

MINUTES OF THE LONGPARISH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE COMMUNITY HALL ON MONDAY 11 APRIL 2011 AT 7PM.

PRESENT

Parish Councillors: Christopher Duxbury (Chairman), Phil Harris, Jonathan Frere, Karen-Marie Dinesen, Martin Lampard and Tony Humphrey (Clerk)

TVBC Councillor Jim Neal

Parishioners and Speakers: Maggie Barber, Mary Jo Darrah, Graham Darrah, Ed Gairdner, Barbara Duxbury, Helen Mehaffey, John Scott, Terry Hemming, John Ellicock, Jenny Jolliffe, Alix Bremridge, Tom Bremridge and Jonathan Evans.

10/01 APOLOGIES

Jeremy Barber, Christian Dryden, Toby Cooper and Natasha Rouse.

10/02 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF 22 APRIL 2010

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 22 Mar 10 were approved and signed at the PC meeting on 22 Apr 10. They were also accepted by Parishioners attending this meeting

10/03 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

10/04 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting, which every English Parish is obliged to hold. It is open to all registered electors in the Parish, convened by the Parish Council and Chaired by the Chair of the PC - and must be held between 1 March and 1 June.

We have a busy evening ahead as we need to hold our monthly PC meeting immediately after this APM. We have a number of planning applications to deal with, so I am hoping that we will finish this meeting by 8.30, - which is about par for the course.

We have prepared the agenda based on that of last year – a series of reports from the Council and other village organisations on the activities of the last twelve months, followed by an open forum. The only exception to this is that the accounts to be reported on are those for the year ending 31 Mar 10, being the latest set of fully audited accounts available.

Whilst preparing for the meeting, I realised that, for some reason, the Longparish Community Association that does not provide a report; and I hope that we can rectify that next year. Also, now that the LCA has been up and running for several years, we need to look and see if there are any overlaps, such as perhaps the New Villagers Event that need reviewing. I would also be interested in any suggestions for improving the subject matter for future Annual Parish Meetings.

So, any way, this is your chance to hear what the PC and the many volunteers in the village have been doing and to ask questions and raise any topics of concern; and my opportunity to thank all those who work so hard for the village.

We are going to run through the reports and ask you to leave any questions until the Open Forum; and, if there are any that we can't answer, for one reason or another, we will decide how best to deal with it outside of the meeting.

One last thing, the proposed Localism Bill was published on 13 Dec 10; it aims to shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. However, although much has been published by way of briefing notes and 'essential guides', little has yet been said as to how it is all going to work at village level in practice. What does filter down often seems to change the following week; but when we do have something definitive, we will put an article in Hill & Valley.

10/05 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

See Appendix A for Christopher Duxbury's report.

10/06 FINANCIAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 2010

Copies of the Accounts were distributed and a Financial Report was given by Jonathan Frere. See Appendix B.

10/07 TVBC COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

See Appendix C for Jim Neal's report.

10/08 SCHOOL REPORT

See Appendix D for Helen Mehaffey's report

10/09 COMMUNITY HALL

See Appendix E for Maggie Barber's report.

10/10 VILLAGE HALL

See Appendix F for John Scott's report

10/11 PLAYGROUP REPORT

See Appendix G for Ed Gairdner's report.

10/12 PARISHIONERS COMMENTS

Jonathan Evans and Graham Darrah thanked the PC for their efforts in maintaining the Footpaths and Open Spaces respectively.

Ed Gairdner made the point that Village clean-up days are always held on a Saturday morning and he is unable to help because he has young children to look after. He asked if the Council could consider an alternative time. The Chairman agreed to put it to a future Council meeting for discussion.

Phil Harris suggested that as a number of children attend Testbourne school we should invite the school to attend the Annual Parish Meeting. The Chairman agreed and would investigate.

10/13 CLOSURE

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 11 APRIL 2011

INTRODUCTION

1. This report covers the period since the last APM in March 2010. It has been another busy year for the Parish Council; nothing particularly out of the ordinary but there's a great deal of routine work simply to preserve and improve the village facilities that we all enjoy, as well as the activities that bring life to them.

2. I must therefore start by thanking all my PC colleagues and everyone in the village who contributes to community life [and there are many with wide ranging skills and talents] for all the time and effort they give towards making Longparish one of the best places to live in the Test Valley. I am delighted that all bar one of the present team have been nominated to serve again. Chris Dewbury has decided to stand down after some 11/12 years; thanks to him for all he has contributed.

