

# WOOTTON BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

## Chairman's report April 2018/March 2019

We have completed another busy year for the Parish Council and I would firstly like to thank Liz Kingston (our Clerk), as well as Gordon and Madge for their valuable work at the office in Brannon Way. I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for their hard work, dedication and support throughout the year.

We continue to comment on an increasing number of planning applications and always reference them against our local Housing Needs Assessment, which has been updated in the past twelve months. It is fair to say that many new build plans do not fit our needs, but we will always push to support the provision of 'affordable' housing where appropriate. Please remember that the Parish Council is a statutory consultee and does not make planning decisions. We do, of course, hope that the Planning Authority will always seriously consider our views, which represent our residents.

I am pleased to report that the first stage of the reconstruction of New Road has been completed, although it was clearly a much bigger challenge than anticipated. The Parish Council funded additional signage to re-inforce the 10mph speed limit in New Road, but I appreciate that this has not made a significant difference. We look forward to receiving Island Roads proposals for the next stage of works between St. Edmunds Walk and the Darwin Properties section. Following on from the tragic accident on the bridge, there has been a justifiable call and campaign to have a pedestrian crossing installed. Island Roads have completed one traffic survey and have undertaken to do another one in the Spring (!) before making their recommendations. We need to be mindful that by gaining one crossing on the bridge, we may lose another one in the High Street which could be unpopular.

Following the Parish Council's decision to not fund a Christmas tree in 2018, we are extremely grateful to the local businesses (prompted by Ben Williams of Wootton Estate Agents) who stepped in to the breach with most of the funding.

I am grateful to our Vice-Chair, Carole Walton for pushing an agenda to support the less well-off in our community and to encourage us to have a robust forward plan of potential benefits that we can deliver for our residents.

We have given grant support to the Footprint Trust and I am pleased to report that they have directly helped 15 residents in 8 households and have helped them to make combined annual energy savings of around £1200. They have also paid for a number of items to help those in greatest need.

Cllr. Ross Edmunds has taken on the task of gathering local opinion on a number of potential improvements at the Rec / Doorstep Green. This includes re-instating a public toilet, re-surfacing the current path to ensure more accessibility for prams, pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters. The path could be extended around the perimeter of the rec to encourage more access and may also include a Green Gym. There has been a positive response to the survey and Ross is now discussing grant funding with Sport England.

The partnership between the Parish Council and WBCIC continues to bear fruit with the development of community and youth offerings in the Old School building, along with the tea room adjacent to the office in Brannon Way. These two facilities satisfy very different needs and all age groups, which I feel is of great importance.

We continue to maintain the public toilets in Brannon Way, grass cutting and grounds maintenance in public spaces in the village, contribute towards the upkeep of the Doorstep Green and play area, contract in an IWC Environmental Officer and provide an unofficial 'help centre' and contact point at the Parish office for local residents. We have currently declined the opportunity to take on the green space in Mary Rose Avenue as we would not be permitted to do anything with it, but would pick up the costs of maintenance.

Party in the Park will not take place this year following the PC's decision to make it and the Christmas Fair bi-annual events on an alternating basis. This is mainly due to a lack of volunteers.

The future direction of our country is very uncertain and I am sure that we will be called upon much more to fill gaps in local funding and services as the economy adjusts to the new order. We need to be prepared to do this and be realistic about what we can and cannot do for the people we represent.

Steve Porter  
Chairman WBPC



Councillor Barry Abraham Isle of Wight Council report.

This year has again been a busy one for me in my Cabinet position with responsibilities for Planning and Housing.

Through the last year working with officers the local plan review has been taking place, the strategic land availability assessment (SHLAA) took place throughout the summer months and over 500 sites were looked at with around 400 sites making it through to the consultation phase with two big sites being in Wootton, the rest of the sites being spread right across the island. The consultation took place in December and January and the period was extended at the request of Town and Parish Councils to better enable them to provide comments. At present the feedback is being looked at and will be taken into account when the final draft is consulted on.

Last year I raised concern at the lack of affordable housing being delivered on the island and the IWC had to find a way to make this happen especially at affordable rents significantly below market levels. In November I took a paper to the Cabinet proposing that the council set up its own housing company to build and acquire housing for the needs of islanders. I am pleased to say that the Cabinet unanimously agreed to the proposals. The council will shortly be announcing how the company will work and I am pleased to say by the end of this year the first houses will be built using modular construction.

