

## EAST WOODHAY PARISH COUNCIL - COUNCIL STATEMENT 2022-23

### QUICK SUMMARY OF YEAR - Chairman Councillor Mitchell

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all councillors who have worked hard in their spare time for the community. These roles are voluntary and at times the councillors must engage in tasks that require the full resolve of a volunteer and for that I thank them for their hard work and dedication. Having ten councillors is a good thing as it means that more hands can ensure that we do more for East Woodhay.

I would also like to thank our clerk Amy White and our litter warden Patricia Barnes who both work extremely hard for the Parish.

The biggest highlight for the EW parish must be the completion into the Planning rule book of the Neighbourhood Plan. This has been a herculean task for many people, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for their many hours worked to conclude this project. This document will be our roadmap for the future. A document for the community, by the community, with significant parishioner involvement and many, long hours of presentations, consultation, debate, and discussion. THANK-YOU all. This has been 6+ years in the making and the project is now successfully concluded. This means that the contents will be used in the planning process and from a fiscal point of view it will mean EWPC can access the full 25% available to the community in any SIL money, as opposed to accessing only 15% if EWPC had no NP in place.

Your East Woodhay Parish Council has completed and is participating in many projects. Each Council member will now give an update from their area of responsibility.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE – Cllr Mitchell

#### Summary:

CATEGORY	INCOME / PAYMENT	SUB CATEGORY	INCOME	EXPENSE	BALANCE	
ANNUAL	INCOME	Bank Interest	£ 751		£ 751	
		Grants	£ 2,052		£ 2,052	
		Precept	£ 36,660		£ 36,660	
		Rental Income	£ 600		£ 600	
	<b>INCOME Total</b>			<b>£ 40,063</b>		<b>£ 40,063</b>
	PAYMENT	Administration		£ 3,615	-£ 3,615	
		Maintenance		£ 16,519	-£ 16,519	
		Payroll		£ 16,378	-£ 16,378	
		Planning		£ 126	-£ 126	
		Donations		£ 4,350	-£ 4,350	
<b>PAYMENT Total</b>			<b>£ 40,989</b>	<b>-£ 40,989</b>		
<b>ANNUAL Total</b>			<b>£ 40,063</b>	<b>£ 40,989</b>	<b>-£ 926</b>	
GRANTS	INCOME	Grants	£ 6,984		£ 6,984	
		S106	£ 6,051		£ 6,051	
	<b>INCOME Total</b>			<b>£ 13,035</b>		<b>£ 13,035</b>
	PAYMENT	S106 Spend		£ 7,208	-£ 7,208	
		Grant Spend		£ 820	-£ 820	
<b>PAYMENT Total</b>			<b>£ 8,028</b>	<b>-£ 8,028</b>		
<b>GRANTS Total</b>			<b>£ 13,035</b>	<b>£ 8,028</b>	<b>£ 5,008</b>	
PC RESERVES	PAYMENT	Administration		£ 2,126	-£ 2,126	
		Maintenance		£ 6,803	-£ 6,803	
		Planning		£ 1,870	-£ 1,870	
	<b>PAYMENT Total</b>			<b>£ 10,798</b>	<b>-£ 10,798</b>	
<b>PC RESERVES Total</b>			<b>£ 10,798</b>	<b>-£ 10,798</b>		
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>£ 53,098</b>	<b>£ 59,815</b>	<b>-£ 6,717</b>	

#### General Comment on Finances

The EWPC has had a reserve of over £40K for many years. The problem has always been finding projects to spend the money on. The EWPC principle for ANY capital expenditure is, 'Can we get a grant to help fund that project', first, and then use our built-up community financial reserves, second. This principle has served EWPC very well over the years and the diligent use of S106/CIL monies in the past few years has meant considerable amounts of money being spent for the benefit of EWPC residents at no tax cost to EWPC residents. However, the PC always looks for ways to use the reserves on projects of value to the community.

**INCOME :** The PC derives its income from the annual Precept, applied for grants and a small amount of rented income.

We have split up the Income and Payments in this year's report into the following 3 'Buckets'.

**1) Annual Run Rate Payments**

This is the income and expenditure associated with everyday running of the Parish

**2) Grants Income and Payments**

This is monies the PC has applied for in grants or donations received and the associated projects costs that this money has been spent on

**3) PC Reserves Payments**

This is monies spent on projects that the PC has deemed sensible investments to be made from the PC reserve funds.

1. Annual run rate payments : Running EWPC parish have been overspent by £926
2. Grants : £5,008 added to reserves owing to monies left to PC from a parishioners will
3. PC Reserves spend £10,798

Controlled spending from the reserves is a good thing, as it is using the money rather than the cash sitting in the bank doing nothing apart from depreciating. See Financial Waterfall in Appendix of this report.

