

# Hook Parish Council

**Annual Report 2004 – 2005**



## Chairman's report

**T**he **Annual Village Meeting**, on 21<sup>st</sup> April at the Elizabeth Hall at 8pm, will have a different format. The evening will start with a display of exhibits to walk around, particularly the plans for the new Elizabeth Hall. Parish and District Councillors, the Police, Highways and Hart will be available for an informal chat. The formal meeting, which will start around 8.45, will be spent on answering your questions.

Please submit questions in advance, either by email to [clerk@hook.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hook.gov.uk), or by letter to the Parish Council Office by 14<sup>th</sup> April, so that we can ensure that we concentrate on issues that arouse the most interest. Questions that arrive after that date or are submitted on the night will be covered at the end.

The Elizabeth Hall project and the preparation of a Village Plan are both crucial major longer term projects included in detail elsewhere in this Report. The Village plan is vital to our ability to influence both central and local planners in respect of our local environmental destiny over the next twenty years.

The Village Questionnaire response showed concerns over antisocial behaviour and vandalism. Statistics actually show Hampshire to be one of the safest counties and Hook one of the safest places in Hampshire but our new Police Station will open in June providing a more visible Police presence.

In 2004, we established our Parish Council Office in the Community Centre. Our thanks are due to all our team for their extra time and effort in setting up the office. The result is more effective and efficient administration.

The office is open to visitors between 9am and noon Monday to Friday. Anne Atkins is well established as Parish Clerk, Christine Randall joined us a Deputy Clerk during the year and concentrates on Amenity and Planning issues and Marian Bright recently joined us as Parish Administrator. Michael Clark and Colin Brown both resigned their seats for personal reasons during 2004 and our thanks go to them and to our former Administrator Julie Ridley for all their work over the years.

**Antony Hunter**  
[antony.hunter@hook.gov.uk](mailto:antony.hunter@hook.gov.uk)

## Development Strategy Committee

**T**wo related items have been priorities for the Development Strategy Committee during the past year: The Village Plan and the South East England Development Plan from the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA).

The SEERA Plan finally arrived in January 2005. The number of houses allocated for the North of Hampshire remains uncertain; however, what is clear is that a very considerable amount of infrastructure will be required for the area before anything like the number of houses being discussed could be contemplated. It is also very clear that there is no money for this infrastructure: therefore it will not be a surprise if we are allocated the houses anyway.

We have already expressed our concern over the lack of funding for the necessary infrastructure and will continue to monitor the process. Needless to say we will react when the appropriate time comes, hopefully with your full support.

The Parish Plan is Hook's opportunity to influence Hart District Council's Local Development Framework, which, in the future will replace the current Local Structure Plan and inform us all where new developments will go. Thanks to the efforts of a number of residents, and all those who responded to last year's questionnaire, the Plan is on target for delivery to Hart in July. It is hoped to put the Plan on display, for comments by all those who are interested, before it is printed and goes to Hart. Hopefully Hart will then adopt the Parish Plan as supplementary Planning Guidance.

The Parish Plan also contains a Biodiversity study of Hook Parish carried out on our behalf by Hampshire Wildlife Trust and contains six Action Plans for the future protection of the wonderful natural environment that surrounds Hook.

**Nigel Carpenter**  
[nigel.carpenter@hook.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.carpenter@hook.gov.uk)

**Don't forget the Annual Village Meeting  
Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2005  
in the Elizabeth Hall from 8pm**

## Amenities Committee

The Amenities Committee looks after all the facilities maintained by the Council – pitches, parks, trees, playgrounds – as well as general improvements to the Parish. For the past few years, the Committee has dealt with a backlog of maintenance and necessary work such as replacing playground equipment, instituting a tree maintenance programme, and completing the Grand Parade landscaping work.

### Christmas Cracker 2005

One big hole in the Hook social calendar last year was the absence of the Hook Christmas Cracker. This year it will return, spread over a wider area and with many more stalls and activities. As before, it will rely on volunteers to do all the organisation as well as to marshal the event. If you would like to be involved, contact the Parish Office.

### Bollards

The bollards keeping vehicles off the landscaping in Grand Parade are continually being knocked askew. Every time it happens it costs hundreds of pounds to reseat them. We are going to replace them with tougher Guardsman bollards, to be set much deeper in the ground. They should resist even heavy 4x4s.

