

Your Parish Council

Chairman: Bryan Nanson

Vice-Chairman: Allan Clark

Pete Edwards, Martin Hatley, Julian Jones,
Graham Roads, Margaret Rothwell, David Stevens, Julie Trotter.

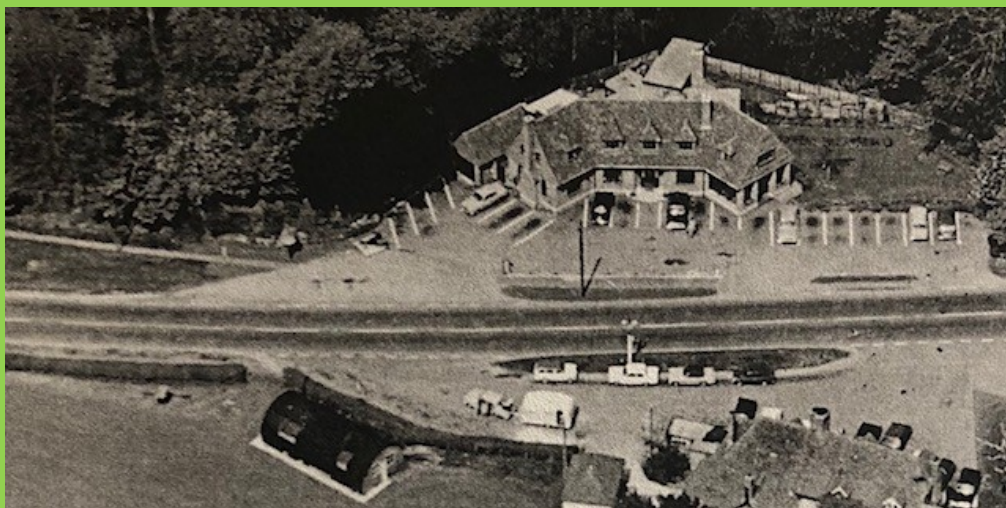
Clerk to the Council: Doreen Matthews.

Parish Website: www.ampfield.org.uk

The public are welcome to attend all Council and Committee meetings,
the dates and times are advertised on Parish Notice Boards and on the website

Your Parish Councillors are the first tier of local government and are unpaid.

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Aerial View of the old Cricket Pavilion

How do I get in touch with Ampfield Parish Council?

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Ampfield Parish Council

NEWSLETTER

April 2018

Issue 30



Ampfield Parish Assembly

Monday 30th April 2018

7.30pm at Ampfield Village Hall.

All parishioners are warmly invited to attend

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ACRONYMS USED IN THIS NEWSLETTER

APC	Ampfield Parish Council
ARG	Ampfield Recreation Ground
VDS	Village Design Statement
TVBC	Test Valley Borough Council
HCC	Hampshire County Council
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

To be held at

**AMPFIELD VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY, 30th APRIL 2018
AT 7.30PM**

The Agenda for this Annual Parish Assembly is:

Apologies for Absence
Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 24th April 2017
Matters Arising
Chairman's Review of the Year
Borough Councillor's Report
County Councillor's Report
Council Finances & Administration
Planning
Village Design Statement
The New Recreation Ground Pavilion
Transport and Road Safety
Friends of Chapel Wood
Ampfield Countryside Heritage Area
Other Reports - see Parish Newsletter
Any Other Competent Business & Open session

Light refreshments will be served at about 9.30pm.

Doreen Matthews
Clerk to Ampfield Parish Council

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

(Continued from page 17)

The Conservative Chairman of the Local Government Associations Well Being Board, said “ **Councils have a proud record of getting on with the job of delivering for local residents and doing so in partnership. But it is not an exaggeration to say that circumstances are now steering steadily towards the impossible.** The government have promised a green paper due to be published in the summer of 2018.

The Household Waste Recycling Centres have also temporarily been reprieved. **However, charges for this service are being sought by Hampshire County Council from Central Government.**

School crossing controls will also now continue, although a much stricter criteria has been introduced to make sure they are absolutely necessary and those that do not meet the new criteria will be lost.

Flexford Close in Ampfield will have the highway resurfaced as part of the Operation Resilience programme this year. This is something I promised local residents.

