



HURSTBOURNE TARRANT
PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023

Councillor Ian Kitson, Chairman:

Thankfully, the recent Parish Council elections were uncontested, so we are the same team as you saw here last year. And I'm sure you'll agree with me that we wouldn't get anywhere near as much done in our villages here without their proactive approach, so I am eternally grateful for their unwavering support and wide ranging skill sets!

We felt we should start with what we ALL hope will be the last nod to the Covid 19 pandemic. This last year has seen the eventual return to business as usual for the Parish Council, and along with the rest of the world, hope we will never have to either experience it or make reference to it again. It also meant that the SWIFTS meetings could make a come-back and my thanks goes to Councillor Louisa Russell for her hard work in getting the number of attendees up to even better than before 2020.

Although the year has been a successful one in many ways, there has also been sadness, with the passing of residents, some who were also great supporters of the Parish Council – including Rupert Conder, Yvonne Hill, Colin Ponting, and our oldest resident Frank Barber, from whom we received a generous donation through his estate and trust fund. We also miss our flora and fauna expert, Peter Billingham, who has moved away from the area to be nearer his family in Cockermouth.

We welcome many new residents to the Parish from near and far, including our own vicar, the Reverend Julie Howell, who is a great asset to our community.

The Royal family have provided us with several opportunities to engage with everyone – both the Platinum Jubilee last year and the very recent Coronation parties were enjoyed, with the weather gods treating us favourably for both. We were delighted to present all children in the Parish of Hurstbourne Tarrant with a commemorative Coronation bookmark, which was funded by a generous grant from Test Valley Borough Council, and the Coronation Picnic last weekend was a resounding success, with the sun shining down on us all afternoon. Of course all of this joy was tinged with sadness at the death of Queen Elizabeth the Second last September.

So, what has the Parish Council achieved this last municipal year?

As a result of a £20,000 donation from the trust fund set up by Frank Barber, we have provided a brand new accessible roundabout in the children's play area of the KGV field, and a defibrillator at the Community Centre. A donation from the previous year from Vinoth at the Family Shopper also went towards the roundabout.

We have carried out some improvements and repairs to the play equipment, as well as some surface repairs on the access road leading to the community centre which is becoming rather like the Forth Bridge.

Environmental projects are always forefront in our thoughts, and we were delighted to give approval to the planting of trees on KGV behind the cricket net, as the beginnings of an orchard

project by some of the school parents. The aim is for the children to look after them and add to the area with bushes and wildflowers.

As a result of an application to the Woodland Trust, we received 420 free tree plants which were planted along the bank of Dene Green, which we hope will grow into a hedge which will not only support wildlife, but will add value to the road safety project. My thanks go to Councillor John Bentley for his support of all things “KGV”.

The road safety project has begun with the new village ‘gates’ at the start of the 30mph speed limits on the A343 along with the dragon’s teeth and 30mph roundels painted on the road. These have been funded by Section 106 developer contribution funds via the Borough Council, and more speed reduction ideas are being worked on by Councillor Neil Hedger and his working party. With a recently replaced bollard at The Square having been again uprooted, as well as the safety railings at the end of The Crescent alleyway, this is a priority project for the Parish Council which we hope will continue to have the County Council’s support. Our thanks go to the volunteers of the Community Speedwatch group who continue to do a sterling job with reporting high numbers of speeding vehicles to the police, who have not only written to offenders, but have also paid personal visits to. Companies are also being contacted to ask if drivers of HGVs can use alternative routes where possible, rather than come through the villages along the A343.

Our County Council ranger, Gemma Clinch, has moved areas, and we welcome Corrine Davis-Cooke as her replacement. Corinne has already been out to check some broken stiles to see if the landowners will agree to them being replaced with gates. An audit of the Test Way was also completed this year by the Parish clerk, ensuring that the route is now properly marked and clear of obstructions, although this may change during the growing season, especially with all the rain we have had.

We also put in some much-needed steps on the footpath across the paddock leading off what is locally called ‘Coffin Way’ above Parsonage Farm. Thank you to Alasdair and Jayne Murdoch as the landowners, for letting us do this as we know how much these have been appreciated by walkers, especially when the weather has been wet and made the slope very muddy.

And on the subject of rain, the inaugural duck race in February took full advantage of the wet weather and the good flow of the river. Thank you to Councillor Mark Thomas for providing the opportunity to have a bit of community fun at a usually quiet time of year for social events.

We mustn’t forget to mention our litterpickers ... mainly ‘ad hoc’, they are an absolute asset to us, as litter especially from traffic on the main road is a constant issue. Although Test Valley will come out periodically to tackle it, the interim picks mean it doesn’t get as bad as it would do without our volunteers’ efforts. In the spirit of the recent Coronation Big Help Out, we always welcome additional assistance with parish maintenance tasks, so please let us know if you can give the parish councillors some support every so often.

And last but not least, as it is an important subject to many, planning applications. Fortunately, there have not been too many contentious applications this year, and many which may have

been initially received with some concern, have taken on board the comments of the public and the Parish Council and returned with plans which have subsequently been approved. We would struggle without the expertise and keen eye of Councillor Jamie Williams, and his balanced words of wisdom. Although the Parish Council is no different from any other public consultee, there is an expectation that it will reflect the opinions of the majority and we hope we do this with a sound and sympathetic knowledge base.

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Councillor Kirsty North, Andover North Division, Hampshire County Council

This year I have had the privilege to serve in the County Council's Cabinet. My role is the Executive Member for Performance, HR, Communications, Inclusion and Diversity and I have enjoyed getting involved with a different aspect of the Council, meeting many more council employees and understanding the organisation as a large local employer in much closer detail. I am still working hard for residents locally and using my new wealth of knowledge to tackle local problems and provide solutions.

