

Hook Parish Council

Annual Report 2015 – 2016



Chairman's Report

This has been a busy year for your Council, which combines both elected and co-opted members working on your behalf.

Probably the main issue facing Hook in the last 12 months has been the challenge of managing development. We are a growing community, and need additional housing. But, there is a limit to sensible development, and your Council has been engaged with local action groups and our District Councillors to ensure that new housing plans are proportionate, and sympathetic to our community.

The demand for housing in our part of the country is high, so this is an issue that will run for some time to come. Your input and support to the debate, to both us and your District Councillors, is welcome - and will ensure we continue to represent the best interests of Hook.

Looking into the community itself, we will continue to make improvements to Bassett's Mead, our local green space. And this year sees the launch of Hook in Bloom, a village-wide project that will engage people from all parts of the village, of all ages - and that will give Hook that little bit of brightening up that many of you have asked for. We have also seen a refresh of Health and Wellbeing activities and initiatives, aimed at everyone in the community.

Finally, the Community Centre is open for business again, with a new look and improved facilities. We are very pleased that Hook Village Halls Charitable Association will be managing the Centre on our behalf, and look forward to working with them to make the Community Centre the hub for many of Hook's activities.

Lastly, I would like to thank our new Councillors for the energy they have brought to the Parish Council, which has resulted in many of the initiatives I have described above. And, of course, to our Clerk and officers, without whose support the Council would not function.

Iain Chalmers
chairman@hook.gov.uk

HOOK In Bloom

Residents love the community feel of Hook but a regularly heard criticism is that the village centre could do with some smartening up.

Although a lot of progress will be made in the coming months, 2016 can only be the beginning of **Hook in Bloom**. The structure of the village centre cannot be a quick fix but there are lots of ways that we can all help towards the aesthetic improvement of its heart and Hook as a whole.

So thanks to an energetic and enthusiastic band of volunteers, backed by various organisations including the Parish Council, Hart District Council, Hampshire County Council, Hook is now on its way to **Bloom**.

Everyone should benefit from **In Bloom**. From the child who proudly displays their prize won in an **In Bloom** competition, to the person who wins the best front garden, to the large business that welcomes its international investor visiting Hook because they are proud of the area where their business is located.

The project is starting to attract sponsorship and grants. The first two major grants are from Tesco as part of their **#BagsOfHelp** initiative to give a huge boost to the village planting and from the **Big Lottery Fund** as part of Hook's Health and Wellbeing grant to help with publicity, the business and residential competition and with costs for the village show.

In Bloom has three main areas of activity:

- A residents' and businesses' **In Bloom** competition with 5 entry categories this year
- A **Village Show** on September 11th which will include a traditional Flower and Produce Show
- In Bloom** planting schemes to cheer up the centre of the village, identified areas around the village and approaches to Hook

The idea behind the new **Hook In Bloom** residential and business competitions is that they will support and enhance the main planting schemes.

For more information or to become part of the In Bloom team please email sue.hinton@hook.gov.uk Hook in Bloom is supported by the **Big Lottery Fund** and Tesco's **#BagsOfHelp**.

See more about **HOOK In Bloom**
at www.hookinbloom.org



LOTTERY FUNDED



Money Matters

The Parish Council's share of the Community Charge (known as the Precept) for 2015-16 was set at £321,400. This was topped up by Hart with a small contribution for the Council Tax Support scheme. This will no longer be passed on in future years.

The Council resolved to keep the precept at £321,400 again for 2016-17. This takes into account an adjustment for inflation and absorbs the loss of Council Tax Support.

We strive to maintain a balance between the need to provide the quality of facilities expected by residents whilst keeping a tight control of running costs of the services provided by the Parish Council and management of all its assets - open spaces, such as Bassetts Mead, playgrounds, sports pitches, cemeteries, street lighting, trees, public art and Christmas lights and more.