The Gladmans planning application for 365 homes at Thorn Hill off Flexford Road was refused by Test Valley Borough Council on policy grounds & highway objections by Hampshire County Council. Although situated in the parish of North Baddesley its greatest impact would have been on Ampfield & Valley Park.

I have been able to provide financial support to many groups and organisations from my HCC Community grant annual allowance. Some are listed below.

- Braishfield Bees Football Club & the Braishfield Village Hall
- St Francis Church, & Knightwood Youth Club, Valley Park
- Relate South West Hampshire
- Eastleigh/Test Valley Mencap
- Scouting organisation at Chandlers Ford & North Baddesley
- North Baddesley over 60's Club
- Romsey Choral Society & Hampshire Search & Rescue Dogs

Cllr. Alan Dowden
Baddesley County Councillor

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

This has been a busy year. Items such as constructing a pavilion, developing a new VDS and considering traffic issues has required a lot of effort, beyond the normal requirement of keeping things going.

Thanks to a lot of hard work by the dedicated VDS Team, the new version is approaching completion and will be published later this year. It was a demanding exercise and they are to be commended for the disciplined and enthusiastic approach which was maintained throughout the project. It is expected that TVBC will soon recognise it a Supplementary Planning Document thus giving it formal status in the planning process.

Planning continues to be an interesting, and occasionally controversial, topic with 15 meetings in the last year. The proposed large care home on Baddesley Road is a major development which is currently in the limelight. The application to build 365 dwellings on Flexford Road near the railway bridge also attracted a lot of interest, together with objections from the 3 local parish councils. It was rejected.

As set out in the finance report, this has been an atypical year as the pavilion project has resulted in large amounts of money going through the accounts. The new pavilion is ready for use subject to minor finishing off. We are grateful to the management of the White Horse for providing a disabled bay.

The precept for 2018/19 has been set at £35,755 which is an increase of 3.88% over the previous year and represents an increase of 1.4% per household. However the household rate is less than it was 3 years ago.

The introduction of allotments has resulted in much more involvement by the parish council, together with more administrative work, than we had anticipated. Problems are being overcome and the allotment holders remain enthusiastic.

We continue to engage with Highways Officials regarding speed limits and traffic calming improvements. A lot of effort has gone into liaising with parishioners, TVBC Highways and the school in order to address the traffic situation in Knapp Lane.

We are grateful to the Friends of Chapel Wood for their continuing efforts in looking after our woodland and burial ground. The good working relationship with the church continues to provide an effective seamless service for burials, despite the occasional hiccup with stonemasons and gravediggers.

We are looking forward to the challenges of the forthcoming year; this includes the publication of the new VDS, development projects at the ARG and a dipping platform in the woodland.

PLANNING

From April 2017 the Parish Council Planning Committee has met 15 times to consider 43 applications including 6 concerning tree work.

We have seen less tree work applications than the previous year but the building application rate has remained fairly stable at 37 compared with 35 for the same period.

Proposed Care Village Baddesley Road

The most significant proposal of 2017/18 was by Perbury (Developments) Ltd. for the provision of a Care Village on the former North Hill Sawmill Yard, Baddesley Road.

The original application, considered in April, was very complex and APC objected, as we questioned the need for a shop on site, plus the increased traffic and parking generated by such an extensive development. There were also environmental issues, such as the effect on the Trodds Copse SSSI which is next to the site.

In a subsequent application considered in July, the scale of the development had been reduced by approximately 36% from 16.3 to 10.4 acres and the shop removed. In addition there was an altered layout, following advice from Natural England, that there would be a 15 metre buffer zone for wild life between the proposed development and Trodds Copse. Based on these changes, APC did not object to the revised application.

A further revision has now been received and is under consideration at the time of writing.

Planning Applications not in the Parish

APC objected strongly (as did Valley Park and North Baddesley parish councils) to an application to build 365 dwellings off Flexford Road. The application was eventually rejected by TVBC.

We were also sent details of a proposed development in Jermyn's Lane to which we initially raised no objection. However after a further application for the site had been made we decided to object. This only proves you can't get it right all the time!

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

I have now been the Baddesley Division County Councillor for over 26 years. I am a member of Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and a member of the Hampshire Pension Fund Panel & Board.

