

**HAWKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2021**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Annual Parish Meeting is a standing meeting which provides an annual opportunity for your councillors to report on their activities over the last year. The Parish extends from near Bradshott on the other side of the Selbourne Road, down to Snailing Lane and through to Empshott, Hawkley and then down to Oakshott. This is my opportunity to report back to you on our activities during the year.

Firstly, I should note that [Sue Harwood](#), our clerk since circa 2007 officially retired on 31 March having been a source of wise counsel for us all. Her ability to navigate between those things that must be done - and those that are simply nice to have - made it possible to run a small council on a small budget. We wish her well for the future.

The good news is that we have been lucky enough to recruit [Katherine Horton](#) into the role. She has had a good start, is now well established and raring to go – so: watch out everybody!

This last year the world at large has been dominated by **Coronavirus**. I'd like to thank the other members of the [Hawkley Area Support Group](#) who each worked tirelessly in the first few weeks of lock down to establish a network of volunteers and support processes in our Parish. The disease may not yet have been widespread here but the Group's existence reassures vulnerable residents that continuing support is available. I should take this opportunity to thank [Russell Oppenheimer](#) for grant support towards the group's operations (which HPC funded) and also for bridging finance to support the Village Magazine last spring.

Turning now to HPC, much of our business is routine and recurs each year including planning matters, maintenance issues and making small grants and/or donations towards specific causes. But we are also dealing with number of less routine matters which I will cover first.

#### **Traffic issues**

The tragic accident on Hawkley Hill resulting in the death of a horse last autumn reminded us that road safety remains of paramount importance. We have engaged with Hampshire Highways and the British Horse Association about what safety measures and signage would be practical on a road that is only 4 metres wide in some places. The road is scheduled to be completely resurfaced in the next few weeks and then new signage - yet to be finalised - will be installed.

One unrelated measure which has been confirmed is a new "Unsuitable for Long Vehicles" sign down by the Spread Eagle pub, aimed at deterring larger HGVs from navigating through Hawkley – then having to turn round across Lower Green.

Traffic safety is a recurring issue but it is clear that most accidents that occur locally are not being reported to the police. If it's not reported it doesn't get into the 'casualty statistics' used by Hampshire Highways to determine priorities making it hard to get HCC to spend money in the Parish. If you are unlucky enough to have an accident, it's in everyone's interest for you to report it.

#### **Finger Post Signs**

We have commenced a process of refurbishment of the finger post signs around the Parish. The Empshott Green, Hawkley Road/Pococks Lane and Lower Green signs have been finished - we have the Upper Green sign in hand. This is quite an expensive undertaking: costs to date have been funded through a combination of our surplus brought forward, our unspent precept this year and devolved

grants from [Charles Louisson](#) and [Russell Oppenheimer](#), our **excellent** District and County Councillors respectively. I'll take this opportunity to thank them both for all they do for us.

The one remaining sign that needs attention is down at the Oakshott junction but that will need to be deferred until we have funds available – quite probably not for a couple of years or more.

### **Children' Playground**

This is an important community resource that needs to be maintained to keep it safe. RoSPA inspect it annually and we carry out any necessary remedial work. Last summer, their report drew attention to the emergence of wet rot in the supports to the swings which, while still sound, need to be replaced in the next two or perhaps three years.

[Simon Dixon](#) oversees the maintenance of the Playground and is now getting quotations for repair. However, we expect the cost to be substantial in relation to our limited resources and we will need to seek grant support.

### **Mobile Phones**

The mobile phone mast has been erected and is now being commissioned. Although it is primarily to support the emergency services, it will also provide coverage for the EE, and probably O<sub>2</sub> mobile networks. We have asked for a “switch on” date but the recent lock down has slowed the project somewhat.

### **Telephone Kiosks**

Who can have failed to notice the sparkling refurbishment of the phone box at Lower Green which we acquired last year? A wonderful community effort spearheaded by [Simon Dixon](#) and [Tim Mullins](#).

We had planned to refurbish the Upper Green kiosk this summer, but when we sought their permission BT said they planned to do it themselves. It will be nowhere as good as Lower Green but is it presently BT's box. Once the Mobile Mast is working BT will likely remove the phone service but that box is listed and so can't be removed. However, neither will it be well maintained. We are exploring whether the burden of maintaining a listed building can be accommodated in our limited resources and if we can, [David Large](#) will at last get his opportunity to lead a group to refurbish it.