3. We need also to record thanks for support from Hampshire County Council, Test Valley Borough Council, the Test Valley Association of Parish Councils and the Hampshire Association of Local Councils. Our County Councillor, Andrew Gibson, has also managed to attend several of our meetings despite a very busy schedule, and provided much support particularly in relation to the repair of the roads and winter gritting. Our local Test Valley Borough Councillor, Jim Neal, is a regular attender at our meetings and has provided advice, particularly on Planning.

STANDING ORDERS

4. The Council has reviewed its Standing Orders against a new model format produced by the National Association of Local Councils [NALC] last year; and here I must thank Jonathan Frere for undertaking the review and doing all the invaluable donkey work. In doing this, our aim was threefold:

- **To Reduce the Workload, where possible, and keep everything as simple as possible.** In this connection, we decided to appoint working parties instead of committees, with one exception – Planning. The word committee has legalistic connotations in this context and working parties simplifies matters and is more appropriate as their main role is to make recommendations for endorsement by the Council.
- **Code of Conduct and Election Procedure:** To embody the existing Code of Conduct into the Standing Orders; and include a section on the election and co-option procedures of candidates onto the Council.
- **To Encourage Public Participation and Openness.** Meetings will be open to the public, as they always have been, unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions, and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda - the period of time for public participation and the conduct of any such period are at the Chairman's discretion.

COMMUNICATIONS

5. The Parish Council uses three main ways to communicate with the village:

- **Hill & Valley:** Mary Jo Darrah edits our Hill & Valley pages - how lucky we are to have such a useful parish magazine - and the Council pays for a copy to be delivered free to each household. Brief reports of our Council meetings are included each month. Thanks too, to the magazine distributors – Mollie Deane, Christian Dryden, Phil Harris, Gina Snowden, Gloria Goodliffe, Rosie Lowry, Corinne and Chris Bowman, Eila Chamberlen and Mary Jo Darrah;

and a special mention to Jim and Joyce Morgan who covered North Acre for 16 years; their round has now been taken over by Corinne and Chris.

- **Village Website:** There is a huge amount of information about the village on our website at www.longparish.org.uk, which earns many compliments. David and Fiona Gould do a great deal of work on the website; the sort of behind the scenes work which doesn't show but is very much appreciated. David has made proposals for updating the site, which are supported by the Council [see discussion paper in the Communications Committee minutes dated 30 Sep 10].
- **Notice Boards:** There are six notice boards [the principal ones being at Acre Stores and in Forton Street].

6. The 2011 edition of the Village Handbook by Mary Jo Darrah and co-author Paul Knipe has just been published. With its history of the village, descriptions of the wildlife and many other points of interest, the Handbook is a resource which both residents and visitors will find useful and informative.

7. David Hopwood [68 North Acre] took over the role of Village Correspondent for the Andover Advertiser last November.

8. The Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council jointly organise a successful 'New Villagers' event. This year's event, the eighth, will be on Thursday 12 May. If you have new neighbours, do let Gina Snowden know and please bring them along.

PLANNING

9. One of the main functions of the Council is to comment on planning applications and notifications; and in the last 12 months we have dealt with 42 applications [including 18 tree notifications that are required within a conservation area]. I'd like to thank Phil Harris our Chair of Planning, who has done a great deal of research into the planning rules and interpreting of plans, which has helped us considerably in putting together our comments; and Graham Darrah who, as Tree Warden, advises the PC on each such notification. Very few applications have been contentious; where possible, the Council has worked with applicants to modify them where it has felt they might be improved; and where necessary we have attended TVBC planning committee meetings to explain the Parish Council's views.

10. Planning is an ever moving feast and we have also benefitted from two evening Workshops by Paul Jackson [TVBC Head of Planning] – the first one on the System and the second on 4 Apr on Enforcement.