I understand the challenge of the budgetary pressures that Hampshire County Council faces with a further £140 million of savings to be found over the next two years. It was disappointing that all of our Hampshire MPs voted for these savings to be made.

In early February, the government did however give a small amount of additional funding to Hampshire in the final budgetary settlement and allowed the authority to raise the Council Tax up to 6%. The County have raised the Band "D" Council Tax by 5.99% to £1,200.96p from April 2018. Hampshire's tax rise is in cash terms context the steepest rise in three years in Hampshire's history rising by over 15%.

Council Tax is a regressive tax: it hits hardest those on low and fixed incomes. Once again the revenue budget is about managing decline rather than fostering growth.

The County Council have been able to identify extra revenue from areas such as their street lighting contract, and renting out buildings that were surplus to requirement.

Health & Adult Social Care have been tasked to find a further £56 million of savings over the next two years. This follows already having to save £181 million since 2010, at a time when people are living longer and therefore making greater demands on services. There is a dependency more and more on voluntary organisations, family and friends and neighbours to assist with social care requirement needs. This is why I was active in seeking that we maintain Community Transport; subsidised public bus services like the (46) Stagecoach service from North Baddesley to Winchester. I argued with the administration that there was no joined up thinking by cutting these services. How could many of these vulnerable people attend voluntary organisations and hospital appointments without transport provision. I am pleased that there has been a **temporary reprieve until April 2019** for bus subsidies so services continue.

Social Services have a huge task in finding cost savings. To date savings have been found by the use of better technology & Extra Care provision and Re-enablement teams are areas that have helped to reduce costs. Further large cost savings have been achieved by reducing staff.

(Continued on page 18)

ST. MARK'S CHURCH

It has been an exciting year for St. Marks Church as sufficient money was finally raised for the work on the bells and the bell tower to be carried out. A last minute grant from the Hampshire and Islands Historic Churches Trust help enormously. We are very grateful for the support the people of Ampfield have given to this project with their generous donations and understanding,



particularly with regard to the upheaval in and around the church during the months leading up to Christmas.

To celebrate the restoration work and being able to ring the bells again, there is going to be a service of thanksgiving on Sunday 29 April starting at 9.30am and a blessing of the bells will take place at 10.45am followed by a guided tour of the outside of the church, pointing out topics of interest. We cordially invite everyone to join us for all or part of the morning and for brunch in St. Marks Room afterwards.

Revd Victoria Ashdown leads assemblies in Ampfield School and they regularly come to church for

special services, the children have also helped at the recent lent lunches, at the Annual Church Fete in June and with other events.

In January The Parochial Church Council agreed to take forward the mission to establish a heritage for the church, the school and the wider community. The care and repair of the church is a major factor particularly trying to get grants and general fundraising as the next large project is saving the stained glass windows.

The church and the Parish Council work closely with the day to day running of Chapel Wood burial ground. We are indebted to the Parish Council and the Friends of Chapel Wood for all their assistance.

The Friends of St Mark's raise funds for the upkeep of the building and welcome new members and suggestions for fund raising and help with these.

Parochial Church Council

THE RECREATION GROUND AND NEW PAVILION

Construction of the new pavilion, after a delay of twelve years, proved to be interesting and demanding. Modifications were required to meet recent changes to building regulations, which increased the costs.

We now have an excellent new pavilion which is a substantial community asset. The first users are the Ampfield and North Baddesley Cricket Club who have had their home at the ARG for many years. It will be a change from the portaKabins and steel container which they have previously been using for changing and refreshments.

The next immediate project is the installation of sewerage treatment facilities for the pavilion to replace those currently provided by the White Horse.



As previously reported, planning permission for the pavilion required the creation of a car park along the northern edge of the recreation ground which is currently occupied by the playground. Once the remaining old wooden changing pavilion has been removed, and the ground re-instated to grass, a new playground will be installed in the north east corner of the ARG. It is hoped to start this work in late 2018.

The Parish Council have entered into a new agreement with Hampshire County Council whereby Ampfield School uses the ARG on Friday mornings. We can now offer toilet facilities at the pavilion for the children.

Supported by the availability of the new pavilion and (fairly soon) a car park, we can now start looking to the introduction of additional features at the ARG.

