

Hook Parish Council

Annual Report 2001-2002



Chairman's report

The start of the last Parish year was a period of great sadness for the Parish. David Deadman, our Parish Clerk for over thirty years, lost his battle with cancer and died on April 18th. Only the week before he ran the Annual Village Meeting in his usual efficient manner.

David had been guide, mentor and friend to generations of Parish Councillors. He worked tirelessly for the village and played an active part in most village projects. Indeed he was often instrumental in showing what was possible. It was a privilege to know him and to work with him. He is very much missed.

We are very fortunate to have David Ridley as our new Parish Clerk (promoted from deputy) and Anne Atkins as the new deputy.

One of the great weaknesses of local government is that it can often take a long time to get things done. Even when your cause is just it takes stamina, perseverance and dogged determination to get a result. So it gives us enormous pleasure to see the improvements at the Dorchester Arms junction finally take place. Our thanks to our District and County Councillors for their support over many years and their assistance in bringing this about.

Traffic and in particular traffic speed is always high on the list of concerns raised by residents. Here we work in partnership with Hampshire Highways. The traffic calming scheme in Newnham Road has been a great success and will shortly be extended with an additional "pinch point" near Carleton Close.

We then moved our attention to Reading Road, where we had received many requests from residents to introduce some sort of scheme there. Technically this is a much more difficult road to manage, but Highways were able to come up with a scheme that we thought was worthy of a trial.

As always with these schemes, we start first with a trial using low cost temporary installations. The experiment will run for 3 to 6 months, after which the

temporary installations will be re-used elsewhere in the County. The Parish Council will then have to decide whether a permanent scheme would provide the benefits we wish and judge whether the cost represents good value for the village.

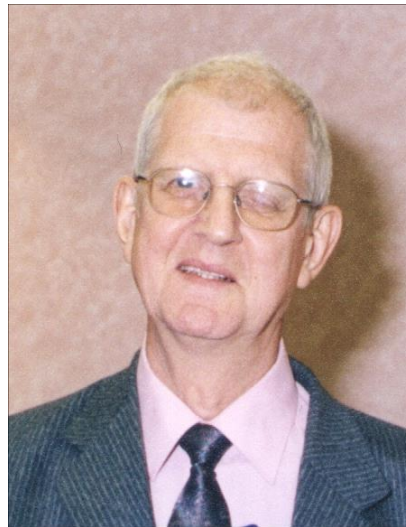
A key part of this decision is always the comments we receive from residents. Indeed during the first weeks of the experimental scheme being installed, we received a large number of comments and letters. At first the comments were mostly negative but have become more positive as the trial progresses. The new traffic islands seem to have near universal approval, whilst the "pinch points" at the A30 end are disliked by virtually everyone. The main problems seem to be where traffic does not slow down or give way to the priority flow at the pinch points.

Within the village we have had a number of contentious planning applications. As a Parish Council, we try very hard to provide residents with all the information they need to make their views known to the Planning Authority (Hart District Council). The Parish Council makes representations on your behalf, but these carry significantly more weight when accompanied by personal letters from residents. This approach does work. There were notable successes such as the rejection of the proposals to demolish Pinecroft and Hazelcroft in Station Road and the rejection of the mobile phone mast at the junction of the A30 and the B3349.

For further information about the Parish Council please visit our web site at www.hook.gov.uk. Residents are always welcome at the meetings of the Parish Council, either just to watch, or under our "ten minute rule", any topic you believe is of interest can be raised. I would like to thank all those who have taken the opportunity to do just that.

Lastly can I remind residents that the current period of office for all the Parish Councillors finishes in 2003. Elections are usually held in early May. I very much hope residents will consider putting themselves forward. Together we really can make a difference.

Tony Taylor
tony.taylor@hook.gov.uk



David Deadman - Parish Clerk 1968-2001

Amenities Committee

This has been a particularly busy year for the Parish Amenities Committee with several projects for improvements already underway or in the process of being planned.

The Deputy Clerk, Anne Atkins, has undertaken much of this year's additional work on Amenities matters since starting her role in September. It is much to Anne's credit that a great deal has been achieved so far and the Parish Council has a number of clear plans for what needs to be done in the future.

This time last year the village was still suffering from a very wet winter. Drainage had once again become a problem in a number of areas, notably Wellworth and Hartletts Parks. In order to alleviate the flooding problem in Wellworth Park, work has begun on a soak-away and improved drainage next to the path. Similar work will be undertaken in the area of Hartletts Park, near the entrance to the Schools.