**Major Projects Undertaken in FY22/23**

1. Footpath installation by Meadow Brook
2. Culvert of ditch and installation of lay-by to allow parking at surgery
3. Installation of picnic benches and table tennis tables
4. New CCTV equipment (Reserves)
5. Made safe several trees on PC property (Run rate)
6. Consultancy costs and completion of Neighbourhood plan (Reserves)

**PC Charity Donations in FY22/23**

In the last financial year, the PC provided £4,350 in donations (FY21/22 £1,500)

MP McKinnon for English School for Ukraine residents	£1,500
St Martin's Guild for Queen's Jubilee	£500
Woolton Hill Argyle football Club towards ride-on mower	£850
St Thomas Church Fund for Heating	£1,500

**Current Account:** The PC current account at the end of the budget year stands at £4,642 (31st March 2023). £41,046 is held in an interest-bearing account with Redwoods Bank.

## **AMENITIES COMMITTEE – Cllr Rand**

The Amenities team have a number of responsibilities within the parish, including:

- Parish Field and Brownies Corner
- Recreation grounds at Woolton Hill and Heath End and facilities therein, for example benches, picnic tables, exercise equipment, tennis court and CCTV
- Upkeep of the war memorials at St Thomas' Church and East End, and the Elliot Cohen Memorial in Church Road
- Upkeep of the bus shelters at Ball Hill and in Broadlayings
- Phone Boxes at Ball Hill and East End
- Five parish notice boards
- Trees growing on EWPC-owned land- namely within the WH recreation ground, HE recreation ground, Parish field, Brownies Corner (to include Meadowbrook once land ownership comes to EWPC)

The regular meetings and minutes, together with our Terms of Reference are published on the Parish Council website and together with the Parish Clerk, Amy White, the committee consists of the Councillors Susan Cooper, Paul Hurst, Carie Roots and Mark Rand is Chair.

The Amenities time is split between projects and ongoing maintenance:

£2,757.50 has been spent on five circular picnic tables in the Woolton Hill recreation ground. This is part of the S106 monies mainly generated from the building work at Meadowbrook and there is £266 remaining of the money assigned to 'play equipment' in WH rec. These tables have proved to have been particularly popular, especially when children are being dropped off and collected from the Woolton Hill schools. In addition, it is good to see the usage of all equipment which has been installed over the past few years.

As part of the S106 contract for the Harwood Paddock / Meadowbrook development, Bloor Homes agreed to return community land at Meadowbrook back to East Woodhay Parish Council via Basingstoke & Deane Council. Although this is now awaiting Land Registry, Amenities have now taken over routine maintenance of the grass which is now being cut by Scofell as part of the annual maintenance agreement.

The entrance notices at both recreation grounds were looking shabby and have been replaced as have the gates to the WH recreation ground.

Following some antisocial behaviour, an extra CCTV camera in WH recreation ground has been installed so that all of the car park is now covered.

The war memorial outside St Thomas Church and The Elliot Cohen have both been cleaned and look so much improved.

Cllr Roots , who is leading our biodiversity program, has provided a calendar of observation for the Parish Field for the year, as well as options and recommendations on further planting and trees. The next steps are to keep a visual diary of the field per month to record what is growing and review proposals with Sean Early who rents the field

As usual there is a significant amount of regular maintenance required across the owned land e.g. relating to trees, play equipment, hedges, paths which the team have managed.

## **FOOTPATHS REPORT – Cllr Watson**

For various personal reasons, there has been little progress for the best part of this year, although two landowners have now indicated a willingness to cooperate with the replacement of stiles with self-closing gates, which is very encouraging.

Two inter-related issues have proved problematic. The first is funding. The funds which HCC apparently allocated to this project last year have now been “retrospectively rejected”, and I now have to re-apply to HCC for funds on an ad hoc basis (i.e. for individual footpaths) rather than for the project as a whole. Apart from the time this will take (there are just over 40 footpaths in the Parish!), there is no guarantee that funds will be forthcoming from HCC. I am aware that other sources of funding may be available, but in order to make a start it would be very helpful if the PC could let me know how much it is willing to allocate to this project.

The second issue concerns supply and installation. I have recently been let down by a potential contractor who would have procured, stored and installed the necessary materials, so I now need to look elsewhere. HCC have provided the names of their preferred suppliers (one of whom I contacted a couple of years ago), and I shall be contacting them again shortly. For that purpose, it would again be very helpful to know the extent to which the PC is willing to fund this project, even if only on an initial basis.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE & NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:**  
**Cllr. Titcomb (Planning) & Cllr Hurst (Neighbourhood Plan)**

The most exciting news for us is the approval of the Neighbourhood Plan after many years of hard work by many volunteers in liaison with local parishioners– more on that below.