Following a trial period, we have now agreed that dog walking can be carried out on the ARG all year round. This facility is being well used and we are pleased to see that dog owners are being responsible and using the bins.

TRANSPORT LIAISON AND ROAD SAFETY**Public Transport Services**

For parishioners living near the A3090, the Stagecoach 66 Service has continued to provide an important and regular link between Romsey and Winchester. APC Councillors held a meeting with Stagecoach in 2017 to explore the possibility of extending the 66 route to provide some service via Hook Road/Hursley Road. Stagecoach confirmed that the existing route remains commercially viable. However, it would need a significant new housing development for Stagecoach to consider rerouting away from the A3090.

The other end of our parish along Baddesley Road is less well served. The subsidised X6/X7 service continues to provide a weekday only link to Fryern Arcade and Eastleigh. The subsidised Stagecoach 46 service provides only 4 busses per day each way between North Baddesley and Winchester and this is under threat due to subsidy cuts. APC was asked in 2017 if we, along with other affected parishes, would consider contributing towards the subsidy. Analysis showed that the passengers boarding/alighting in Ampfield were only 4/day each way. As the subsidy request represented around 5% of our precept, in January 2018 APC declined to contribute. Better news is that the 46 service has received an extension of HCC subsidy for one year.

Web links for all Ampfield Public Transport Service timetables can be found on our website www.ampfield.org.uk under information/transport.

Highways

A meeting was held in May 2017 with Highways to review our speed limit strategy for the A3090 and the accident statistics for the area. These did not show a significant number of serious incidents but did show a better picture around the Jermyns Lane junction since it's redevelopment. It was agreed to set up an annual meeting to review this data. Measurements taken with our Speed Limit Reminder sign do not indicate a significant flouting of the 30mph limit zone.

Ampfield School in Knapp Lane has been successful in growing pupil numbers to around 60 in the past few years and this is to be welcomed. This success has led to traffic congestion outside the school at drop off and pickup times. As a result of a request by some residents for street markings to be introduced, APC was asked by TVBC Highways if we would support such a change. After site visits in December 2017 we had discussions with residents and the school.

The school is working with parents and HCC to develop a 'Park & Stride' programme and this year we supported this by making available use of the public spaces at Morleys Green and the Village Hall for parent temporary

Precept and Budget for 2018/2019

Regular reviews of expenditure were carried out throughout 2017/2018 to monitor costs and determine outturn. A budget of £81,464 was set for the next financial year 2018/2019; this was an increase of approximately £29,400 over the current year. Much of the increase was due to the need to move money in order to re-establish reserves, make provision for a health & safety audit of the woodland, and increased insurance and running costs for the pavilion. The remaining expense items showed modest increases or decreases across the board. The increase in budgeted expenditure was offset largely by anticipated receipts producing a precept of £35,755. This is an increase of 3.88% over the previous year.

Details of the accounts will be available at the Annual Parish Assembly.

Doreen Matthews

Responsible Finance Officer

ALLOTMENTS

At this time of year we are looking forward to the next growing season and it's good to see that many of the plots are becoming well established. As we expected at the outset, setting up the first allotment site in Ampfield has been a learning curve for all involved!

Some of the uncultivated ground that we inherited three years ago was very stony and not immediately suitable for cultivation. However, the allotment holders, supported by the Parish Council, are overcoming the problem. This year we are going to employ a man with a digger for a couple of days to loosen up the soil on those plots that require it.

Water is available on site but currently allotment holders at the far end from the huts have to carry their water to their plot. Not much fun on a hot summer's day and some of those plants can be very thirsty! So we are looking to install a stand pipe at the far end of the allotment to help with the watering process.

A couple of the plots appear to be a bit neglected, although it is difficult to tell at this time of year. We will be checking with those allotment holders to see if they wish to continue, and if not then the plots will be reallocated to the next on our waiting list.

Despite the teething problems there is still a good interest in the parish from people wishing to acquire an allotment plot.

