

Hook Parish Council

Annual Report 2005 – 2006



Chairman's report

The **Annual Village Meeting** will be on 26th April at the Elizabeth Hall at 8pm. Feedback on last year's format was very favourable, so the 2006 meeting will run on similar lines. The evening will start with a display of exhibits and County, District and Parish Councillors will be on hand for an informal chat. Exhibitors will include Hampshire Highways, Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Hart Recycling, Elizabeth Hall Redevelopment, Police, Neighbourhood Watch, Hart Neighbourhood Centre and Hart Community Safety.

As last year there will be no speeches so the time at the formal meeting, which will commence around 8.45, will be spent on answering your questions. Please submit questions in advance either by email to clerk@hook.gov.uk or by letter to the Parish Council Office at the Community Centre by 14th April so that we can research the answers where necessary and allocate each question to the person best qualified to answer it.

Questions that arrive after that date or are not submitted in advance will be covered at the end if time allows. It was excellent to see a larger number of people at the meeting last year and to receive a greater variety and number of questions than was possible in previous years.

The Elizabeth Hall rebuilding project and the Parish Plan both continue to make good progress and are crucial to the future of our community. The Parish Plan is an important way to influence our destiny.

Parish Council meetings normally take place on the first Wednesday of each month and agendas are published on our notice boards in the Grand Parade car park, outside the Community Centre and by the footpath from the A30 to the schools. There is an opportunity for members of the public to raise topics of Parish concern under the "Ten minute rule."

Many thanks to Angus Ogilvy, who left us to make a career move to Singapore. We welcome Pete Comley to fill his vacant seat. Our thanks are also due to our small and cheerful team: our Parish Clerk, Anne Atkins, our Deputy Clerk Christine Randall and our Parish Administrator Marian Bright.

Antony Hunter
chairman@hook.gov.uk

Development Strategy Committee

The South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) continues to make progress with their plans for house building in Hart. The number of houses allocated to North Hampshire is not yet fixed; however it seems that in one option the numbers in and around Hook could be less than originally thought.

Infrastructure in terms of road, schools and especially water continues to be a concern, as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister seems to think that all that can come later. Hart, sensibly, thinks it should be in place before the houses are built. It is also clear that there is no money for infrastructure, except in very few cases; so it will not be surprising if we are allocated the houses anyway.

European legislation from 2002 has reached the UK with rather far reaching effects. The new law introduced the "Special Protection Area" to the UK and in particular to the Thames Basin Heath Lands. In broad terms there is now no new building allowed within 400mtrs of a SPA, and land has to be provided in lieu for all new building within 5kms. The effect of this on Hart is very great indeed: the whole district apart from North Warnborough and Odiham is within 5kms of a SPA. Currently all new building within Hart has been stopped pending clarification on how the new rules are to be applied. Watch this space!!!

The Parish Plan continues to be our opportunity to influence Hart District Council's Local Development Framework, which, will replace the current Local Structure Plan. A considerable number of residents saw the plan in July and provided very useful comments on its content and structure. The planned delivery of the Plan to Hart, in October last year, was delayed as Hart were not in a position to receive it. Hopefully Hart will accept the Parish Plan by the middle of this year and then adopt it as Supplementary Planning Guidance after due process.

The Parish Plan also contains an Action Plan to address the points raised by the replies to the questionnaire, which seems so long ago. The number one item is the Elizabeth Hall, which is making good progress and hopefully will commence rebuild in 2007.

Nigel Carpenter
nigel.carpenter@hook.gov.uk

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.

Christmas Events

Last year saw the welcome return of the Hook Christmas Cracker. Despite the appalling weather, crowds of people gathered to sing, dance, eat and drink their way through the centre of the village. With a new management committee - and full support from the Parish Council - we hope this event will become a permanent feature of Christmas in Hook.

To improve the Christmas atmosphere even further, the Council has begun a 3 year programme to update and improve Christmas decorations around the village. Last year saw the first of the new lights, but most of the money went on attaching brackets to lampposts around the centre so we can put up proper decorations in future.