In practice, Council Tax for a Band D household will be, at £98.18 pa (£1.89 pw), slightly lower than in 2015-2016.

We continue to offer free pre-application planning consultations, to work closely on the development of the Hook Neighbourhood Plan and emerging Hart Local Plan. We support a number of local organisations, events and charities, such as The Base Youth Centre and Hook Christmas Cracker. Where possible we obtain additional funding to enable enhancements to the facilities in Hook and secure them for the long term.

The Community Centre project is still within the 12 month maintenance period and the final account has yet to be settled. At the time of writing, payments made for the construction contract totalled £1,544,071.

Full audited accounts will be available for inspection in the Parish Council Office and on our website later in the year.

Precept spent in 2015/16 can be analysed as follows:

Expenditure	£'000
Recreation and the Environment	90.0
Youth Provision	15.5
Cemetery	6.3
Street Lighting	4.0
Grants to local voluntary organisations	14.0
Office & Admin	25.5
Professional Fees	22.0
Wages & Salaries	72.1
Project & Capital Costs	18.0
Democratic & Elections	6.0
Other Expenditure	
1 CCTV	0.0
2 Repayments on CC Loan	60.0
Gross Expenditure	333.4
Less Income	
Fees and Charges (Cemetery)	-5.0
Contribution from Hart	-3.0
Interest, capital payments and other income	0.0
Net Expenditure	-8.0
Transfer to reserves	4.0
Precept for 2014/15	321.4

Anne Atkins - Parish Clerk
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Jane Worlock and Amanda Whittaker promoting Hook in Bloom at Tesco in March

Neighbourhood Plan

Although local communities have always been consulted about planning issues, until recently there was no effective way for them really to influence the shape of development in their local area. This was changed by the Localism Act, where permission was given for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans.

Work on the Hook Neighbourhood Plan started in late 2014, but it has taken some time to understand clearly what the Plan could and should cover, and how it would work. It is now clear that the Plan will consist of two parts:

- Land use policies, covering the location of new housing development, style, facilities etc. When the Plan is approved these will be legally binding on the District Council.
- Community policies, covering how residents would like village facilities to develop, e.g. improvements to the centre, new sports and leisure facilities, locally funded bus services. These will essentially set the strategic direction for Hook and are intended to be used by the Parish and District Councils to inform future changes to Hook. These policies will not be legally binding.

Unfortunately, because of the way the Housing Options for Hart's Local Plan have appeared, most of the development land in Hook will be controlled directly by Hart rather than the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the community policies will prove invaluable in guiding the growth of the village.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is currently finalising the draft policies that will guide the future of Hook. Once these are complete, the Group will be organising a public consultation to get feedback from residents. When this is complete, work will start on collecting evidence to support the policies.

The next step will be to produce the final plan and have it approved by a planning inspector, followed by a formal referendum where it will be submitted to the approval of all Hook residents.

The production of the Plan is proving to be a long and involved process, partly because of the uncertainties in Hart's Local Plan. However, the volunteers on the Steering Group are still plugging away and hope to make rapid progress this year.

If you would like a direct say in the future of Hook, you can find out more about the Neighbourhood Plan at www.np.hook.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can contact Christine Randall in the Parish Office.

All Steering Group meetings are open to everyone, and people with special skills, expertise and interests are always welcome to ask to join the Group.

Martin Whittaker
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Planning Committee

The Hop Garden Road Appeal was heard in May 2015, with representatives from the Parish Council, Hook Action against Overdevelopment, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and local residents all speaking against the proposed housing development. The result we all hoped for came through in July and the Inspector rejected the appeal.

Landata House in Station Road has finally been demolished and Taylor Wimpey has recently submitted an application to increase the number of apartments to 70 from 50. Another well-known building, Greenwell, (Providence House), on the Bartley Wood Business Park overlooking the pond, was given automatic approval by the government to be converted into apartments. They are in the process of being converted and already being marketed by a local estate agent.