### **BOATs – “Byways open to all Traffic”**

There are several tracks around the Parish which are unsurfaced but legally open to motorised traffic and which attract organised groups of “off-roaders”, (eg 4x4s and motocross bikes), from as far away as Cambridge and Nottingham. The more treacherous the road surface the more fun they have; the more they use it the worse the surfaces become.

[Russell Oppenheimer](#), our County Councillor, is campaigning with others to engage the SDNP in preserving the countryside for the enjoyment of those who travel on foot. We recently submitted an extensive representation to the SDNP which incorporated contributions from several residents – available on the website.

### **Trees**

There are a variety of initiatives at national, county and district level, planting trees in order to mitigate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. [Madeline Allison](#) has kindly agreed to be reappointed as our Tree Warden. [Liz Buckle](#) is leading a group including [Madeline](#), [Charlie Butcher](#) and [Susan Sinclair](#) to consider what planting

and/or maintenance might be possible and appropriate for Hawkley. We will hear from Liz later this evening,

Turning now to the more routine topics, our most significant activity is in the planning arena.

### **Planning**

Planning applications relating to the parish are dealt with by the Planning Committee; the vast majority of these applications require site visits and the Planning Committee then normally meets to decide on our response. This year they have dealt with 25 applications, convening 9 separate planning committee meetings in addition to those applications dealt within the normal Parish Council meetings.

The Planning Portfolio is not a trivial undertaking so many thanks to Planning Chairman [Geoff Brighton](#) and committee members [Jo Humphrey](#) and [Susan Sinclair](#).

### **Maintenance of Greens, Roads, verges and footpaths**

We oversee the maintenance of the greens, ponds and byways around the Parish.

We routinely ensure that the parish roads, verges, ditches, ponds and drains are kept clear and tidy. When work is needed, we encourage HCC to take action or, if they cannot prioritise it, we try to deal with it ourselves.

We arrange for the Greens to be cut. Thanks to [Dominic Palmer](#), and latterly [Nick Davis](#), [Simon Dixon](#) and others for keeping them in shape. At this point we should recognise the substantial contribution [Charlie Knowles](#) has made to the ambience of Upper Green over the years; many of you know that Charlie is not at all well right now; I am sure you will all join with me in sending him our best wishes.

We also keep an eye on the verges around the Parish. However, while HCC will strim dangerous 'sightlines' on request, it has substantially reduced the maintenance of the verges more generally to a single annual cut as a result of budget pressure. This year we expect that cut will be early in the summer before any wild flowers emerge; the verges look untidy and unkempt by the autumn and in the past when that has happened we have arranged for a contractor to cut them in November; they then remain reasonably tidy until towards the end of May; HPC believes it money well spent.

We participate in the Lengthsman Scheme funded by HCC in which gives us one man-day's labour each quarter to do minor maintenance tasks: e.g. to cut back hedges and overgrowth, pick litter and maintain road signs, ditches footpaths and stiles.

### **Donations and Grants**

We do have the capacity to make small grants and donations to activities with a local impact. Again this year we supported Butser-Homestart, the Rosemary Foundation, East Hampshire Citizens Advice Bureau and Hampshire Air Ambulance. We were also pleased to support the publication of the Hawkley History book which [Graham Johnson](#) initiated and substantially wrote before his sad passing. [Lou Elderton](#) has now completed it and together with [Maggie Johnson](#) will soon have it printed for sale.

**Finances**

All of this has been achieved on our very low and unchanged annual precept of £13,000 (collected through your Council Taxes). We have reserves of the order of a years' expenditure but, as I have explained, we face some significant challenges in balancing our resources in the near term.

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So that's about it. None of this would have been achieved without your committed team of councillors. I have commented on a number of their specific contributions already but quite a lot of your Councillors' efforts go unremarked. So I should specifically thank **Charlie Butcher** and **Liz Buckle** our Staff Panel for their considerable contribution during the process of selecting and contracting Katherine's appointment. I also want to thank **Jo Humphrey** for her continuing support as Vice Chair. In addition to her Planning role, she is an effective sounding board for me to test ideas and of course she continues her close involvement in the traffic agenda.

In closing, may I personally thank every one of the members of the Parish Council for their continuing commitment to their task in serving our community.

**David Caukill**

**Chair: Hawkey Parish Council**

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