11. There are a number of outstanding planning related matters that I should also record.

- **Shooting School:** on 17 Apr last year there were a number of complaints about the noise from the shooting school; and on 7 Jun, Jonathan Frere and myself met Mr and Mrs Faulds and TVBC Environmental Health representatives with the aim of establishing more effective dialogue and communication, clarifying issues relating to the planning conditions and to see what practical measures could be taken to mitigate the noise of shooting. The meeting was very successful, the outcome being published in the Jul 10 issue of Hill & Valley.
- **Settlement Boundary Review:** Last year, we reported on TVBC proposals for 'village envelopes' and held an open forum for parishioners. We think it likely that the concept will have only a modest effect on our village and will keep parishioners informed as ideas develop. During the first Planning Workshop, Paul Jackson had stressed the importance of giving full and careful consideration to the recommendations of the Settlement Boundary Review when it is circulated.
- **Mineral and Waste Plan Consultation:**

The Council responded to the recent consultation on the new Mineral and Waste Plan on the portal and followed up with an email setting out some specific points concerning the Cutty Brow proposal.

The Council strongly opposed the inclusion of the site in the Plan, but welcomed the fact that the consultation document appeared to address many of the concerns raised previously. However, there was no mention of the use of a single approved crossing over the Middleway or of the requirement to screen the workings from the Middleway as far as is possible.

The Council also felt that it would prefer a shorter time frame in order to minimise the impact on the village; - that some form of financial compensation should be made (perhaps in the form of a small royalty per tonne of sand and gravel extracted) to compensate the village for the disruption and loss of tranquillity which would be caused by the operation of the site; - and that as a broader concern Longparish's proximity to the A303 and A34 makes it increasingly vulnerable to potential developments attracted by the good communications, and the feeling that the rural character of the village was already being undermined by the presence of existing facilities [*waste transfer site at Longparish Station, recycling site at Owl's Lodge Farm, metal reclamation site at Bullington Cross etc*]. We will pursue all these concerns and highlight the cumulative impact rather than just looking at individual proposals in isolation.

- **Solar Energy Farm at Owls Lodge Farm:** Representatives of AAE Renewables Plc gave a presentation on the proposed solar farm development at Owls Lodge Farm; it was preceded by an exhibition at the Plough and attended by approx 40 members of the public. The Council has now received a planning application for comment. The general emerging view is that the visual impact would be low and that renewable energy projects should be encouraged.

OPEN SPACES

12. One of the Council's main and most time-consuming functions, and indeed the major cost centre, is to administer the 'Open Spaces' in the village, including the cemetery*, the village hall car park, the three bus shelters*, the football field, the play ground, the allotments, the village green near the long bridge, the common land at East Aston Common, the common land near Larkwhistle Farm*, the common land [old chalk pit] near Vale Farm* and the common land at the Common* [off Southside Road] that the Council maintains as a pocket nature reserve. The sites marked with an asterisk are owned by the Council and this year we took up an offer from the Land Registry to have them registered formally; this actually took a good deal of research through old deeds and minutes in the Hampshire Record Office, particularly with regard to the cemetery, which has been the subject of five deeds of gift.

13. Our thanks here go to Jeremy Barber, who, after nine years as Parish Council Chairman has continued to Chair the Open Spaces working party and put in an incredible amount of time and effort to maintain some of these facilities – and I have heard nothing but compliments about the results. In doing this, he is ably supported by Paul Knipe [*as a contractor and a volunteer*], Andy Smith, Martin Hulme and Laura Wearn [*who inspects the playground*], Jenny Jolliffe [*for arranging the clean up days*], the Raymond Brown Group for supplying a skip. Nor must we forget all those that turned up to do the work – and on the last occasion we also benefitted from two tractors from Vitacress and Lower Mill, driven by Michael Meaden and Michael Blocksidge respectively.

Tree Work:

14. We have managed to undertake a good deal of necessary tree work during the course of the year at the old chalk pit near Vale Farm and the village hall car park. The car park trees look much better and it is a relief to have removed the branches that have previously needed annual attention because of the electricity wires going through them. A thank you to Nigel Goodliffe who helped Paul Knipe with this work. I should also mention that John Metcalf at Church Farmhouse has felled the overbearing cypress hedge and replaced it with laurel, which is a great improvement.

15. Permission has also been given for further work at the cemetery, including the felling of the moribund beech in the rear hedge, the smaller of the cherries (which is very shaky) and the large cypress and reduce the crown on the larger cherry by up to 30%.

The Cemetery:

16. Thank you also to David Gould for administering the cemetery as Clerk to the Burial Board; and to Clive Kent who has made a really good job of the cemetery for some years and it is good to see the work going to someone from the village.

