

Ampfield Parish Council

NEWSLETTER

March 2016

Issue 28



Ampfield Parish Assembly

Monday, 25th April 2016

7.30pm at Ampfield Village Hall.

All parishioners are warmly invited to attend

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Front Cover: Aerial View of part of Ampfield used on the 2003 Village Design Statement front cover

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

It has been an interesting, and sometimes challenging, year.

Purchase of the freehold of the Village Hall was completed at the beginning of January 2016, thereby ensuring its future as a community asset. The hall itself has been enhanced as a result of the Morleys Green development and the Parish Council looks forward to working with the Village Hall Management Committee to further improve the facilities. The new car park is now managed by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council is taking on the management of the new village green at Morleys, together with the associated open areas and woodland. This includes an allotment area, an activity not previously within our experience. It proved to be an interesting and demanding exercise to sort out the formalities in order to have plots allocated and available in time for the start of the planting season.

As set out in the finance report, after 7 years of not increasing the precept we are now looking at an increase for 2016/17 of 4.9% in order to meet future demands. This resulted in an increase of 3.2% per household.

Funding for twenty years estimated maintenance at Morleys Green will be paid to the Parish Council by the developer which will ensure that the new responsibilities do not impact upon the precept.

Planning activities are always with us and we continue to receive a regular flow of planning applications which require a comprehensive response. This year has seen the addition of 54 new dwellings to the parish in two major developments - 39 at Morleys Green and 15 at Broadgate Farm. We now comprise a total of about 700 properties.

We have started work to produce an updated version of the Village Design Statement which was originally produced in 2003. This important document will continue to have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document which gives it weight.

We continue to remain closely involved with Test Valley Borough Council and Hampshire County Council regarding highway activities and the forthcoming traffic improvements in the village. Our input was instrumental in improving the design of the proposed revised junction at Jermyns Lane and the A3090.

It is pleasing to see the woodland and burial ground looking in such good condition thanks to the work of the volunteers. We work very closely with the Church regarding the burial ground and we are pleased to welcome our new vicar Victoria Ashdown.

(Continued on page 4)

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR (continued)

Over the first weekend in March a national tidy up initiative by the Keep Britain Tidy organisation, which was labelled "Clean for the Queen," was well supported in the parish with gangs of pickers collecting rubbish from many of our roads and verges.

The Village Design Statement, allotments, traffic improvements and the village green should ensure that the forthcoming year is at least as interesting.

VILLAGE GREEN & WOODLAND

Over the years Ampfield has purchased both the recreation ground and Chapel Wood, but there has never been a central focal point such as a village green. Now with the development of Morleys Green this has been achieved.

Thus we will soon have a fully functioning village green, approximately in the centre of the Parish adjacent to the Village Hall.

Currently the Parish Council have not sought to identify community events that might be held on the green. However there are several possibilities, including a Village Fete or Community/Social Gathering. We would very much appreciate receiving from parishioners ideas and suggestions regarding activities that might be held on the Village Green. Suggestions should be addressed to the Parish Council via clerk@ampfield.org.uk and we look forward to receiving your thoughts.

Special events apart, the site will be open to those who just want to stroll, perhaps in summer evenings, to enjoy watching the sun setting and to appreciate all the beauty and tranquillity our parish has to offer.

Allotment Opening Event, Morleys Green

Robert Hillier OBE, Chairman of Hillier Nurseries, has agreed to formally open the allotments at Morleys Green

Sunday, 24th April, at 11.00am.

This exciting project is a first for Ampfield

Allotment holders have already started work on cultivating the sixteen quarter-size (approximately 60m²) plots.

Parishioners are invited to attend the ceremony

ALLOTMENTS

WE ARE READY TO GROW!

Pictured below are the lucky residents of Ampfield who will soon be planting on their newly acquired allotments which are situated adjacent to the new Morleys Green development. The allotments benefit from two communal buildings, both of which are designed for disabled access. One has a toilet and washroom, and the other a small kitchen and storage area.



At a meeting of the Parish Council in early February a Champions League style draw took place to allocate a parishioner to each of the 16 plots. There were more interested parishioners than plots so there is now a waiting list.