Recreation and Public Art

As part of the planning agreement with Hart, the Parish Council receives money from all developers who build houses in Hook. Most of this Section 106 money (as it is known officially) is being used to help finance the new Elizabeth Hall, but some of the funds are earmarked for special purposes such as recreation areas or public art. The new Vardell Road recreation area opened last year was built using money from this source, and almost completes the current plan for play areas in Hook.

The first of two planned play areas has been installed in Holt Park. The first will be dedicated to the former Parish Clerk, Dave Deadman and will be opened in Spring 2006. The second, at the southern end of the site, will be installed once the adjacent building work is complete.

Also in Holt Park is the new piece of public art - "Sedges" by local artist Peter Parkinson. This truly monumental piece of sculpture was designed to reflect the environment of the nearby River Whitewater, as well as keeping cars from driving across the new roundabout in the middle of the development.

Hook Summer Festival

Looking to the future, the Parish Council is in the process of planning a Summer Festival to take place at the beginning of June. This will be a joint event with Hook Schools' Parents Association and will combine the attractions of the Schools' Summer Fete with a programme of events such as a circus, sideshows, juggling, dancing, crafts, animals and much more. Keep an eye on Hook Focus for details.

Youth Facilities

One of Hook's best and most popular facilities is The Base. It is probably the most active youth club in the area, and last year was awarded the title of "Youth Club of the Year" in Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

The Base is actively supported by the Parish Council, and in order to improve the facilities, Councillors have recently agreed to fund the installation of floodlighting on the Multicourt in Hartletts Park. The floodlights, due to be installed this Spring, will greatly extend the use of the Multicourt on dark evenings.

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



'Sedges', by Peter Parkinson, now adorns a roundabout on the Holt Park development.

Photograph: Steve Bright - www.brightimaging.com

Elizabeth Hall Redevelopment

Do you get home tired after a long hard day and simply want to flake out on the sofa? Do you have that one night in the week when you go out to do your "thing", be it a book club, a local society meeting, or some other stimulus that takes your mind away from work?

If anything in the above sounds familiar, I would like to say a hearty thanks to you simply for living in Hook; if you have come into Hook recently in one of the newer homes, thanks to you, too. Did you support the Fun Run or the Christmas Cracker? Then thanks again!

Why? It is simply thanks to your support that we now have the basic funding for the Elizabeth Hall securely enough in place to go to the final stages prior to actual construction instructions.

Yes! The dream of replacing the well-loved and slightly careworn hall that has served the village so well, having been created by the community in the 1950s, is moving one step closer to being a reality. At the time of writing, the tenders for the project are to be reviewed by this Working Party. From these deliberations we will be able to finalise a design specification for the definitive hall.

For your information, as I am sure everyone is desperate to know, the overall concept as reviewed during the last open meeting and at the 2005 Fun Run is still intact. This means that the ability of the new facility to meet the demands of an expanding village now and in the future is being met, insofar as we can forecast from your feedback.

The cost of this imaginative venture is not cheap, but neither is a good quality wine, food, house or car these days, and Hook does need a building designed to last for another 50 years or more.

By the time of the Village Meeting, a review of the proposals should be complete and it is hoped to be able to bring you right up to date at that time with the latest situation.

That is why our thanks go to you for living here and supporting the work of your Parish Council, the Elizabeth Hall management and the local activities that raise money for the project, who have all worked so hard to make this essential work a real possibility.

Again, like so many other things that are good about Hook there are a substantial number of people who will get off their sofas in the evening and make things happen to provide diversions, entertainment and generally improve the quality of life for those lucky enough to live in Hook.

Cedric Bradley
For Elizabeth Hall Redevelopment

Money Matters

The Parish Council share of the Community Charge for 2005/6 came to £258,000 which represents a charge of £1.66 a week for a property in the benchmark Band D. Full audited accounts will be available for inspection in the Parish Council Office and on our web site later in the year.