17. Although the war memorial was cleaned again before Remembrance Sunday and looks good, there is some outstanding pointing and other repairs required to prevent deterioration. Some of the fences, too, require attention and we are obliged to have this work undertaken to meet the terms of the original deeds of gift.

The Play Ground:

18. Full refurbishment and re-cladding of the skate ramp was completed during the year; and the surface was also renewed.

19. The Council is in discussion with a group of young mothers with a view to improving the equipment available for children under three years of age *[a direct consequence of the increase of young families moving into the village]*. We need to work out what new equipment to get, get it priced and seek a grant. All this will take a while, especially as grants are only awarded quarterly.

The Football Field:

20. A local football team continues to use the pitch which is good news. Their rent helps pay for the maintenance. The pitch is also used by the school children for their running club. Regrettably, dog mess remains a problem and any further suggestions as to how to reduce this problem would be very welcome.

East Aston Common:

21. East Aston Common is an outstanding matter. We have not yet heard whether the order restricting access by dogs to some parts of the common is going ahead. You will recall that the Natural England proposal to exclude dogs *[not people]* from specific parts of the common, initially for 2 years, is concerned with the management of the common and improving the SSSI, not changing its overall status as common land, so that work can be undertaken to start restoring the SSSI's condition/habitat to that for which it was designated originally; and specifically to protect the interests of breeding otters.

22. The Council decided to support the NE proposal, as representing a reasonable balance between the interests of public access and wildlife conservation; and published an article in the July edition of Hill & Valley explaining the proposal and how people could comment individually if they wished.

FOOTPATHS

23. We have around 20 miles of footpaths and we are lucky that all the landowners in the village take their responsibilities for footpaths seriously and look after them well – thank you.

24. Some of our footpaths are regularly maintained by volunteers who have adopted them – Allan Clear, Paul Knipe, Patrick Beresford, Graeme Francis, Phil Harris, Matt Beal, Martin Lampard and Jeremy Barber – our thanks go to them all. Allan Clear has looked after the spinal path from North Acre to Sugar Lane for many years and kept it mown and tidy, but has now decided to retire from the role following a setback in his health. He has done a brilliant job and The Council and the many users of the path take this opportunity to record our special thanks to him.

25. The new footpaths on the Testbourne estate have proved popular. The new permissive path from near Whitchurch to Hurstbourne Priors now gives the prospect of an excellent circular walk, either from the Village Shop/Cricketers *[about 5.5 miles: 3 pub-stops]* or the Plough *[about 8.5 miles: 5 pub-stops if you walk either really fast or very slowly]*.

26. Our Thanks, too, go to George De Watteville, Matt Beal and their respective teams of volunteers who have dealt with improvements to the kissing gates by the allotments and on the spinal path – to make them buggy friendly.

ROADS

27. The Council met Keith Thompson, Principal Highways Engineer Test Valley, Jon Bambridge and Cllr Andrew Gibson on 15 June 2010 to discuss Longparish Highways matters' including the Southside Hill passing place. Jon Bambridge is the new Longparish contact; he already covers the majority of Parishes in Cllr Gibson's area, so moving Longparish to his patch was a sensible move and has given Christian Dryden, our Parish Lengthsman, a direct contact when necessary.

28. HCC has done a good job this winter gritting the priority one route through the village; and was very responsive to requests to fill the six grit bins that have been placed around the village.

29. In general, there has been very positive feedback to the extension of the 30MPH limit, although safe driving is still an issue that is raised often by pedestrians, particularly parents walking their children to school. Stemming from this, the Council's view is that the message should be about safer driving and not just about driving within the speed limit – when passing pedestrians, for example, it may be necessary to slow down further. The Council re-affirmed its commitment to continue a low key campaign to encourage safer driving by promoting respect for other road users. In the medium/longer term, we do really need to find a way of improving the spinal path from North Acre to Sugar lane.

30. A special thank you goes to the anonymous members of our 'Adopt a Road' scheme, co-ordinated by Ricky Bourne, who quietly make sure that their patch is clear of rubbish.

TRANSPORT

31. Public transport has been a regular item on our agenda this year and I'd like to thank Phil Harris for his work in this regard; it is an uphill battle.

32. HCC has taken over responsibility for the concessionary travel from TVBC and the changes were outlined in a separate article in the April Hill & Valley.