At last year's annual meeting, my colleague Colin Brown outlined some of the activities planned for the year. Among these was an ambitious proposal to convert part of the tennis court area in Hartlett's Park to a multi-function facility to provide for a wider variety of sporting activity. I am very pleased to report that the planning of this is now underway.

The long-awaited transfer of the land to the Parish Council for the completion of the Children's Playground at Hop Garden Road is being progressed and work on planning will commence shortly.

As part of a review of all Hook's amenity areas, all the play facilities in the village have been reviewed for any repairs or improvements. As a result, the toddlers' play area at the Elizabeth Hall is to be completely replaced. Much of the consultation and

pre-planning of this was undertaken by Anne Atkins, who received responses from 30 parents, with some particular pieces of equipment highlighted by the children. In addition, the multi-activity equipment in the toddler's play area in Hartlett's Park will be refurbished and the play area in Wellworth's Park will have remedial work to reduce the waterlogging.

The Dog Waste bins are to be repaired, and additional bins are to be added. Some of the bins will be moved, to try and encourage those dog owners who seem to "miss them" when exercising their pets to get into the habit of acting responsibly.

Members of the Hook 2000 Group attended the October Amenities Committee meeting and presented a proposal scheme to improve the landscaping of the land in the centre of the village between Grand Parade and Station Road. As a result, a joint working party with members of the Amenity Committee and Hook 2000 Group to produce a workable worthwhile plan for the renovation of what could be a very attractive centrepiece to the village.

Following the completion of the extension to the skate park, the youngsters who use it highlighted some inherent problems. The contractor was recalled and changes made. Also additional tarmac and concrete has been laid in place of the grass and gravel, to improve usability and enhance safety. The final part of this, concreting beneath the half-pipe should be completed by the time of reading this report.

Amenities Committee Meetings usually occur on alternate Wednesdays. Agendas for meetings are published on Parish notice boards. Members of the public are welcome to raise any amenity matters to me, to the clerk, the deputy clerk or any councillor.

Allen Saltmarsh
allen.saltmarsh@hook.gov.uk

National Tree Week

In late November 2001, we were pleased to support National Tree Week.

The aim this year was to involve as many young people and children as possible in planting native trees. In collaboration with Hart District Council, the Parish Council planted 24 trees.

Children from both Hook Schools and three pre-schools (Elizabeth Hall, St. John's and Community Centre) took part in planting the trees in five locations in the village.

Anne Atkins
anne.atkins@hook.gov.uk

Right: Children from the Community Centre Pre-school get to grips with one of the new trees in Hartletts Park.



Planning Committee

All local Planning Applications are sent to the Parish Council for comment. A member, usually the Planning Committee Chairman, always makes a site visit before the case is considered at one of our meetings. Regulations require that all Planning Applications are decided within a strict timescale, so as to be fair to applicants and objectors. The Committee meets every two weeks so as to provide an opinion to Hart, which is responsible for making the decision.

We have reviewed over 150 applications over the past year. Although the majority are straightforward conservatories or single storey extensions that will not inconvenience anyone, about 30 of the total caused concern to the Parish Council and to neighbours, so that these applications were contested and in most cases refused. A small number of applications have caused very serious local concerns and on these we have worked hard with residents and our District Councillors so as to try to ensure that these applications were rejected.

Our meetings are open to the Public, dates are published in Hook Focus and agendas are on the Parish Council notice boards, so if you see an application that concerns you, please come along. If you receive a letter from Hart about an application and have a concern, please ring the Parish Council as soon as possible.

Following a Public Enquiry, and despite Parish and many local objections, permission was given in November 2000 for 280 houses on land at Holt Lane. Work on the first phase of 110 houses at the northern end of the site will start this Summer. As part of the legal agreement,

Berkeley Homes will finance putting the existing overhead power lines underground, a new classroom at each of our two schools, community facilities and the laying out of a Country Park between the River Whitewater and the development.

The intrusion of phone masts on the landscape and the potential health risks are a major concern right across the country, yet most people want a mobile phone that works! Government policy is that operators should share masts and we have concluded that the least undesirable site in Hook is in Osborne Way, as it is both well away from houses and schools, and in an industrial area. The original site was set up by Orange but has capacity for more operators. As a result of strong public opinion, One2One has twice been refused permission for a mast on the A30/ B3349 roundabout and Vodafone has been refused permission for a new mast to replace their existing one at the station.