Firstly though a reminder of who we are. The Planning Committee consists of five councillors: Simon Bowden, Susan Cooper, Martin Hainge, Andrew Watson and me, Karen Titcomb. My thanks are due to them for unstintingly giving their time to the many planning issues in this parish, and especially to Susan, who undertakes a huge job of dealing with Agendas, Minutes and responses on planning matters which roll around every two weeks.

As with all Parish Councillors, we are volunteers with an interest in how the Parish develops from a planning perspective. We are not experts; we do not have any power of decision or enforcement. Our endeavour is to represent the ‘local’ view on planning matters, including appropriateness of design or impact on the local community or environment. We will always encourage individuals to make their own comments to Basingstoke and Deane’s Planning Department, which generally makes final decisions regarding planning matters. And now, of course, we will all be able to refer to the Neighbourhood Plan when making planning assessments, which should lend weight to the local perspective when considering the possible impact of potential development within the Parish.

We continue to meet twice a month, usually on Mondays at 6pm in either East Woodhay Village Hall or Woolton Hill Church Hall. Anyone is welcome to join us – just let the Parish Clerk know in advance so that we can put out a chair for you! Agenda and venue are published three working days in advance of each meeting on the Parish Council website. EWPC responses to applications are available on the Parish website shortly after each meeting and full details are on the BDBC Planning Portal. We are always available to talk through planning matters.

This year (May 2022 – May 2023) we have:

- Continued to liaise with the team at the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Over 99% of our Parish falls within the AONB and it is important that their views are given greater weight in planning decisions in the years ahead – underlined by the importance of the AONB within our Neighbourhood Plan.

- Reviewed and published our Terms of Reference in tandem with production of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Reviewed some some 92 planning applications to BDBC including:
  - c. 21 applications for work on trees (either with TPOs or within the conservation areas of the Parish.)
  - c. 14 applications for new builds in back gardens or on agricultural land – which will deliver approximately 24 new homes. Plus the additional potential of some 300 houses in Wash Water and up to 50 in Mount Road (the latter still pending planning application).
  - c. 57 other planning matters, including retrospective planning, extensions, swimming pools, greenhouses, traveller sites, oak framed buildings, garages, home offices.

With most planning applications within the Parish, we will endeavour to undertake a roadside view of the site before our response is made. We are also available for applicants to discuss their proposals with us in advance of making an application, which sometimes makes the process easier.

#### Planning Issues Confronting This Parish Going Forward:

- We continue to work with neighbouring Parishes, which are facing similar threats, to ensure that we protect green spaces between our hamlets and villages and that there is no joining up into one urban conurbation.
- The proposed development, submitted by Bewley Homes, for up to 350 new homes at Wash Water is a hugely inappropriate development on this site and our objections are set out on the BDBC Planning Portal. This proposed development involves both East Woodhay and Highclere Parish Councils. Working with Highclere, we continue to enlist the help of a Planning Consultant regarding this highly complex (and controversial) application.
- The proposal, mentioned last year and still not yet formally submitted, by Thakeham Homes for 50 new homes in Mount Road, is another development which we would be unable to support; among other reasons for objecting, it is contrary to many of the planning policies which are contained within our Neighbourhood Plan.
- There is a growing trend within the Parish for ad hoc development applications in the hamlets – developing land adjacent to existing properties. The cumulative effect of these will add to the erosion of the countryside.
- This last point seems to be a recurring theme in each Report - we continue to be unable to support any but the most exceptional applications for the construction of additional new homes in the Parish, outside the Settlement Policy Boundary. Whilst BDBC have not yet fulfilled their 5 year housing requirement, this Parish has more than fulfilled its quota, as confirmed in last year's Authority Monitoring Report and acknowledged with a zero allocation in the ongoing Local Plan review. We have no identified need for additional housing and cannot support the continuing 'urbanisation' of our Parish and the unplanned 'sprawl' into the countryside by which we are presently threatened.
- We continue to be concerned about the amount of additional traffic which will inevitably be attracted to the new 'Malverleys' development in East End and the adverse impact the project may have on the AONB, Conservation Area, and local residents. Certainly, the state and safety of the roads leading to East End continue to be of huge concern.
- Consistency is also a key word for us going forward; whilst each planning application must be assessed on its own merits the application of planning policy has not been consistent within our Parish in the past 12 months, causing some surprising decisions.