Recipients of my Devolved Budget for 2022/23 were as follows:

Rooting for Andover – Poppy Park Community Garden Accessible Pathway
Kids on Track – Easter Holiday Camp
North Hampshire Cruse Bereavement Support – specialist counselling for select Andover North residents
Andover Town Band – Specialist Percussion Instruments
Enham Alamein Parish Council – Summer Fete
Tangley Parish Council – Hatherden Village Green purchase
Spotlight UK – Inflatable Fun Day for pupils at local Andover schools
Andover Town Youth FC – Funding towards inflatable pitches

My budget will reopen in June and I welcome all applications

Over the course of the year I have:

- Visited Icknield School to see the wonderful new £2.5m renovation of the school site providing 11 special SLD (Severe Learning Difficulties) places.
- Reported and chased up pothole repairs
- Attended site visits in Andover with Aster around Roman Way and Cricketers Way
- Raised childrens and adults social care queries on behalf of residents
- Met Taylor Wimpey to discuss snagging issues around Augusta Park
- Ensured grit bins were replenished throughout the Division
- Overseen the installation of new accessible gates on Augusta Park to Smannell walking route
- Visited Norman Gate Primary School
- Visited the Poppy Park Community Garden to present a cheque for grant funding
- Attended many meetings around Hatherden School, its closure and the ongoing use of the site

- Reported gritting movements for residents
- Liaised on traffic calming measures and support for parish councils locally
- Attended the Hampshire Education Awards
- Visited Winton Academy where plans have been submitted for an extension to provide 150 additional places
- Joined Enham residents for their Platinum Jubilee celebrations
- Liaised with Network Rail and Taylor Wimpey on the Finkley Arch traffic programme and pushed for progress to open the Arch between Augusta Park and Walworth Business Park (Picket Piece).
- Attended Andover Regeneration Board meetings
- Visited The Mark Way Special School to see progress towards their site extension and refurbishment which will provide an additional 20 moderate special school places.
- Judged the Vernham Dean Platinum Jubilee Scarecrow competition!

HCC Budget:

Hampshire's budget includes £2.6billion of spending, covering the hundreds of services delivered by the council to its 1.4million residents, including support for the most vulnerable children and adults as well as maintaining Hampshire's road network, infrastructure and schools, countryside services, libraries, environment and climate change mitigation. The council tax precept for the financial year beginning 1 April 2023, will increase by a total of 4.99%, of which 2% will go specifically towards social care, in line with Government policy. This equates to an annual charge of £1,460.25 for a Band D property – an increase of £69.45 per year or approximately £1.34 a week.

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Councillor Phil North, Bourne Valley Ward & Leader of Test Valley Borough Council

I want to start by thanking the Parish Council for all your help and support over the past 12-months and for everything you do to serve your communities. Now that we are on the other side of both the borough and parish council elections, I look forward to continuing to work together.

Please see below a short report from me on some of the main issues I have been dealing with as your Test Valley representative and leader of the Borough Council over the last 12-months:

The year has, of course, been bookended by two historic royal events, Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee and the recent Coronation of Charles III. Test Valley Borough Council provided special grant schemes for both, enabling our communities to come together to celebrate.

As the fallout from Russia's appalling invasion of Ukraine continued, we also created a Cost-of-Living grant scheme following a special meeting of the Test Valley Partnership I chaired in August. The scheme has funded money management support, fresh food provision, a dedicated Citizens Advice caseworker in the Food Bank and School Breakfast Clubs, including for Smannell & Enham Primary School here in Bourne Valley.

As well as dealing with the fallout from global events, my priorities remain three-fold: First, continuing our plans to regenerate Andover town centre. After delivering the new Riverside Park, more pop-up shops, the Second Sunday markets and restoring the Guildhall. I'm fully focussed on implementing the next stage of the Masterplan, uncovering the River Anton along Western Avenue, having allocated £6.5m to the project. I'm also heavily lobbying central government for another chance to get our hands on the levelling up cash that Andover so deserves. If successful, that would accelerate our plans to redevelop the Chantry Centre and relocate the theatre into the centre of town.

Second, to give residents more opportunities to recycle. Having announced how we intend to enable people to recycle glass, thin plastics (pots, tubs and trays) and Tetra Pak-style cartons in the same household recycling bin, as well as providing a weekly food waste service, we will shortly be detailing further plans around implementation for 2024.

Third, to continue to implement our Climate Emergency Action Plan. This year we have planted over 6k trees and have switched the fuel in our bin lorries from diesel to fossil free hydrotreated vegetable oil, reducing our carbon emissions in our fleet vehicles by 95%.

Sticking with the environmental theme, our recent manifesto also committed to continuing our zero-tolerance approach to fly-tipping. We are the only council in Hampshire who relentlessly prosecute fly-tippers. Over 60 in the last 4-years. Resulting in tens of thousands in fines, prison sentences and driving bans. I will make sure we keep up the good work to deter others from blighting our beautiful borough.

In terms of Bourne Valley matters, as well as assisting residents with individual cases, I was also pleased to:

- Visit the Little Fingers Pre-School in Vernham Dean to celebrate the £25k Community Asset Fund grant I arranged for them to secure their future.
- Support Enham Alamein through the Aster merger, including organising and chairing a public meeting so local residents could ask questions and hold Aster to account.
- Work with Tangleby Parish Council to negotiate the purchase of Hatherden Green in The Close from Aster.
- Support Vernham Dean with their successful Community Infrastructure Levy and Community Asset Fund bids worth £58k for new play equipment on the Bury Dene.
- Support Smannell Parish with their bid for funds for a new storage shipping container in Little London Playing Fields.
- Attend Hurstbourne Tarrant fete – carrying out consultation work that helped shaped Test Valley's new Corporate Plan.