33. We have also recently received the new [Hampshire Local Transport Plan \(LTP\)](#) covering the years 2011 to 2031, which has now been formally adopted as policy and published. The new LTP is the centrepiece of the County Council's transport policy framework. It emphasises the importance of highway maintenance, alongside the need for transport networks to be reliable in order to support economic activity and sets out which transport improvements to be delivered over the next three years to support the long-term vision.

SCHOOL

34. We have had regular contact with the school during the year and reports from Helen Mehaffey, Chair of the Governors who will be giving a separate report this evening.

35. I would just say that the Council pleased to have been invited to be part of the Steering Group exploring how the school grounds can be improved to provide for the future needs of the school and the community.

VILLAGE HALL

36. During the last couple of years, the Council took the view that there will always be pressures on school use of the community hall and that there is therefore a continuing need for the two halls managed in parallel. Indeed, the Village Hall provides better/ more suitable accommodation for more robust activities and has much better storage so is more suitable for activities such as Kidszone, mother & toddlers, Cubs or Brownies.

37. The Council has paid some £11,000 from funds saved for village hall maintenance/refurbishment for the preparation of detailed specifications and a tender process. The tenders indicate that the overall cost of the refurbishment project will be around £240K.

38. Further action will depend on the availability of finance and the emphasis is now on applying for grants from various organisations [*HCC, TVBC, Veolia Trust etc*] for which the Council has written a letter of support. John Scott will give a further update presently.

LONGPARISH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

39. The LCA is one of the main outcomes and success stories of the Parish Plan. The Council provides some financial support for the Events Diary and their work with older citizens and children. Thanks again go to Christian Dryden who is the Parish Council representative on the committee.

40. The LCA is thriving and has provided a wide variety of events for the village including coffee mornings and running races, and live entertainments in the Village Hall and the Community Hall. The Illustrated talk by John Woodcock on 13 Apr; the Playgroup concert on 22 May and VH centenary on 16 Oct and the Winter Talks are but examples of what were particularly memorable evenings and great fun.

SUMMARY

41. I hope I have given you all a broad resume of our Parish Council activities, but before I finish I would particularly like to thank Tony Humphrey, our Clerk for all his hard work. At one stage, we were on the verge of losing him, but we were delighted at his subsequent request to remain, which was approved unanimously.

42. We need to continue to work together to preserve and improve the facilities, as well as the activities that bring life to them; and we are justifiably proud of our village and parish.

Christopher Duxbury
Chairman
11 April 2011

LONGPARISH PARISH COUNCIL – ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 11 APRIL 2011

FINANCIAL REPORT

1. The accounts being reviewed at this meeting are those for the Financial Year 2009/2010, ending 31 March 2010, as these are the latest set of fully audited accounts that we have and include a full set of explanatory notes. Copies of the accounts and notes have been distributed, and the figures we are interested in are those in the right hand column headed 09/10. The left hand column shows the figures for the previous year for comparison. All figures are net of VAT and have been approved by the Council and both internal and external auditors.
2. The total income for the period was £17,378. The main item was the precept of £15,000, which has remained the same for 7 years. This is the amount that householders in the village contribute through the Council Tax to the running of the Parish. The other main income was from grants, which are explained at Note 2, for the skate ramp and footpaths. You will also notice that the amount of interest earned on the funds deposited with HCC declined dramatically in line with the general reduction in interest rates.
3. The total expenditure for the year was £15,500. The main item was, as usual, Open Spaces, which, as well as the maintenance of the cemetery, playground, football field, village green, and pocket nature reserve, also includes part of the cost of re-furbishing the skate ramp. General administration, which includes insurance, has increased, because we are now fortunate enough to have a Parish Clerk. Parish plan implementation represents the continuing grant to the Community Association. Communication includes a free monthly copy of Hill and Valley to each household together with costs relating to the village website, the village directory and the reception for new villagers.
4. The difference between income and expenditure gives the operating surplus of £1,877, and, after taking account of the transfer of interest to the Village Hall fund and savings towards the replacement of playground equipment, the general reserve (general fund balance) increased to £14,262. The state of the Council's finances was, therefore, healthy for the year we have just looked at.
5. The following year's accounts have not yet been closed, but I can confirm that, while the situation is still positive, expenditure on major re-furbishment of the skate ramp has reduced the general reserve significantly, well below the target level of having approximately one year's expenditure available to meet unforeseen contingencies. One of the aims for this year's budget (2011/2012) will therefore be to start re-building the reserve without affecting other areas of expenditure.
6. I will be happy to answer questions during the open forum at the end.