This year has at last seen the successful completion of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP). I think when this project was kicked off quite a few years ago no one had an appreciation of the huge effort that would be required by volunteers to reach completion. Just this year alone has seen large amounts of time devoted by volunteers to achieve success.

The following stages have been completed over this last year:

- The successful rerun of 7 weeks of Regulation 16 Consultation (due to the legal requirement to cover off the environmental impact analysis of nitrate drainage into the Test Valley). At the end of this process the NP had gone through at least 21 weeks of public consultation.
- Examination of the NP by an independent examiner and the production of a report making recommendations on the legal planning compliance of the document. This identified only a small number of required changes.
- An update of the NP in line with the recommendations.
- A review of the updated NP by the examiner and approval for the NP to move to referendum.
- Planning and organisation of the referendum by BDBC and the NP team.

The referendum for the NP was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023. This covered the whole parish and was successful with 95% voting in favour of the NP. There were 446 votes in favour (95.1%) and 22 votes against. The referendum had a turnout of 20.5% (regarded as a good turnout for an NP by BDBC).

Following the “yes” vote at referendum, the NP was approved at BDBC full council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023. There then followed 6 weeks for any final legal challenge. This was completed in April and the NP was fully approved. The NP now forms part of the statutory development plan for the area. Planning decisions in the parish will now be made in accordance with the BDBC Local Plan and the NP. Indeed the NP is now being actively used by BDBC for planning decisions.

I would like to thank the many people who have been involved in the NP project over the years. In particular I would like to thank the final team who managed the project over the last few years, especially keeping the project going through the Covid lock down period. How we miss those long Zoom sessions. I would also like to thank the whole community for the support and patience throughout the long process. Community input and feedback has been critical to the development of the NP. Please remember this is very much a community document and outlines the community’s vision and objectives for the parish.

BDBC will now monitor compliance to the NP from the planning process and will report on this annually.

Hard copies of the NP can be viewed at BDBC offices, Basingstoke Discovery Centre, Newbury Library and from the EWPC parish clerk. All the NP documents (the many, many documents) can be found on the BDBC website if anyone has a sleepless night.

All the NP process this year (regulation 16 consultation, Examination, and the referendum) has been funded by BDBC.

## **HIGHWAYS REPORT – Cllr Dick**

### **HIGHWAYS REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE**

The past year has seen increasing levels of concern raised by parishioners about the state of local major and minor roads. East Woodhay Parish Council (EWPC) has been very much aware of the number of potholes in the roads and lanes of the parish, many of which date back to reduced maintenance during the Covid period.

Most notable in its progressive deterioration has been the main A343 highway between Penwood and the A34, which, although actually outside the Parish boundary, is a route regularly taken by the majority of parishioners and service vehicles to gain access to homes businesses in our parish.

However, the EWPC has no authority for allocation of county council resources to the maintenance of local highways nor indeed any budget of its own to rectify urgent issues. Nonetheless, over the last twelve months it has continually sought resolution of these increasing problems by Hampshire County Council, both by seeking to gain action through local County Councillor Tom Thacker, and more recently by direct communications with the HCC Highways Engineering department. We have also additionally combined with neighbouring parishes to highlight the steady decline in local infrastructure over recent years to local MP Kit Malthouse and will continue to maintain pressure on him and the councillors of Hampshire County Council to restore and then maintain local infrastructure to an acceptable level.

Direct assurances have recently been obtained from the HCC Highways engineering team that further heavy patching repairs are planned for the A343 for the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year to resolve the current issues and that they will be working with their delivery team to ensure there is no repeat of the recent problems faced with local misleading diversions. However, at present there are no publicly listed plans for full resurfacing of this stretch of the highway.

I urge Parishioners to continue to report deteriorations in the local roads through the HCC Highways portal, or to myself so that I can consolidate and monitor issues together with any response by HCC Highways or by our elected representatives.

### **Parish Project Fulfilment**

EWPC has control over the allocation of resources obtained under S106 arrangements from developers and has sought to use some of this limited budget to best advantage for parish infrastructure over the past year.

Having fought to prevent this money being allocated elsewhere in the county, the Parish Council has overseen the successful completion of suitable crossing access at Brownie's corner for wheelchairs and child buggies, a pedestrian footway along Tile Barn Row to provide safer access along this busy stretch of road and a car parking lay-by to improve access to the Doctors' surgery in Trade Street, which also assists in smoothing traffic flow at this busy access point.

Additional to the continued pressure on HCC regarding essential road maintenance, current projects include the provision of signposting to direct users more readily to East Woodhay Village Hall, a review of supportive safety options for pedestrian users of Mount Road and possible improvements to Woolton Hill entry signage in relation to driver/ pedestrian awareness.