If you would like to be added to the waiting list then please contact Doreen Matthews, email: clerk@ampfield.org

PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE REPORT

Our accounts featured some very high receipts and payments this year as pavilion construction costs mounted and S106 developer monies were handed over by Test Valley Borough Council. These peaks and troughs should come to an end in the new financial year although we still have some important projects to complete such as the movement of the playground, the pavilion sewerage treatment plant and the Recreation Ground car park. We are in the process of reclaiming VAT paid in the construction of the pavilion which, at over £32,720, is a significant sum. The Budget for the new financial year reflects the need to start to rebuild our reserves which were used towards the pavilion construction and fitting out.

Assets

We now have an attractive and well-designed pavilion on the Recreation Ground to replace the various metal containers and broken down wooden huts that have been home to the Cricket Club for many years. This is a great community asset which will broaden its use as experience of running it increases. The Parish also now owns the village phone box which BT sold to us for £1. It will need some renovation work before it can be converted into something useful again. Members of the community have volunteered to help look after it. When the lease for the office photocopier and printer expired during the year it was replaced with a desk top printer which is owned by Council.

Current Financial Year 2017/2018

Receipts and payments for the current financial year 2017/2018 are not complete at the time of writing; Cllr Bryan Nanson will give an update at the Annual Parish Assembly on 30th April. However, receipts to end February 2018 were £192,983. This is a very large sum for us which, like last year, is mostly due to S106 developer monies. Approximately £137,231 of S106 funds was released for the construction of the new pavilion. Other receipts include the precept at £34,419, income from the Burial and Recreation Grounds of £2203, £1213 grants from TVBC for the Village Design Statement review and £9417 for the pavilion. Also £7498 was reclaimed from VAT payments.

Expenditure to end February 2018 was correspondingly high at £218,086. This was due mainly to the construction and fitting out of the pavilion at approximately £156,704.

Most other payments relate to the routine maintenance of our community assets of Chapel Wood, the Village Green and Allotments, and the Recreation and Burial Grounds and on their loan repayments.

TRANSPORT LIAISON AND ROAD SAFETY

parking twice per day. However, there is no one simple answer to this problem and we have concluded that road marking and parking restrictions should be considered as part of the solution. We are working with TVBC Highways and the school to develop a proposal to be put out for public consultation.

Meetings are now also being held with TVBC Highways to develop plans for traffic calming measures along the A3090 through the village. These will primarily consist of highways markings and small structural changes which alter the 'look and feel' of the highway to drivers. We would expect more detail to be available for public view and comment later this year.

The Lengthsman programme will receive HCC funding for another year. This small but useful resource allows us to complete those lower level highways tasks which make a difference to the look and feel of the parish.

DEFIBRILLATORS

A reminder that the Parish Council have two defibrillators for use by the public. One is installed at the entrance to the Village Hall and the other outside the Potters Heron.

We are pleased to say that, despite the recent fire incident at the hotel, the defibrillator is back up and working, having been relocated to the right hand side of the hotel entrance.

Sudden cardiac arrest is a leading cause of premature death, but with immediate treatment many lives can be saved. Seconds count.

When the ambulance service receives a 999 call asking for emergency assistance for a possible heart attack they check to see if there is a defibrillator within reasonable range. If so, the caller is directed to the location and told how to use it.

The unit is an iPad SP1 (Intelligent Public Access Defibrillator) and are nominated devices of the British Heart Foundation. It features illuminated illustrations and voice prompts which guide an inexperienced user at every step. Unlike other defibrillators it has an adult to child switch, with no other changes required, saving seconds when it matters most.

APC have set up a weekly inspection programme to ensure that both units are ready to go if and when required.



AMPFIELD SCHOOL

Ampfield CofE (Controlled) Primary School continues to thrive with now almost 60 pupils on roll and increasing 'first preference' applications for the Reception year. Coming from the village and from further afield, families are positively choosing the school for its nurturing environment, high adult to child ratio and Christian distinctiveness. There are three classes: A Year R/1 class, a Year 2/3 class and a Year 4/5/6 class. We are happy to show visitors around so please call the school office to book a tour (01794 368219).

Since September 2013, the school has worked in partnership with John Keble CofE (Aided) School in the neighbouring village of Hursley. A slightly larger school of around 200 children, the partnership is known as a 'federation' and is run by an Executive Headteacher and one Governing Body. Staff work together across both schools and there are now several roles which have responsibilities in each school. For example, the Site Manager runs both sites and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator looks after SEN across the federation.