We have had a number of applications for extensions, which is understandable with the current house prices and stricter criteria for mortgages and larger deposits required. Unfortunately though, there have been instances where residents have been advised by builders that planning permission is not required.

There are a number of areas in Hook where permitted development rights have been removed, so planning permission is in fact required. Hart offer a pre-application meeting for a small fee, which could save a retrospective planning application being refused and the extension having to be removed, which is costly and distressing. The Parish Council are also happy to meet residents to discuss an application.

Debra Davies
debra.davies@hook.gov.uk

Amenities Report

Bassetts Mead is an area of public open space located to the east of Holt Park. The Parish Council works closely with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, which manages Bassetts Mead on the council's behalf. Residents who walk there will have noticed that, in the summer, extensive work was undertaken to clear several large trees that had fallen across the River Whitewater.

In addition, the Bassetts Mead car park adjacent to Doctor's Acre was enlarged, improving access for visitors. Over the coming year, further work is planned to improve the site and the Parish Council would welcome comments from residents and visitors alike concerning this area of natural green space.

The play equipment in all children's recreational areas, including the skate park, is constantly monitored and undergoes weekly safety inspections. and an annual inspection by RoSPA. Any remedial work, or necessary replacement of equipment, is undertaken as a matter of priority.

Jane Worlock
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Health and Wellbeing Activities

A new initiative by the Parish Council, focusing on the Health & Wellbeing of Hook residents was started in 2015.

Hook has been awarded grants from the Big Lottery Fund (for Wellbeing) and Tesco plc Community Support (for Hook In Bloom). Various village activities will thus be financially supported by both of these awards to the benefit of the whole community.

Recent research published by The New Economics Foundation, which assessed the latest scientific evidence, created a set of five simple actions to improve wellbeing in everyday life. These 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' are:

- **Connect**
- **Be Active**
- **Take Notice**
- **Keep Learning**
- **Give**

Following receipt of funding, the Parish Council has facilitated a Health & Wellbeing Event held on 7th April 2016 at the Community Centre. It has also initiated: expansion and production of both printed and online versions of the Hook Health and Wellbeing Directory; support for the Hook Village Show on 11th September 2016; rebranding of the Taxi Bus and the launching of **Hook in Bloom** to festoon the village with colour.

HOOK'S CHARITIES AND ORGANISATIONS

There are lots of great activities, organisations, charities and clubs operating in Hook, plus new ones that have recently started up since the re-opening of Hook Community Centre.

However, not everyone is aware of them and many could do with a publicity boost. So, thanks to grant funding, leaflet drops to publicise activities and events in both the Community Centre and Elizabeth Hall have been undertaken throughout Hook.

With its thriving village atmosphere, Hook is a great place to live and work. There are many diverse recreational activities and events on offer for our residents and visitors to participate in or simply enjoy as a spectator.

Hook is truly the place where '**community means everyone**'.

Jane Worlock
jane.worlock@hook.gov.uk

For the latest information about Hook go to www.hook.gov.uk, follow @Hookpc on Twitter, like **Hook Parish Council** on Facebook or join the **Hook Announcements Mailing List**



Don't forget the Annual Village Meeting: Wednesday May 18th at 8pm in the Community Centre

Parish Council Personnel: 2015 – 2016



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Vice-chairman of Council	Fergus Kirkham	1 Alderwood Drive	01256 766122
Chairman of Planning Committee	Debra Davies	1 Ravenscroft	01256 760882
Members	Jane Bonnin	Church Path Cottage, Church Path, Newnham Road	01256 763287
	Jeff Burke	21 Hawthorn Rise	01256 766223
	Sue Hinton	15 Selborne Close	01256 763753
	Barry Myall	23 Lynwood Gardens	01256 764640
	John Orchard	15 Painters Pightle	01256 767521
	Mark Potterton	10 Oak Tree Drive	07824 317327
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Hook Parish Council's website is at www.hook.gov.uk

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