The 2006/7 precept has been set at £274,000 which due to new housing, particularly in Holt Park, will be spread over around 120 more homes than was the case last year. New housing brings extra costs that we have to meet, particularly in areas such as grounds maintenance, although the extra homes also bring us some extra income.

Our move to a permanent office in 2004 has provided useful cost savings and a more effective team concept including easier links with your (unpaid) Councillors. The public and all the bodies with which we work now know how they can find us during working hours or can leave a message that will be quickly returned by one of the team.

We have once again put £60,000 to reserves to assist in funding the new Elizabeth Hall. The rest of the £93,000 placed to reserves consists of interest added to the Elizabeth Hall reserve, Disability Discrimination Act requirements and street light replacement. The Parish owns 140 street lights, most of which are over 40 years old and will require replacement to County Council standards over the next 15 years at a cost of £1,000 each. Money actually spent during 2005/2006 can be analysed as follows:

Running expenses (salaries, office rent, insurance, office equipment)	£69,000
Youth facilities	£10,000
Street lighting/ security	£8,000
Loan repayments	£12,000
Gardening/park keeping/ cleansing	£52,000
Grants	£37,000

Projects	
Leisure and Community facilities	£9,000
Multicourt floodlighting	£12,000
Holt Park public art	£5,000

Total spend £214,000

Less other income	-£24,000
Less Developer Contributions	-£25,000
Add transferred to Reserves	£93,000

Precept £258,000

Antony Hunter
chairman@hook.gov.uk

Planning Committee

This year has been a busy year for the members of the Planning Committee, with 125 planning applications being considered. We are pleased to report that in most cases recommendations made by the committee were subsequently endorsed by Hart District Council, the planning authority.

During the last year there has been an increased flow of applications for extensions, mainly we believe due to the cost of moving home. These applications are usually supported, provided they are not detrimental either to the neighbours or the 'street scene'.

Last year though saw some very controversial planning applications being brought before the Parish. These ranged from redevelopment of the New Covenant Church in Elms Road, to brown field/back garden housing schemes such as the Bungalow on London Road and Jambonze, Newnham Road. The prevalence of these types of applications puts ever-increasing pressure on adjoining neighbours.

It's now two years since George Wimpey and David Wilson Homes started to build at Holt Park. About one third of the 330 houses are now inhabited and it is likely to be early in 2008 before all the homes, including the affordable housing, will be occupied.

Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers elected to serve the interests of the local community. Planning decisions made by the committee are a democratic process and the majority opinion is paramount. The Committee can only represent the views of the community and their own view on the evidence provided in the application and as discussed at the time of the meeting.

Every member of the community has an opportunity to represent their views to the Parish Council. The Parish Office is open daily and contact details for all members are listed below and on our website.

David Ridley
david.ridley@hook.gov.uk

Don't forget the
Annual Village Meeting
Wednesday 26th April 2006
in the Elizabeth Hall from 8pm

Parish Personnel - April 2006



Clerk:	Anne Atkins	Parish Office,	01256 768687
Deputy Clerk:	Christine Randall	Hook Community Centre	or
Administrator:	Marian Bright		01256 768573
Chairman	Antony Hunter	Moles Meadow, Elms Road	01256 762043
Vice-Chairman & Chairman of Development Strategy Committee	Nigel Carpenter	27 Goose Green	01256 762936
Chairman of Amenities Committee	Martin Whittaker	Foundry Cottage, London Road	01256 765902
Chairman of Planning Committee	David Ridley	24 Bramshott Drive	01256 763571
	Jane Bonnin	Church Path Cottage, Newnham Road	01256 763287
	Tim Colman	17 Bow Field	01256 765434
	Pete Comley	3 Seton Drive	01256 760904
	Janet Deller	9 Chalky Copse	01256 764132
	Fergus Kirkham	1 Alderwood Drive	01256 766122
	Gillian Morgan	14 Garden Close	01256 764214
	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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