Jonathan Frere
Chairman
Finance Working Party

TVBC Councillor's Report

TVBC is currently producing a Rural Settlements Action Plan [work on going since 2009], which will contain detailed rural policies and review the approach to defining settlement boundaries. Each village will be looked at separately.

Current TVBC infill policy in the Local Plan 2006 has been criticised by successive Planning Inspectors and the existing approach using built up areas [SET 01] and infill brown lines [SET 06] needed to be reviewed.

The Planning Department should soon be consulting PC's on the next stage of the Rural Settlements Boundary Review [also referred to as the Village Envelope Plan].

The proposed Solar Farm at Owl's Lodge Farm is within Government and TVBC guidelines.

£52,000 has been set aside for Bus passes and the Village car scheme.

LONGPARISH C OF E SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2010

School

The Head teacher and her staff continue in the aim to ensure that each individual child attending the school reaches his or her full potential. A recent visit of the School Improvement Partner confirmed that the school is classed as “outstanding in most areas” There is a difficulty in the area of statistics as we have very small cohorts Our results can be adversely affected if we experience a higher than average number of children with special educational needs in each year group. These children may attain the academic levels expected for each individual but this is not always reflected in our statistics.

At the beginning of our last academic year our number on roll stood at 104. Throughout this past academic year, in addition to the usual in and out movement of families within our catchment area we have experienced a number of children leaving to go to the private sector. This has had a severe effect on our budget. We are happy to receive enquiries regarding possible vacancies in some of the year groups.

Because of this movement we applied to County to increase our PAN to 16, this has been granted and we hope we will be able to implement this for the September 2011 intake.

An ICT Network was installed with wireless connectivity throughout the school and grounds. With the financial help of FOLS 30 netbooks have been installed for use throughout the curriculum in each class.

We have a new website in place which has been very well received

The after school clubs offer a wide variety of choice and continue to be very popular.

Meetings have taken place with the local PCS Officer to address traffic problems around the school area.

Both a community open afternoon and individual silver Surfer computer lessons were offered but there was a very poor response to both of these initiatives

Buildings and Environment

The Staff room extension was finished and is utilised fully for a variety of purposes throughout the school day, including ‘one to one’ sessions with children.

An Evergreen hedge has been planted around the perimeter.

The Robins outside area has been enhanced with the erection of a play house and improvements made to the outside surface and provision of a sand pit.

A joint Community and school committee has been established to investigate the possibility of developing the school grounds to the mutual advantage of all users

Lead socks were fitted to all external beams of the community hall.

An outside door has been fitted to Chaffinch classroom and the ICT suite.

Playgroup

Close liaison continues with the Playgroup Staff and they continue to use the School Hall, field and lunch each week.

The children who will be in next year’s Yr R come into school weekly.

FOLS

We are indebted to the work of the committee who have raised a large amount of money for various projects throughout the school year. These have included such items as funding two charging trolleys for the netbooks and subsidising class visits and the travel element of Year 5/6 residential.

Community Hall Management

Problems continue with the heating and the floor is showing signs of wear and tear.

We are exceedingly for the work of Maggie Barber and her committee in keeping control of bookings.

Helen Mehaffey

Chair of Governors

LONGPARISH COMMUNITY HALL

I continue to chair the management committee of the community hall. The other members of the committee are Jonathan Evans, Sheila Borlotti and Sandra Jones to whom I am very grateful for their hard work and support. We have a vacancy so if there is anyone who would like to join us and help take our work forward I would be delighted to hear from them.

Bookings continue to trickle in and the feedback I receive from hirers is good. They say the hall is lovely and how well equipped it is.

There have been no major changes or improvements to the hall in the last year.

Our committee continues to work closely with the village hall as it starts its refurbishment project which we fully support. We feel that the two halls complement one another and are not in competition.

Please do contact me if you want to book the hall or if you wish to discuss anything about it.

Maggie Barber

Chair, CHMC

VILLAGE HALL REPORT

1. OPERATIONS

Little or no maintenance was required during the cold winter. No outstanding issues were reported at the last committee meeting. A new cleaner has been appointed this year and she is doing a good job. Bookings remain fairly constant with the same organisations and the occasional private party.

