



Chairman's report April 2021/March 2022

Firstly, I would like to thank my predecessor Cllr. Steve Porter for the many years of dedicated service he gave to Wootton Bridge Parish Council. It is reassuring to know that he is still around and still helps WBPC when needed.

Secondly, I would like to welcome new and returning councilors following the elections of 2021. All of you have contributed during this year but I would like to particularly thank my Vice-Chair Cllr. Port for her support, often un-noticed throughout the year.

Thirdly I would like to thank the staff, particularly our Clerk Liz Kingston. It is not always easy when there is a change of regime, but she has supported this new council superbly. Hopefully soon we can bring in the extra support she desperately needs so that together we can move forward to the next level.

Finally, I need to mention the passing of former Cllr. Ken Morris. Ken was a personal friend and his passing is a great loss. I respected Ken greatly and my thoughts are with his family.

On a similar note one of the first things this council undertook was to erect a bench in Ken's memory within the Parish. After much discussion and problems, it will soon be installed at the front of Tesco. Emblazoned with two footballers representing Ken's two teams; the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth, it will be a fitting memorial for years to come.

The first of what will likely prove to be several phases of improvements has already been completed on the recreation ground. Following complaints last year WBPC undertook a review of bush and hedge cutting and it was decided to change the way we had it done. This costs more but should really be seen as an investment in the environment of the area. The second phase is the upgrading of the pathway which has been agreed on by the council. Works on this should start soon. There are still other areas to look at including tree replacements, wildflower areas, toilets and the play area and these will be addressed as time and budget allows.

One thing that has struggled is Party in the Park. A lack of volunteers has scuppered this year's event but I am hopeful that we could do something in the future. It was popular with residents so we should not write

it off completely although the volunteer issue will remain a problem.

I am pleased to say that another initiative to bear fruit this year was the opening of the Post Office in Brannons. This has not been without issue and we have worked to overcome them as they present themselves. The use of Brannons is another area where we can start to provide better services to the community. It is a great asset that we can use to help many people. In order to do so we must formalize the Post Office part as it seems they are with us for the long term due to the lack of other commercial options.

Planning has been a significant issue this past year. Enforcement is a problem and there have been applications put forward we would have rather not seen. I thank Cllr. Abraham for speaking on behalf of WBPC at the recent Planning Committee against the proposals at 69 Station Road. Even with the previous two IW Council Cabinet Members for Planning speaking against it (Barry and I) it still got through. This shows the situation on the island at present. The next big Planning fight will be the proposed gravel extraction at Palmers Farm which WBPC will look at shortly.

In the recent budget round it was felt that an increase in the WBPC precept was required. While I felt that the IW Council should have not taken the full 1.99% available to them I felt that WBPC was right to increase theirs. The WBPC precept has not risen significantly for seven years during which many new services have been taken on and one off expenses incurred. This has so far been covered by efficiency and reserves but that can only be done for so long. Our budget is small and things like inflation will hit us hard as we try and improve what we do for our residents. There is no shame in increasing our precept alongside increased services such as the Post Office, Recreation Ground improvements and so on. People want to see value for money above all else and I am confident that going forward we are able to do this.

This year's activity was still set against a backdrop of Covid-19 restrictions. I know that several parts of Community Support, started during lockdown are still in place with individuals still supporting the

vulnerable and disabled and enabling a quality of life. On behalf of the recipients of help I would like to thank these volunteers for their efforts.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LOCAL MEMBER FOR WOOTTON BRIDGE 2022

When elected in 2021 I promised to take action on four main issues:

The first was services in the village. I promised to work with the Parish Council to provide a Post Office. This is now open every Wednesday morning in Brannon's next to the Parish Office.

The second was Covid-19 Community support and lack of control over the ferries during lockdown. I continue to provide community support through my role as a Councillor and I am spearheading work on the IW Council to see if more control can be obtained locally over ferries and other issues.

The third was the state of our roads. I have made progress regarding the worst, New Road. For the first time ever I have been able to get all interested parties including the IW Council, Island Roads, businesses and residents groups around one table. Work on reducing the speed limit to 20mph on our residential roads will begin in earnest this year, although I have raised it several times with both Island Roads and the IW Council. I have also supported Gravel Pit Road by ensuring signage is put up there whenever Park Road is shut.

The fourth and final issue was housing developments. As I promised I have continued to argue against developments that are detrimental to our village. I have represented these views to my fellow Councillors, to IW Council staff and in public at the Planning Committee. I have also been active in supporting the WAGE campaign which opposes gravel being quarried at Palmers Farm.

During the next year I will continue work on all these projects but particularly the scarcity of Doctors at our surgery, to continue opposition to the plans for a gravel quarry at Palmers Farm and will start a full campaign to introduce the 20mph limit.

Daryll Pitcher
Chair and Isle of Wight Local Member

WOOTTON BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE (HELP AND INFORMATION CENTRE (HIC))

The Parish Council office continues to be well used. Issues we deal with are very varied, from potholes in the road to coastal erosion. The office has been open for 19 years this November and it has become an established part of our village life. We are proud of all the very positive feedback received from our customers.

The office provides us with a very good way of communicating with the village and is invaluable for carrying out our consultation exercises. These exercises are vital in the process for securing grant funding.

Our facilities include:-

- The Beat Officer and PCSO are always calling in either to hold a surgery or pick up messages.
- The Environmental Officers pop into the office to collect messages.
- CCTV coverage of the square and the toilets.
- Photocopying and laminating service.

We continue to provide assistance where possible on general issues including:-

- Advice on local issues.
- Signposting of services.
- Comprehensive walks leaflets.