Much is shared between the two schools and we have the same vision, values and policies. A common uniform was introduced in 2016, along with a federation website (www.ajkfed.com) and updated school logos. We can celebrate the diversity within each school and recognise individuality across the federation under the Christian values of Love, Forgiveness, Hope and Trust.

A strong parent group has been successful at raising money to help improve school resources and opportunities for children. Although many families come from out of the catchment area, they are committed to supporting the school within its community. We are currently working on our School Travel Plan with parents, staff, governors and residents to help promote safer routes to schools.

Marcus Roe

Executive Headteacher

Federation of Ampfield & John Keble CofE Primary Schools

St. Mark's Church Fete

This year's fete will take place on Saturday 9th June at 12 noon located behind St Mark's Church.

As well as a variety of stalls there will be games for the children and a fun dog show, so do come along and enjoy this very popular village event.

- We may do it subconsciously, but we also allocate resources to what is most important to us and our families. We spend money on what we value the most and prioritise our spending on what will make the biggest difference to our lives.

The Council's budget is **exactly** the same; granted that it's hugely more complex and has many more zeros on the end of the numbers, but basically it's **exactly** the same.

This is a serious business and the consequences of getting it wrong are severe. You will have seen recent reports in the press about Northamptonshire County Council who are on course to overspend by £21M in the current year.

Our Revenue Support Grant from the Government has reduced by 98% in the last five years from £3.1M to only £56,000 next year and will end entirely in 2019/20. It's something that we've prepared for though. Our successful Project Enterprise investments in commercial property and housing have helped generate some replacement income and we are due to receive £1.7M more income next year than if we had kept our money in the bank.

Prudent budgeting means that regrettably the Borough Council's proportion of local Council Tax is being increased by £5 next year to £141.41 for a band D property. This equates to less than 10 pence per week for a Band D property and continues to be one of the lowest in the whole of England.

It is also worth noting that the Borough's Council tax has risen by just £28 in ten years – that's an average of just over 5 pence per week.

Cllr. Martin Hatley

Borough Councillor

AMPFIELD COUNTRYSIDE HERITAGE AREA

The annual Boxing Day walk was very well attended with close to 30 hikers and amblers making the most of a pleasantly fine day. In particular, it was good to be able to welcome a number of residents from Morleys Green and it is hoped they will be regular participants at this popular event.

The autumn meeting was a real treat. Liz Hallett, Ampfield's own historian, gave a packed village hall a fascinating insight into the people and history of Ampfield, culminating with the events of the 1940's. That is not to say that there is no significant history after 1940, merely that it was being saved for a future occasion. It is hoped we will be able to continue Ampfield's story this coming autumn. Please watch the notice boards and the website for further information.

BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

This is the time of the year when Council Tax bills arrive and in many a household the same question is asked, what do we get for our money?

I was very saddened to witness the serious fire at The Potters Heron on 19th March. I immediately remembered seeing the destroyed building after the fire in November 1966, after which it did not reopen until 1972. Ironically in 1966, the hotel was due to host a dinner for the fire brigade the following evening!

Within an hour of the alarm being raised, in addition to the 25 fire appliances with over 120 firefighters and 50 other emergency personnel, on site were Test Valley Borough Council officers including a senior director. They were in contact with the County Council emergency planning department. The Borough's housing services were put on standby to arrange any emergency accommodation for staff or guests, which might have been required, building control engineers were ready to give any advice about safety and stability of the building during fire fighting and investigations and repairs afterwards. Representatives from the Village Hall and Parish Council offered the village hall and its facilities.

Due to the incredible professionalism and hard work of the firefighters, and some very expensive hi-tech equipment, the fire was contained to the restaurant and bar area and thankfully there were no casualties.

Thanks to the fantastic efforts by the staff, the hotel opened for business within just 6 days – unlike the 6 years after the 1966 fire. The signs on the verge saying 'ONLY SINGED! WE'RE OPEN' and 'THE THATCH WILL BE BACK!' are very heart warming.

All this was only possible because of the vast investments made by the various authorities who request money in your council tax bills, and so were able to respond when it mattered.