We had an informative get together later in February at which the new allotment holders met each other and the members of Ampfield Parish Council (APC) who are involved in the development of the allotments. As these are the first public allotments in Ampfield we anticipate there will be a need for some changes as we gain experience. APC want to keep it simple and we went over the rules and procedures that holders need to sign up to.

After the introductions and formalities were discussed, the allotment holders were able to get on-site and inspect their plots. There is the need to create a body to run the allotments, all allotment holders will be members automatically. This will be the Ampfield Allotment Holders Association (AAHA) and will meet regularly to discuss the governance and the future running of the allotments. The project will be overseen by APC and initially two councillors, Julian Jones and David Stevens, will take up an advisory role on the Association

The Parish Council believes this is an exciting way of bringing our community together. We look forward to some great crops in the coming year, and maybe even an allotment product stall at the Ampfield Village market in the coming years.

If you would like further information, please contact our parish clerk by email clerk@ampfield.org.uk

PLANNING

Planning

Since the beginning of April 2015 the Parish Council Planning Committee has met on 15 occasions and considered over 60 applications. Those which require specialist technical knowledge, mainly tree applications, we usually respond with “no comment” or “refer to Tree Officer”. Thus approximately 38% of our responses to the Planning Authority at Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) were “no comment”. Of the remainder, just over 32% expressed “no objection”, 21% “objection” and finally we recorded our “support” for 8% of applications. To summarise, in overall terms we supported or raised no objections to 40% of applications and objected to 20% when Councillors felt there were good reasons why an application in its current form shouldn't be approved.

Southern Area Planning Committee

On a number of occasions during the year we have followed up our objections by attending the Southern Area Planning Committee Meeting (SAPC) using the Planning Authority's invitation to speak for 3 minutes. This allows us to direct our arguments to Borough Councillors, who at the end of the debate vote on the application.

Although the SAPC can refuse an application against the recommendation of Officers for approval, there are occasions when the Head of Planning considers that decision to be unsafe in terms of the applicants' right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. This can often be a lengthy and costly procedure at the end of which the Inspector may award costs to the applicant against the Authority. Thus TVBC, and eventually Council Tax paying residents, might be liable for costs of several thousand pounds. To ensure the SAPC decisions, in particular when the SAPC votes to refuse an application, are properly scrutinised, there is a Planning Control Committee (PCC). This is made up of Councillors from across the Borough, not just the south, who in the end make the final decision. For the first time this year we chose to attend and speak at one of the PCC meetings. Whilst on that occasion we were unsuccessful in persuading Councillors to refuse the application, it is something we shall consider repeating in the future.

Morleys Green and Broadgate Farm Developments

The Morleys Green estate is now virtually complete and we have been able to show a number of Parish Councillors from across the Borough

around this development. All have commented on the high quality of the development and how it has been sympathetically blended into the existing surroundings.

The other major development in the Parish is at Broadgate Farm which is continuing and which has been the subject of a number of “detail planning” applications, none of which we felt the need to object to. This scheme should be completed during the next twelve months.

Gypsy and Traveller Applications

There have been no further developments to report regarding the Ampfield Hill Gypsy and Traveller site. The site opposite the Potters Heron Hotel is under construction.

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

The community is able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. They can also grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. It is the equivalent of a “mini” local plan with many of the characteristics of such.

Evidence from the few parishes that have completed such plans indicate that neighbourhood plans are demanding and require the employment of external consultants together with a substantial resource commitment from the parish or town council. Costs are typically in excess of £20,000, although grants might be available to help with consultancy costs. Some parish and town councils in Test Valley have announced an intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood plans are not suitable for all parishes and towns. The Revised Local Plan recently adopted by Test Valley Borough Council does not specify any planned development within Ampfield Parish. The Parish Council has therefor concluded that the Revised Local Plan provides adequate protection and that a neighbourhood plan is not necessary.

Instead, as described on page 12 of the newsletter, our existing Village Design Statement will be updated.

AMPFIELD MARKET & THE CATCH-UP CAFE

My husband Martin and I launched the Market in September 2000. It takes place between 10.00am and 12noon in the Village Hall on the first Saturday of eight months of the year. The sales tables display locally sourced, good quality items, including Fairtrade foods, fruit, vegetables, cakes, bread, preserves, plants, flowers, books, cards, jewellery and an eclectic range of crafts. The Market continued to thrive in 2015, the December Market was the most successful ever and a raffle raised £95 for a Cancer charity. Our great reputation brings visitors from far and wide.