In my role as the Cllr for Wootton Bridge I have dealt with a number of resident's issues, some minor concerns that have been easily dealt with and some that are not so easy and quite complex, there are some issues that are ongoing and it feels like Groundhog Day dealing with some them.

Thank you as always to Liz for her work and reminding me when I forget to do something, although I do write things down these days.

As always I try to work with the PC the sustainable transport policy has started to help get 106 payments included in planning conditions and will hopefully make Wootton a more sustainable and healthier place to live.

### **Councillor Barry Abraham**

#### **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 17 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	Mon 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. Tues and Thurs 10.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. Wednesday CLOSED and Friday 10.00am – 5.30pm
Beat Officer & PCSO	First Tuesday in month 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. or messages can be left

Liz Kingston  
Clerk

## Parish Council accounts.

The following report shows the income and expenditure for 2018/2019, which have been audited by PKF Littlejohn LLP on behalf of The National Audit Office. No matters giving cause for concern came to the attention of either the Internal Auditor or the External Auditor and the books were successfully signed off by PKF Littlejohn LLP on 27 August 2019. 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 2018/2019 is £70,269 and represents approx. £49.12 per annum per household at band D or 94p per week.

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

<b>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2019</b>			
31 March 18		Current year end 31 March 2019	
<b>INCOME</b>		<b>£</b>	
71,000	Precept	Precept	70,269
39	Interest on investments/bank interest	Interest on investments/bank interest	191
0	Donations	Donations	826
600	St Marks PCC/Newport PC Grass Cutting	St Marks PCC/Newport PC Grass Cutting	600
1,158	Sale of Garden Waste Sacks	Sale of Garden Waste Sacks	0
821	HIC Income	HIC Income	911
854	Events	Events	749
74,472		<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>73,546</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>£</b>	
7,209	Public Conveniences	Public Conveniences	7,659
30,102	General Administration incl. salaries	General Administration incl. salaries	30,656
2,265	Events	Events	1,202
240	Capital schemes (Play Area & Signs)	Capital schemes (Play Area & Signs)	257
725	S137 payments	S137 payments	3,824
4,640	Help and Information Centre	Help and Information Centre	4,730
7,662	Grass cutting/Recreation Ground	Grass cutting/Recreation Ground	7,213
2,080	Environmental Officers	Environmental Officer	2,080
1,575	Churtyard maintenance	Churtyard maintenance	2,100
808	Christmas tree/Queens Birthday	Christmas Tree	877
809	Garden Waste Sacks	Housing Needs/Sustainability Reports	7,250
0	Training	Training	35
2,133	Election Expenses	Election Expenses	0
3,812	Youth Club	Youth Club/Grants	6,351
64,060		<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>74,234</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>			
127,019	Balance at 1 April 2017	Balance at 1 April 2018	137,431
74,472	Add total income	Add total income	73,546
<b>201,491</b>			<b>210,977</b>
-64,060	Deduct total expenditure	Deduct total expenditure	-74,234
137,431	<b>BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2018</b>	<b>BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2019</b>	<b>136,743</b>

## GENERAL INFORMATION.

### PARISH COUNCILLORS FROM 1 April 2018:-

Ken Morris  
Steve Porter                      Chairman  
Barry Abraham  
Peter Mundell  
Daryll Pitcher  
Linda Pitcher  
Carol Walton                      Vice Chairman  
Barbara Port  
Ross Edmunds  
Mike Waddleton

### OFFICERS:-

Liz Kingston      Parish Clerk  
Madge Reeves    Assistant 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 are able to 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](http://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. Additionally reports are given by the Parish Council Chairman, Clerk, Environmental Officers and the Isle of Wight Councillor

### Parish Councillors attendance at meetings.

The following attendance record is in respect of the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 and is in respect of the Parish Councillors who were in office during 2018/19.

Of the 11 scheduled monthly meetings held, Parish Councillor attendance was as follows:-

Barry Abraham	10	Carol Walton	10	Linda Pitcher	11		
Ken Morris	6	Peter Mundell	10	Steve Porter	9		
Daryll Pitcher	6	Barbara Port	9	Mike Waddleton	7	Ross Edmunds	10

### Office opening times.

Parish Council Office opening times: 10.00am to 1.00pm on Mondays. 10.00 am to 1.30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays. 10.00am to 5.30pm on Fridays. Closed all day on Wednesday

### **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](mailto: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](http://www.woottonbridge.org.uk)