Budgets are important in our personal lives. We all have our own household budgets:

- We set targets for how much we want to spend, income we want to earn and, if we're lucky, targets for how much we want to save.
- We spend time forecasting what might happen over the year to change our plans – What if the roof leaks, etc.
- In this uncertain world, we do our best to plan for the future especially if we know that our income is likely to reduce over time.

AMPFIELD VILLAGE HALL

2017 has been a busy and successful year and the Trustees would like to start this review by thanking all of you who have supported the hall either by organising or attending activities and events held in our developing community hub.

Following the closure of Ampfield pre-school the trustees have done a great job attracting new activities to fill the gap and we now have thriving Pilates, yoga, toddlers and other groups operating from the hall in addition to stalwarts such as the bridge club and various craft and activity groups. There has also been a significant uplift in private hire as the word spreads about the excellent facilities available.

In support of our objective of providing an active social hub for the village the monthly market has gone from strength to strength with an increasingly diverse offering now including fresh produce such as bakery, meat products and fresh fruit & veg.

The relatively new Thursday morning café now has a resident IT surgery run by Sue O'Dowd for which we are very grateful. During the café we have run some very interesting master classes covering such topics as, working with puff pastry, chocolate craft and most recently hot cross buns which continue to boost attendance. On the fundraising side we staged a number of successful events including quiz nights, the annual pantomime and the Shoo Shoo Baby cabaret.

2017 saw a number of significant improvements to the hall such as superfast broadband, dedicated computing and even a Facebook page. On the building side there have been lighting energy upgrades and a new patio, together with high quality outdoor café furniture, aspects of which were generously supported by TVBC community grants for which we are very grateful. The patio and new flower beds are now complete and provide an attractive outside seating area for all Hall users.

The trustees have ambitious plans for the coming year for the continuing improvement of your village hall and its related activities and we hope we can rely on your continued support in achieving them.

Thank you

The Trustees of Ampfield Village Hall

FRIENDS OF CHAPEL \WOOD

It has been a very interesting year for the Friends of Chapel Wood. We had hoped to complete the installation of the new dipping platform during the course of the year but circumstances combined to thwart our best intentions. During a very dry spell this time last year, when the water in the pond was very low, we discovered a small colony of newts. Following discussions with the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and the Freshwater Habitats Trust, the decision was taken to defer further work on the dipping platform until we could identify which species of newt we were hosting. Newts being somewhat shy creatures, we have only just managed to take the necessary photographs and, happily, now the process of identification can begin.



Meanwhile, we have used the time to continue cutting back the rhododendron, particularly those bushes between the pond and the west window of the church. This has made a huge difference to the vista over the wood as you walk around the church. It is our intention to open this area right up, including the removal of the roots, so, when standing at the entrance to St. Mark's room, it will be possible to enjoy the wonderful tree canopies in that area of the wood and get a full view of the pond itself. There is also the possibility of putting a seat in this location for those who might want to linger.

Once again, it is very important that we remember to thank the Friends of Chapel Wood for their dedication and hard work. Irrespective of the weather, the Friends turn up every month, on the second Saturday. They undertake whatever is required to ensure this most precious of assets is available for all to enjoy and, most importantly, have fun whilst doing so. We are always pleased to see new friends, so, if you think it is something you might enjoy, please come and give us a try!



AMPFIELD PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

As we reported last year, the parish is in the process of revising its Village Design Statement (VDS). It is pleasing to report that, over the past twelve months, much of the hard work associated with this project has been completed. Following on from the questionnaire, there was a period of public consultation and a public exhibition in the village hall. From these, the VDS team gained much valuable information concerning the thoughts and aspirations of Ampfield residents.



Using all available information from these events, the draft text of the revised VDS was completed towards the end of last year. In January, the document was considered and endorsed by Ampfield Parish Council. The next stage is to ensure that the issues raised in the VDS are emphasized and accurately illustrated using up to date maps and photographs. Once this has been completed, the finished draft VDS will be sent to Test Valley Borough Council for review and a further period of public consultation.

It is hoped that following this, the VDS will be adopted by TVBC as a Supplementary Planning Document. Once adopted by TVBC, planning officers will then take the planning guidance notes contained within the VDS into consideration when assessing future planning applications.

Ampfield Parish Council is most grateful to all members of the VDS team for their hard work and dedication and to all those members of the public who have helped with this important project.