EWPC will continue to raise highway issues of local concern with the responsible authority, either Hampshire County Council or Basingstoke & Dean Borough Council, and we welcome parishioners bringing matters of concern to our attention.

### **Speed Calming report 2022/23 – Councillor Martin Hainge**

It is now 18 months ago since the implementation of the "Speed Calming" measures in the Parish to re-enforce the speed limit. In the last year, since June 22, we have covered a further 13 sites on the roads that have shown to have the worst speeding issues.

The main road of concern, in terms of speeding, is the Woolton Hill Road along which we have two schools and a tennis club, but which in our statistics features highly in terms of the speed at which cars travel. Of the minor roads, Church Road and Trade Street can be said to be of concern in terms of the speed at which cars travel. The first because with the development at Malverleys approaching completion, volume of traffic will only increase along a road with limited footpaths.

In the case of Trade Street, the volume of people attending the Doctor's surgery continues to increase and once again the lack of a continuous footpath together with parked cars and a bus route on this relatively narrow road, could potentially cause a serious accident.

A comparison of the Woolton Hill Road between the Tennis club and the Junior and Infant schools indicates an 85% speed of 30.2 mph and 30.5 mph respectively. (Bear in mind that the 85 percentile is indicative of the speed that the majority of road users are travelling at). A speed at or below which 85% of people drive at any given location under good weather and road conditions may be considered as the maximum safe speed for that location. This would indicate that 15% of the drivers are travelling too fast with speeds of up to 50 mph above the tennis court in the direction of Ball Hill and 55 mph between the Junior and the Infant schools.

Looking at the figures for Church Road, we have an 85 percentile speed of 33.1 mph in the direction of the crossroads with Woolton Hill Road and 30.5 mph in the direction of East End respectively. Top speeds here are 60 mph in the direction of the crossroads and 55 mph towards East End.

The figures for Trade Street are better, but given the relatively narrow width of the road are still surprising with maximum speeds up to 40 mph and an 85 percentile speed of between 26.1 and 28.2 mph depending on direction.

In terms of a comparison with previous readings, in 2022 we recorded the following on the Woolton Hill Road, An 85 percentile speed of 31.9 mph by the Junior School with a top speed of 55mph and an 85 percentile of 33.2 mph by the tennis club with a top speed of 55 mph.

Church Road had an 85 percentile speed of 33.1 mph and top speed of 60 mph and Trade Street an 85 percentile speed of 28.2 mph and top speed of 40 mph.

It appears that whilst an SID unit is valuable reminder of the speeds at which drivers are travelling, the education process for a minority of drivers to keep within the speed limits within the village will take longer.

## **DITCHES**

The winter of 2022/23 was not a particularly harsh one or wet. However, with the Parish Council's persistence and focus on the problem of ditches and the landowners' and home owners' continued support, the parish ditches are getting more and more functional. Flooding issues around Brownies corner and the BT exchange on Woolton Hill continue to no longer be problems.

The general maintenance work that we have encouraged to happen across Parish certainly is paying off. There are several landowners / householders who have worked hard to ensure their ditches are in good working order and the Parish Council, on behalf of the residents of East Woodhay thank them for this diligence. As always there are some landowners who do nothing.

The PC reminds the community of the following rules around ditches and water flow:

1. Every landowner has to accept water from higher land
2. Every landowner is responsible for the passing of water across their property
3. Every landowner is responsible for the ditches and culverts that are on or adjoin their property

Landowners and householders who have not maintained their ditches despite PC requests continue to be socially irresponsible. The PC's view on poor ditch management in a community is the perpetrators are extremely anti-social and their lack of action causes unnecessary harm and is potentially dangerous to their fellow parishioners. The PC will continue to work on this topic.

## **Administrative Policies and Procedures (updated May 2023)**



We have improved and updated our working procedures and now have a Terms of Reference for all committees; these are on our website.

**OUR GOALS FOR THE NEXT YEAR ARE 2023/24 – Chairman**

- Maintain the level of Councillors at 10
- Continue to work with the community and BDBC, ensuring official S106 approval procedures are followed, to deliver the desired spending, by the community, of S106 monies.
- Continue to work with landowners and house owners to ensure there is awareness on ditch maintenance
- Continue to work with landowners to make countryside more accessible to all by removing stiles and replacing (at the PC's cost) the stiles with gates
- Get visibility of the PCSO within the Parish
- Continue the improvement of the biodiversity of the Parish Field, working in partnership with the local schools
- Initiate the community orchard on Meadowbrook land

**\*\*\* END \*\*\***

### FY2022-23 WATERFALL

