

# Hook Parish Council



## Annual Report 2012 – 2013

### Chairman's Report

Last year this Report was concerned mainly with the developments in North East Hook, buses, and the planned refurbishment to the Community Centre. You may notice that much of this year's Report talks about the same things – but a huge amount of progress has been made:

- We should have a new bus timetable by the middle of April. The persistence of the Parish Council's Transport Working Group seems to have had an influence on the decision making process. It should be possible to get from Hook to Fleet and Farnborough by bus – for the first time in living memory.
- The Community Centre refurbishment work is currently out to tender, and bids should be in the hands of the Council before the Annual Village Meeting (don't forget – 24<sup>th</sup> April at 8pm).
- The North East Hook development negotiations continue, but we won't know how effective we have been in getting the best deal for residents until we see the final planning applications, probably in March or April.

This will be my last Chairman's Report as I'm coming to the end of my term as Chairman of the Council. After four years it's time to return to the backbenches and allow those with fresh ideas to take over.

**Martin Whittaker**  
chairman@hook.gov.uk



*Area for the proposed residential and supermarket development. Come to the Annual Village Meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup> for the latest news.*

### Development Update

The Hart Local Plan is progressing towards the final stages and with it the proposal for 500 dwellings and a food store at North East Hook. The local plan also proposes an additional 100 houses on sites yet to be identified. Discussions have been held with potential developers in respect of these additional dwellings but only on a preliminary and "without prejudice" basis. If any of these applications are to proceed in due course, the main aim of the Parish Council is to secure the best possible benefits for the residents.

The consultation on the draft Local Plan ended in early January and the Parish Council submitted a detailed response, which can be seen on our website. This essentially made the case – using the District Council's own documents - that the appropriate figure for Hook is 200 rather than 600 dwellings. The Local Plan will be the subject of a public examination in front of an independent inspector in the autumn and the Parish Council has asked to be represented.

This whole process has resulted in continuing and extensive discussions with both Hart District Council and the potential developers – Croudace and David Wilson Homes (the housing developers) and Sainsbury for the proposed store. The developers mounted a joint exhibition in November 2012 which was well attended.

The main issue of considerable concern to residents was the impact of the additional traffic on the roads around Hook, particularly at peak times. These concerns were made very clear to the developers and have resulted in additional discussions. Hampshire County Council's Highways department is assessing the traffic issues. The design of the proposed store was also controversial.

Planning applications are expected to be submitted in March or April. These will again be the subject of further consultation and discussion. Once received, the Parish Council will arrange a further public consultation before deciding on its own response. Detailed negotiations will then be underway during the next four months or so – again with the aim of securing the best possible outcome for Hook residents. It is not known at present when these applications may be determined, as that could depend on the timing of the Local Plan process.

**Anthony Hawkins**  
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## Amenities Committee

### Bins, Benches and Noticeboards

This year we have started to replace open-top litter bins with closed-top bins and this has helped reduce the amount of litter strewn across the ground by the wind and foxes.

Four new benches (one donated by a resident) have been installed across the village at Holt Lane, Jubilee Green, Griffin Way South and outside the cemetery. These are to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. One old bench from Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 had to be removed as it had become broken beyond repair. We hope the new ones last as long. A new bench has also been installed in the cemetery to enable family and friends to view the newer and future graves.

The Parish Council noticeboard near Casa Flora has been replaced and two new noticeboards placed in Holt Lane and Wellworth Park to enable residents to view information in other parts of the village.

### Grounds Maintenance

We continue to work closely with our Grounds Maintenance contractors (Lotus, Goslings and Hampshire Wildlife Trust) to ensure that work is carried out to a high standard. Any comments and requests from residents are passed on and are acted upon where necessary.

Drainage at King George V playing fields is an ongoing issue but we are working with the Cricket and Football Clubs and contractors towards resolving this.

At Bassett's Mead the grazing cycle of the meadows is working well, and cattle, walkers and dogs all co-exist happily. Wire mesh has been put on the boardwalk at Tynes Meadow to reduce the risk of slipping. A couple of the white willows succumbed to age and the weather and were removed. HWT continues to take measures to prevent bank erosion at the river and encourage vegetation to flourish. The ground covering on the path in Holt Copse was removed as it was causing water logging and was very muddy.

