to maintain and were expected to do everything necessary to keep 'their' sections of road up to scratch. Lengthsmen generally worked alone, using hand tools.

Stroud is joining other local parishes by sharing a lengthman and Hampshire County Council has given Stroud a grant for £1000 worth of work to be carried out in the parish. The work will include cutting hedges belonging to the parish, grass cutting and other minor works as appropriate. If this is a success and financially sustainable, the council will look to see if this arrangement could be made more permanent.

Traffic speeds in the village

The speed of traffic through our 30mph village is at the front of our minds when we think of young children and families negotiating the narrow pavements and crossing the A272 to and from school. We are hopeful jointly with Hampshire County Council will be able to make it safer for us during the first half of this year. I am not going to say anymore on this subject as this is a main agenda item, but I wanted to say a special thank you to Angharrad Snow for all her hard work on behalf of our community for the work she has done to secure some significant road improvements that you will hear about this evening.

David McKinney

Chairman of Stroud Parish Council.