I attended the Village Halls conference in March. As for last year it proved very useful with a number of pointers picked up. As a result we will be changing our insurance company and reviewing our hiring policy. We will also review our licensing arrangements, as to whether to continue to use the community hall license. Following last year's conference several more committee members have formally signed up as trustees.

It is still our intention to take part in 'Hallmark', a current Community Action Hampshire (CAH) initiative for the measurement of quality of village hall management. We have made only a small amount of progress this year towards it. CAH has also established a Village Hall network, of which we are a part, for sharing best practice and problem solving.

2. CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

It is worth recording that a very enjoyable Edwardian Evening was held in October in celebration of the centenary of the Village Hall. Entertainment was provided by the Village Choir and the Longparish Players. Everybody came dressed up for the occasion and joined in. The other piece of good news is that we raised over £1000, largely from donations, for the VH Refurbishment fund, whereas our planning objective had been to put on a cost-neutral event.

3. REFURBISHMENT PLANNING

We have made substantial progress this year in that we have utilised a Quantity Surveyor, Robert Jackson Associates who has sub-contracted to the architects, Chaplin Farrant Wiltshire Ltd in order to undertake a tender exercise. Four local builders were selected and requested to provide quotations for the total refurbishment, including a couple of options, lowering (and enlarging) the windows to allow more daylight in; and the installation of photo-voltaic cells on the roof. The exercise enabled us to confirm the approximate funding required to complete the structural refurbishment. Three out of the four builders responded and when their prices had been qualified on a like-for-like basis the prices ranged from £186k to £206k ex-VAT. We formally declined each quotation as we need time to arrange the necessary funding. During the tender exercise our proposed refurbishment was approved by TVBC Building Regulations.

We have subsequently set up a funding sub-committee consisting of Maggie, Tom and myself. Maggie is leading the grant application side and Tom is leading the local donation side. Maggie has put in applications for TVBC and HCC grants (about £40k) which we are confident of getting, and is working hard on a Veolia grant application where we are asking for £100k (their maximum). Typically they offer grants of about £40k. She has also commenced work on the big lottery grant application. They have recently changed the rules for the 'Reaching Communities' fund so that only 'deprived areas' can apply. However this does not disqualify us from other big lottery funding applications. The Veolia and Big Lottery applications are tortuous but you would expect to have to jump through hoops to win grants of the order of £100k.

In addition to these formal grant applications, several members of the committee and others are arranging fund raising events. We have already had a coffee morning arranged by Sylla Frere which raised £230 for both the church and village hall. Next Saturday is the Mega Jumble sale arranged by Gloria. Several other events are in the process of being arranged including a bridge tea by Marion Bell on 2nd June. Some of the organisations

that are stakeholders in the village hall are also arranging events, the most notable to date being a murder mystery being put on by the Longparish Players on 21st May. At as many fundraising events as possible we will have plans available for inspection and someone available to answer questions.

In addition to the tender exercise and the fundraising we have had two inspections of the hall carried out. The first identified the presence of asbestos in a few places and the second confirmed the presence of wood infestation, both of which will need addressing during the early stages of refurbishment. The hall does have a current guarantee from wood treatment carried out 10 or so years ago; and a claim will be made against this, although the chances of success may not be high.

We have also just completed a survey of village residents and the analysis is under way. Having had a quick look through the returns we find it encouraging that nobody seems to have baulked at the idea of putting photo-voltaic cells on the roof. We think we have about a 25% response rate; compared with a 6% response rate for the Wallops who were successful in getting a big lottery award several years ago. The big grants do require us to illustrate that we are meeting villagers' requirements, hence the survey, and are taking steps to raise the level of PR, so we are in the process of raising awareness via the Andover Advertiser and Andover Sound.

Following the tender exercise Graham and I have spent some time reviewing the specifications and schedules. This has enabled us to improve our detailed thinking of our requirements and possible solutions, and has highlighted a shortfall in the work carried out by the architects. A couple of schedules were deemed to be very light or non-existent, including the absence of a lighting schedule. By coincidence we were under charged for the last phase by RJA and following negotiation have a verbal agreement that CFW will provide some free consultancy in the re-tender stage. The cost of the re-tender exercise has not been quoted for yet.