We have finally obtained ownership of Mitchell's Field and that has also been added to the maintenance schedules.

### Play Areas

The safety surface at Wellworth Park was repaired and we hope that this will suffice until funds are available to refurbish the whole play area. Our reports from ROSPA continue to be good with no major issues as we strive to keep on top of maintenance and safety in all play areas. The skate park remains extremely popular and well used, so we have increased maintenance here to every six months.

We have had a busy year working hard to keeping Hook a safe and attractive place to live.

**Juliet Henham**  
juliet.henham@hook.gov.uk

## Bus Services

Much work had been carried out to secure a marked improvement to the bus service. There was great disappointment last year when the very helpful timetable that was displayed at the last Village Meeting, put together by Stagecoach in liaison with the Transport Working Group, was eventually turned down.

Our MP, Rt. Hon. James Arbuthnot has been working on our behalf to challenge the strategy for transport in this area and progress has been made in highlighting the needs of Hook and the surrounding area.

Stagecoach has produced a new timetable for the 100 bus service, to work in conjunction with the newly routed no.10. The new timetables will start on 14th April 2013 and will route through from Basingstoke to Fleet and Farnborough. The improvements will enable many more possibilities for bus travel. We are pleased that it seems some of our views have been listened to and acted upon.

If the service is well used it will help to ensure that the service becomes a commercially viable route for the bus company, and should secure good bus transport into the future. To this end, we would urge residents to become familiar with the possibilities for bus travel and consider using bus transport for at least some of your journeys.

We hope that in the future we will see improvements to the service, but we cannot expect this if the improved bus services provided is not well used.

Bus travel is being promoted as a greener alternative to using a car. With the much improved timetables, real time information and better infrastructure; buses have the potential to help many people get around in a more sustainable way.

There will still be a need to plug some gaps in service in the shorter term, possibly by providing a taxi bus for some local journeys within the village.

**Mandy Butler**  
mandy.butler@hook.gov.uk



*One of the new Jubilee benches.*

## Money Matters

The Parish Council's share of the Community Charge (the Precept) for the year to April 2012 came to £312,000. This represents a cost equivalent to £1.79 per week for each property in the benchmark Council Tax Band D household. Full audited accounts will be available for inspection at the Parish Council office and on our website later in the year.

The amount paid by each household depends on the number of houses sharing the cost. The coming year is unusual in that the government has withdrawn support for Council Tax Benefit. The cost of this will now be borne by the local councils. For this year only, the government has agreed a grant to local councils, to offset some of the impact of this and Hook will benefit a little from the buffer this has provided.

Hook Parish Council set its precept for 2013-14 at £320,000. This represented an inflationary increase only and is the first increase for over 3 years. However, due to the changes to the way the Council Tax Benefit is funded the cost of the precept is shared amongst a smaller number of households paying full council tax.

At the time of writing it is still not yet clear how this will be shown on the forthcoming Council Tax bills, but we believe this could appear as if Hook Parish Council has increased the precept by 5-6%. As explained above, this is not the case. This reflects the impact of the government's change of policy.

Demands on the Parish Council increase every year as a result of government requirements, social changes and our growing community. Hook residents expect high standards, but unlike the rest of local government, Parish Councils receive no assistance from central funds. Everything we spend comes directly from the residents. This puts substantial pressure on the financial and administrative resources of the Parish Council.

We have continued to build a funding reserve for the refurbishment of the Community Centre. This year £60,000 has again been set aside and the reserve toward the refurbishment is now £370,000. Progress with this project is discussed elsewhere in the Annual Report.

The Parish Council sets aside a budget each year to support the efforts of local organisations and voluntary groups. Details of how to apply for a grant are on our website at [www.hook.gov.uk](http://www.hook.gov.uk).

A number of local voluntary groups and support organisations have struggled with funds in the current economic climate. As a result, grant support increased to £11,000 in the current year.