We've also put bollards on some of the entrances to Wellworths Park to stop people driving over the grass. The ring of bollards limiting vehicle access to Hartletts Park is now complete. This will allow us to shut vehicles out of the Park and should reduce the risk of invasion by joyriders and travellers.

### Hedges

Few people seem to realise that they are responsible for cutting back growth from hedges and trees on their land to prevent footpaths becoming impassable to pedestrians. Hampshire Highways have powers to enforce maintenance, but there may be a problem deciding who owns the offending greenery. We are trying to identify the owners of the worst areas so that owners can be encouraged to cut their own hedges before being presented with a bill by Highways.

### Others

The Committee's work during the year includes clearing up broken glass and litter from playgrounds, repairing vandal damage to play areas, maintaining trees, cutting grass and working with Hampshire Wildlife Trust on the village pond at Carleton Close.

We're always looking for new projects to improve the quality of life in Hook. If you have any ideas, please get in touch with me, any Parish Councillor or the Parish Office.

**Martin Whittaker**  
martin.whittaker@hook.gov.uk

## Planning Committee

Let me start by thanking Antony Hunter, as the outgoing Chairman of Planning, for his leadership of and contributions to the Planning Committee.

As Hook grows and the demands on local government increase, the day-to-day administrative needs of the Parish continue to expand.

Overall an interesting year in the changing face of Hook. The hoardings are now down on the Linden development in Station Road and the show home open for viewings. The Old Foundry development is complete, whilst the Holt Park development expands more slowly than expected, as house sales fall behind forecast. The new dental surgery has opened and we are supporting the application by the pharmacy to expand into the space vacated by the dentist in Hook Parade.

During the year there has been an increase in the number of applications to turn single dwellings into multi-dwelling developments. The largest of these applications was to redevelop The Bungalow, London Road. The Parish Council objected to the original planning application, which was refused by Hart. The appeal will be heard on 23rd November 2005. Please watch out for more information nearer the time.

A couple of other multi-dwelling applications are in the pipeline. These include one in Holt Lane and a two-dwelling development in Newnham Road. Under new rules, a financial contribution from future developments of five houses or more will go towards Community and Leisure for Hook.

Another application that created much interest was the proposed re-development of the New Covenant Church in Elms Road. This was appealed to the Inspectorate, and was dismissed on grounds of impact on the surrounding area and the quality of life for certain residents of Lynwood Gardens.

As we reported last year, no operator has yet been found to run the Bus service from the Holt Park Development to Tesco and the railway station.

The Village Survey results highlighted the importance of the role of Planning in working to ensure any future development of Hook is not detrimental to our quality of life. I therefore request your ongoing support in continuing to contribute to planning applications. As the Parish Council is not a Planning Authority we rely on your input to help us object to applications which we believe are not appropriate. Thank you.

**Angus Ogilvy**  
angus.ogilvy@hook.gov.uk

## Elizabeth Hall Redevelopment

The Elizabeth Hall is, like the Nursery rhyme about London Bridge, falling down. Many know the scenario that has brought us to the current state of affairs, where to replace the Hall is the only viable option. Fifty two years of faithful service has taken its toll.

Summarising this and bringing everyone up to date, is the object of this brief message.

The original survey evidence shows that to keep the existing Hall open would cost close to £500,000 in the upgrading and repairs required in order to comply with new legislation. This will become mandatory in the next few months, so there is no room for further prevarication. Even with the upgrade and repair work completed, the life expectancy of this refurbished hall would be less than 15 years. Not a very good value for money deal at all.

This time last year, we were pushing ahead with developing a plan for a replacement hall. With great effort on the part of the Elizabeth Hall Development working party, there is now a plan that will work, a location that is environmentally acceptable to the Hall Neighbours, including Network Rail, and Planning Permission from Hart District Council has now been granted.

Good progress, but the really hard work is actually still to come. Building contractors will be asked to bring us their best ideas to fine-tune the design, so that it is fully effective in its use and can be completed within budgeted cost. The budget is always the

crunch line in any project of this type and with our target set at £1,000,000 it will be a challenge for all concerned.