We hope to have raised enough funds to re-tender during the last few months of 2011 and commence the refurbishment early in 2012, diamond jubilee year.

I would like to complete this report by registering my thanks and appreciation to all those who have willingly provided their time, both operationally and for the refurbishment. I am especially grateful to Graham and Maggie for their efforts, sound council and advice, in addition to their expertise and hard work. I would also like to thank all the other village committee members who have provided support throughout the year and the Parish Council for their advice and financial support to the tune of about £11k to cover costs of the Quantity Surveyor and Architect.

Thank You and Any Questions.

John Scott, Chairman, Village Hall Committee

Longparish Playgroup annual report to Longparish Parish Council – Mon 11 2011

It has been another busy year for the Playgroup since I last reported to you. We have 180 places per week, and we are filled for 179. This is an excellent position to be in and I am reliably informed that others in the North West Hampshire region have or are having to close their settings for a myriad of reasons. We are fortunate that we have good finances that can further support the education that our staff brings to the children. We cannot rest on our laurels and be complacent, so much of the work of the committee is to identify and carry out fundraising activities that supplement our two main sources of income: the grant funding we receive and also the income for those children who are not eligible to receive the state funding due to age or those that do more than the funded hours. It is imperative we maintain this high level of fundraising.

Whilst I say we have “good finances”, my main concern is our income generation. Though we are a charity we face, like all businesses, increasing costs. We stick rigorously to our constitution by ensuring we maintain at least a term’s cost in the bank. This is vital for survival and I have been told many times that other settings do not adhere to this and have reached a point where they are unable to pay their staff on time.

We have made a conscious decision to keep places open for those in our catchment area and we take these children at 2 years 9 months; government funding starts at 3 years old. However, this reduced our ability to raise further revenue as government funding was greater than parental fees, though the education is exactly same. We rectified this by bring the fees in line with government funding yet this action has only increased our revenue by about £2k over the year. We are now at a stage where we cannot really create any more income. Our hourly rate is set by the Local Authority and we have brought the parental funding in line with it. We are full in terms of the number of children at the Playgroup; therefore realistically we have no room for manoeuvre. We cannot increase beyond 180 children per week due to sq ft of the setting. Whilst we pay relatively well we now have to manage staff expectations especially as they continue to get more qualifications and understandably will look to command a higher salary. This could be a couple of difficult years.

Claire Nash, our supervisor is also an ‘area cluster practitioner’ where she helps organize practitioner conferences on the role of the adult in the setting. This again helps promote our Playgroup in the local area.

We have become an unofficial example setting to others and we do have visitors to the Playgroup. Whilst we can leverage little from this, this is an excellent accolade to have and it demonstrates that we have got most things right. We do provide a varied mix of activities to teach and stimulate the children. Many external trips are organised and as yet we do not ask parents for a contribution. We continue to manage our ability to do this (fairly low cost) as we want to avoid putting some parents in a position of financial strain. We know that our hourly increase of £1 per hour to £4.20 has put a strain on some households in this time of austerity and it is important we do not create a divide within a small village playgroup.

Therefore our ability to fund raise remains a key driver and vital for our existence. We have been incredibly well backed by the village and we hope we can further rely on their support. After the hugely successful Spring Concert last year, plans are already underway for the next concert entitled “Music from Films and Musicals” in May 2012. Rather than the Playgroup being the only beneficiary we have recognised that we are not the only institution in the village that needs to fundraise. We have spoken with FOLS and they are ‘on board’ and also with Tom Bembridge regarding contributing some of the proceeds to the Village Hall refurbishment project, though with the concert in May 2012 this may not be required. The concert will be held on a Friday and Saturday in May next year and once again the programme will be a mix of popular classical and modern music performed by local instrumentalists and singers, including the Village Choir. We are seeking out more musicians to step forward and dust off long forgotten instruments as well as singing voices.

This has been a busy year and we have now got most of our ‘house in order’. I have concerns regarding our ability to income generate as our costs increase as well as managing staff expectations. Fundraising is key but we have a committed and determined committee who assist

me in ensuring we have a leading setting where we provide a fantastic start to our children's educational development.

Finally I would like to extend a huge thank you to Claire Nash and her team for their tireless efforts maintaining a fantastic PlayGroup which thrives as our neighbouring PlayGroups close. Also to the village itself who provide valued support to us. We ask that they maintain their support as we are nurturing the future of the village.