Money actually spent in 2012/13 can be analysed as follows:-

Expenditure	£'000
Recreation and the Environment	87
Youth Provision	15
Cemetery	3
Street Lighting	4
Grants to local voluntary organisations	11
Office & Admin	20
Professional Fees	12
Wages & Salaries	54
Project & Capital Costs	45
Elections	6
CCTV	5
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>Less Income</b>	
Fees and Charges (Cemetery)	-3
Contribution from Hart	0
Interest, Capital Payments and other Income	-7
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>252</b>
Transfer to reserves – Community Centre	60
<b>Precept for 2012/13</b>	<b>312</b>

Anne Atkins - Parish Clerk  
[clerk@hook.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hook.gov.uk)

**Don't forget to come to the**  
**Annual Village Meeting**  
**Wednesday 24th April 2013**  
**Elizabeth Hall**  
**from 8pm**

There will be a presentation on the Community Centre Refurbishment, plus opportunities to meet a variety of local organisations and to discuss matters of local concern with councillors.

For the latest information about Hook go to [www.hook.gov.uk](http://www.hook.gov.uk), follow @Hookpc on Twitter, like Hook Parish Council on Facebook or join the Announcements Mailing List



## Community Centre Refurbishment

In the last year, the project to refurbish the Community Centre has made substantial progress. It was recognized as early as 2008 that the present building, which was constructed in 1988, is no longer fit for purpose and requires major repairs. The original intention was to undertake repairs and small improvements with a limited spend (£300,000). However, a detailed structural survey and consultations with user groups identified that the 'repaired' building would still not meet the future requirement of the community.

A further complication has been the proposed development of 500 houses in North East Hook. This will inevitably increase the demand for a modern sports and leisure facility. Increasing administrative demands on the Parish Council office will also require extra space to serve the growing Hook Community for many years.

In 2010, a feasibility/design study was commissioned. This has now been completed and the overall design finalized. A proposal for a completely new building was considered, but was rejected, on grounds of the cost of £2.7-3 million. However, the refurbishment of the existing building incorporates the latest energy saving technology and is a completely revised modern structure. It will provide excellent sports facilities and multi-use meeting rooms for clubs and

social activities, as well as a community café and self-service library facility. Cost estimates are still under review and cannot be finalized until the tenders are received and a value analysis conducted. At this time, the previous estimate of £1.2 million still stands, but may increase in line with the final design.

Thirteen construction companies expressed interest in tendering for the project and tender documents were issued in late February. At the time of writing, it is expected that tenders will have been received and evaluated before the Annual Village meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> April. This will enable the Council to present the final details of the design and cost at the meeting.

The Parish Council is well positioned to fund the project. Funding will come from existing reserves previously set aside for this purpose plus a loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The government loan, at very advantageous rates, will then be repaid over a fixed period without any increase in the precept (the Parish element of the Council Tax). Further funding anticipated from grants and the development of North East Hook could enable the loan to be repaid early.

**Robert Leppard**  
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## Parish Personnel – 2012 - 2013



<b>Clerk:</b>	Anne Atkins	Parish Council Office, Hook Community Centre, Ravenscroft	01256 768687
<b>Deputy Clerk:</b>	Christine Randall		or
<b>Amenities Administrator:</b>	Marian Bright		01256 768573
<b>Chairman of Council &amp; Chairman of Finance Committee</b>	Martin Whittaker	1 Redes Close	01256 765902
<b>Vice-chairman of Council</b>	Jeff Burke	21 Hawthorn Rise	01256 766223
<b>Chairman of Amenities Committee</b>	Juliet Henham	15 Pexalls Close	01256 766343
<b>Chairman of Planning Committee</b>	Jane Bonnin	Church Path Cottage, Newnham Road	01256 763287
<b>Chairman of Development Strategy Committee</b>	Anthony Hawkins	6 Rookwood Close	07976 799746
<b>Chairman of Staff Committee</b>	Iain Chalmers	9 Creswell	01256 760433
<b>Members</b>			
	Mandy Butler	5A Gower Crescent	01256 762008
	Hazel Carter-Morgan	34 Birch Grove	01256 768687
	Debra Davies	1 Ravenscroft	01256 760882
	Fergus Kirkham	1 Alderwood Drive	01256 766122
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Hook Parish Council's website is at [www.hook.gov.uk](http://www.hook.gov.uk)

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