£1,000,000 can be raised. With Housing developer assistance, the target is achievable. As with much local development, the timing is also a critical element and with the constraints placed by law upon the Parish Council, the start date for the construction of the hall is later than we had originally hoped for. However, the furthest away date we can estimate is April 1st 2007 for a "Silver Spade" ceremony for the start of construction. There is a real chance to improve on this, rather than any potential for slippage.

With the Housing Developer support, in order to complete the project we will still need to find an additional £250,000 of funding. The worst case is we will borrow the money and finance the loan from income from the new facility. The best case is that we work to successfully petition support from trust funds, even the lottery and generally talk nicely to anyone with money, to reduce the amount we actually need to make up the shortfall.

So, if you know anyone with a yen to have a room named after them, it will only cost a £50,000 cheque to have one of the New Hall rooms named after them. On a more general note, anyone who wishes to donate sums of any value can do so by making cheques payable to the Elizabeth Hall Development Fund.

**Cedric Bradley**

For Elizabeth Hall Redevelopment

## PLANNING PERMISSION HAS NOW BEEN GRANTED!



*Architect's drawing of the new Elizabeth Hall.*

## Money Matters

The Parish Council's share of the Community Charge for the year to April 2005 came to £245,000. This represents a charge of £1.59 a week for each property in the benchmark Council Tax Band D. Full audited accounts will be available for inspection in the Parish Council Office later in the year. They will also be available on our web site.

Once again, the demands on the Parish Council have increased over the past year. Risk Assessment, the Disability Discrimination Act, and increased Health and Safety requirements are just three areas. The Parish receives no money from other tiers of Government so all the funds we require come directly from residents.

As in 2003/4 we have put £60,000 to reserves in 2004/5 to assist in funding the new Elizabeth Hall. The Varndell Recreation area has been installed financed by developer contribution linked to the Planning Permission granted for that area a few years ago. The funding included £32,000 for ongoing maintenance which has been transferred to reserves.

The 2005/6 precept has been set at £258,000, representing a Band D charge of £1.66 a week and an increase of £13,000 over 2004/5. Compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act and project fees for Elizabeth Hall are two new items that will require

funding from the precept in the coming year.

Money actually spent during 2004/2005 can be analysed as follows

Running expenses (salaries, office rent, insurance, office equipment)	£75,400
Youth facilities	£9,400
Street lighting/security	£7,800
Loan repayments	£12,000
Gardening/park keeping/cleansing	£51,000
Grants	£12,000
Projects	
Leisure and community facilities	£2,900
Community Centre fence and security	£15,000
Varndell recreation area	£58,000
Holt Park public art	£10,500
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Total spend	£254,000
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Less other income	(£14,000)
Less Developer Contributions	(£87,000)
Add transferred to Reserves	£92,000
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Precept	£245,000
=====	

**Antony Hunter**  
antony.hunter@hook.gov.uk

## Parish Personnel - April 2005



<b>Clerk</b>	Anne Atkins	Parish Office, Hook Community Centre	01256 768687
<b>Deputy Clerk</b>	Christine Randall		or
<b>Administrator</b>	Marian Bright		01256 768573
<b>Chairman</b>	Antony Hunter	Moles Meadow, Elms Road	01256 762043
<b>Vice-Chairman &amp; Chairman of Development Strategy Committee</b>	Nigel Carpenter	27 Goose Green	01256 762936
<b>Chairman of Amenity Committee</b>	Martin Whittaker	Foundry Cottage, London Road	01256 765902
<b>Chairman of Planning Committee</b>	Angus Ogilvy	Oakleigh, Morris Street	01256 766411
	Jane Bonnin	Church Path Cottage, Newnham Road	01256 763287
	Tim Colman	17 Bow Field	01256 765434
	Janet Deller	9 Chalky Copse	01256 764132
	Fergus Kirkham	1 Alderwood Drive	01256 766122
	Gillian Morgan	14 Garden Close	01256 764214
	David Ridley	24 Bramshott Drive	01256 763571
	Allen Saltmarsh	119 Ravenscroft	01256 764658
	Tony Taylor	45 Middle Mead	01256 762925

The Parish Council's website is at <http://www.hook.gov.uk>



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