Overall government planning policy is to favour new housing on sites that are already developed in some way. The theory is to develop these brownfield sites rather than cover yet more greenfield sites with housing. The Old Foundry site falls into the brownfield classification and has long been regarded by us as more suitable for housing than industrial use. However we believe that the density of the application currently being considered is some thirty percent too high. I will comment further on this particular application, and the possible impact of this shift in policy in favour of brownfield sites at the Annual Village Meeting.

Antony Hunter

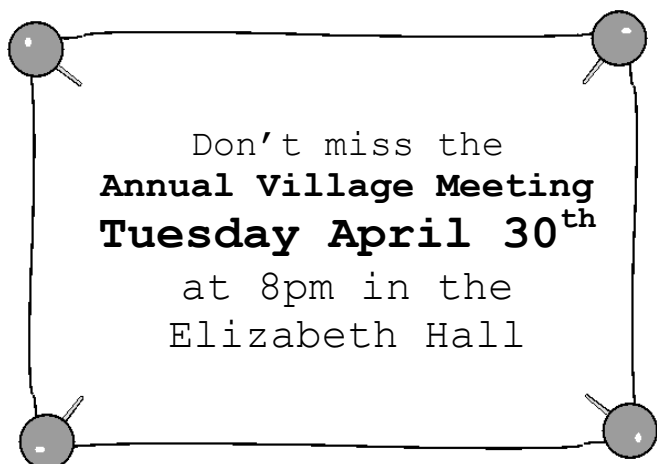
antony.hunter@hook.gov.uk

New and old faces

Michael Clark stood down from the Parish Council during the winter. Our thanks go to him for all his hard work, together with our best wishes for a more restful future.

Stepping into the vacant seat is Nigel Carpenter, who will be known to many villagers as a long-time member of Hook Action Group.

At the other end of the scale, both David Burke and Jane Bonnin have now been Hook Parish Councillors for twenty years.





Money Matters

The Parish Council's share of the Community Charge for the year to April 2002 came to £189,000. This represents a charge equivalent to £1.25 per week for each band D property.

Full audited accounts will be available for inspection after the end of the financial year. These will also be available on the Parish Council Web site.

The precept for the year to April 2003 has been kept unchanged at £189,000. The Parish receives virtually no assistance from central funds. Everything we spend comes directly from the residents.

As a Parish Council, we strive to maintain a balance between the need to provide facilities for all residents whilst keeping a tight control of costs. At £1.25 per week (per band D property) we believe we offer first-rate value for money.

Tony Taylor

tony.taylor@hook.gov.uk

The money actually spent during the last year can be analysed as follows: -

Running expenses (salaries, expenses, stationery, insurance, typing, utility costs, office equipment)	£ 41,100
Youth facilities	£ 8,600
Street Lighting/ Security	£ 12,400
Loan repayments	£ 19,700
Gardening/ Park keeping/Cleansing	£ 51,300
Grants	£ 11,700
Village Projects	
Playground at Elizabeth Hall	£ 20,000
Traffic calming & footpaths	£ 18,000
Community Projects	£ 30,000
Community Centre repairs	£ 20,000

Total Spend	£232,800
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Less other income	(£13,100)
Less transferred from reserves	(£30,700)

Precept

£189,000

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Parish Personnel to May 2001



Clerk:	David Ridley	24 Bramshott Drive	01256 768573
Deputy Clerk:	Anne Atkins	1 Painters Pightle	01256 768687
Chairman	Tony Taylor	45 Middle Mead	01256 762925
Vice-chairman & Chairman of Planning Committee	Antony Hunter	Moles Meadow, Elms Road	01256 762043
Chairman of Amenity Committee	Allen Saltmarsh	119 Ravenscroft	01256 764658
Chairman of Village Garden and Cemetery Committee	Gillian Morgan	14 Garden Close	01256 764214
	Jane Bonnin	Church Path Cottage, Newnham Road	01256 763287
	Colin Brown	1 Oakhanger Close	0794 1211609
	David Burke	41 Goose Green	01256 762776
	Nigel Carpenter	27 Goose Green	01256 762936
	Janet Deller	9 Chalky Copse	01256 764132
	Peter Jennions	Cedar Court, Reading Road	01256 762178
	Peter Moore	69 Middle Mead	01256 764467
	Martin Whittaker	Foundry Cottage, London Road	01256 765902

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



Parish Council Clerk: 768573 (24 hour Answerphone)

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