HIC OPENING TIMES:-

Parish Council

Monday – Closed

Tues and Wed 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

Thursday – Closed

Friday 9.00am – 2.00 pm

Beat Officer & PCSO

Messages can be left

Liz Kingston, Clerk



PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS 21/22

The following report shows the income and expenditure for 2021/2022, which is waiting to be audited by PKF Littlejohn LLP on behalf of The National Audit Office. No matters giving cause for concern came to the attention of the Internal Auditor and we are waiting to hear from the external auditor. Local government electors have the opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts and have the right to attend to the auditor and make objections to the accounts or any item in them. Full details on how this can be done are posted on the Village Notice Board and at the Parish Council office prior to each annual audit, usually in the summer.

The council tax precept for 2021/2022 is £70.075 and represents approx. £50.53 per annum per household at band D or 97p per week.

Any questions or a request for copies of the accounts can be directed to me at the Parish Council office.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2022			
31 March 21		Current year end 31 March 2022	
INCOME		£	
71,000	Precept	Precept	70,075
185	Interest on investments/bank interest	Interest on investments/bank interest	57
150	Donations	Donations	75
600	St Marks PCC/Newport PC Grass Cutting	St Marks PCC/Newport PC Grass Cutting	600
1	Photocopying	Photocopying	6
0	HIC Income	HIC Income	83
0	Events	Events	0
5,000	Covid Grant	Covid Grant	0
7,850	Gravel Pit Road Residents	Gravel Pit Road Residents	0
84,786		TOTAL INCOME	70,896
EXPENDITURE		£	
11,042	Public Conveniences	Public Conveniences	9,002
31,577	General Administration incl. salaries	General Administration incl. salaries	34,105
70	Events	Events	608
7,020	Gravel Pit Road Residents	Gravel Pit Road Residents	810
1,860	S137 payments	S137 payments	359
2,072	Help and Information Centre	Help and Information Centre	3,235
7,862	Grass cutting/Recreation Ground	Grass cutting/Recreation Ground	7,719
1,872	Environmental Officers	Environmental Officers	2,184
1,890	Churchyard maintenance	Churchyard maintenance	1,950
842	Christmas tree	Christmas tree	539
0	Post Office	Post Office	693
0	Election Expenses	Election Expenses	24
1,288	Village Square maintenance	Village Square cleaning & maintenance	1,407
0	Capital Expenditure	Capital Expenditure	6,331
67,395		TOTAL EXPENDITURE	68,966
GENERAL FUND		£	
126,015	Balance at 1 April 2020	Balance at 1 April 2021	143,406
84,786	Add total income	Add total income	70,896
210,801			214,302
-67,395	Deduct total expenditure	Deduct total expenditure	-68,966
143,406	BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2021	BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2022	145,336

GENERAL INFORMATION

PARISH COUNCILLORS FROM 1 APRIL 2021:-

Daryll Pitcher	Chairman
Barbara Port	Vice Chairman
Barry Abraham	
Linda Pitcher	
Trish Evans	
John Ward	took office in May
Barrie Hailstone	took office in May
Dave Burley	
Lee Lemon	took office in May
Christopher Cory	took office in May
Steve Porter	left office in May
Pete Mundell	left office in May

OFFICERS:-

Liz Kingston	Parish Clerk
Gordon Tutton	Financial Assistant

MEETINGS

The Parish Council usually meets on the third Tuesday in every month except August when no meeting is held. We meet at 7.00pm in the Old School and members of the public and press are welcome to attend. Members of the public can participate in meetings and speak on any agenda item. There is also an Open Forum at the start of every meeting where issues can be raised that are not included on the agenda. Notices and the agendas are posted on the village notice boards, on the web site www.woottonbridge.org.uk and at the Parish Council office. Sometimes extra meetings are held to deal with urgent matters such as planning.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Additionally, there is a statutory Annual Parish Meeting held during April. The Annual Parish Meeting provides another opportunity for residents to come along and address the Parish Councillors or just to have a say on matters of interest or concern. Reports are given by the Parish Council Chairman, Clerk, Environmental Officers and the Isle of Wight Councillor.

PARISH COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

The following attendance record is in respect of the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and is in respect of the Parish Councillors who were in office during 2020/21.

Of the 12 scheduled monthly meetings held, Parish Councillor attendance was as follows:-

Barry Abraham 9	Trish Evans 12	Linda Pitcher 12	Lee Lemon 8
John Ward 9	Barrie Hailstone 11	Daryll Pitcher 12	Barbara Port 9
Christopher Cory 10	Dave Burley 8	Steve Porter 2	Pete Mundell 1

OFFICE OPENING TIMES

Parish Council Office opening times: 9.00am to 2.00pm on Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday. Closed all day on Monday & Thursday.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS

Parish Councillors/officers can be contacted at the Wootton Bridge Help and Information Centre on 884555 or by email at clerk@woottonbridge.org.uk

Remember that your Parish Councillors give their time for free because they care about the village; they receive no payments or expenses. Also, much of what we achieve is thanks to the many volunteers who help us in all manner of ways. Together we have raised thousands of pounds worth of grant funding for village regeneration projects. It is very rewarding to work together and to see so many projects come to fruition. If you would like to become involved or would like more information, please contact any one of your Parish Councillors or the Parish Clerk on 884555.

Questions relating to this report can be addressed to any one of your Parish Councillors or the Parish Clerk at the Parish Council Office in Brannon Way.

This report is also available on the Parish Council's web site at
www.woottonbridge.org.uk



Wootton Bridge
PARISH COUNCIL