The Market team, Claire, Diane, Beryl and Sue generously volunteer their time and baking skills to provide a wonderful selection of seasonal cakes to serve with fresh coffee all morning in our sunny new Hall annexe. Come and visit us soon, we definitely offer the best value refreshments in Hampshire! We are proud to have raised over £17,800 and all the proceeds continue to support our lovely Village Hall.

Dates remaining for 2016:-

May 7th, June 4th, September 3rd,
October 1st, November 5th and
December 3rd.



The Catch Up Café. was launched in September 2015 in the new Village Hall annexe. It opens every Thursday morning between 9.30am and 11.30am and has become very popular. The refreshments are delicious and a warm welcome always awaits you! The new Café is run entirely by volunteers and all the proceeds go to Hall funds. We are hoping to provide free WiFi soon to enhance your visit to our Café.

Do you know of a neighbour or friend who would welcome a lift to the Market or Café and if so would you be able to offer them transport occasionally?

For more information on the Market or Café, please contact 02380 254587

Julie Trotter

BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Key of the door achieved!

It does not seem possible but I have been your Borough Councillor for the last 21 years and remain Deputy Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Transportation.

TVBC Commended as Local Authority of the Year

As I write this report I have just been advised that Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has received a commendation from the MJ Local Government Achievement Awards for the category of Local Authority of the Year. The Council's submission was based around the four elements of the Corporate Plan, Investing in Test Valley, and included robust examples of how we have supported residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the Borough to grow and develop. The submission also outlined our future ambitions to achieve the best possible results for our communities. TVBC was one of just two authorities in the whole country to be commended in this category.

Housing Land Supply – visit to House of Commons

As I previously reported last year, I have been very concerned about the apparent manipulation of the planning system by some developers and landowners. In November, accompanied by my fellow Portfolio Holder for Planning Control, Cllr. Phil Bundy, I went up to the House of Commons to attend a personal meeting, (facilitated by our MP, Caroline Nokes), with Brandon Lewis, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning. The meeting was to discuss the problems that communities face, created by the methodology used in calculating the 5 year housing land supply figures. Failure to meet the 5 year supply results in Local Plans being overridden by the National Planning Policy Framework. This has the effect of enabling planning decisions to be made in favour of developers, often on inappropriate sites. We were of the opinion that the rules need to be modified to create a fairer system to determine applications. We were able to make contact with the senior civil servants responsible for policy and it was agreed by the Minister that further dialogue was necessary as he fully appreciated the difficulties involved. We now have the mandate to continue this project, which if successful, will prevent inappropriate development in the future. TVBC does currently have a 5yr land supply.

(Continued on page 22)

TRANSPORT LIAISON AND ROAD SAFETY

Transport

The past year has seen some changes to the frequency and routing of the subsidised services that run through Ampfield. However, despite the cost reduction exercises carried out by Hampshire County Council (HCC) in 2014/15, no local services have been discontinued.

Service 66, between Romsey and Winchester continues to provide the only regular 7 day/week service to the part of Ampfield local to the A3090. Service 36, which provides one bus each way between Ampfield and Romsey (during school days only) has also been maintained.

At the Chandlers Ford end of the parish, along Baddesley Road, Services 46 and X6/X7 have been maintained. The 46 provides a minimal 4 bus per day service between North Baddesley and Winchester. The X6/X7 gives a regular connection to Fryern/Hiltingbury and Eastleigh.

Over the next year, funding from the Morleys Green development will become available to provide two new bus shelters for the parish. The Parish Council will keep you informed as plans for these are developed.

Links to all Public Transport service timetables can be found on our website www.ampfield.org.uk under Info/Transport.

Road Safety

Over the next year we expect to see HCC Highways commence work on restructuring the A3090/Jermyns Lane road junction. This will initially involve a closure of the slip road to Jermyns Lane accessed from the A3090 east bound lane. The work is part of several highways projects in the area brought about by increased traffic flows due to Abbotswood.

Although the relatively mild winter appears to have caused fewer potholes than previous years, when they arise they are still a potentially damaging and dangerous problem and parishioners are urged to report these to HCC via their web site www.hants.gov.uk.

The Parish Council has added a new site for our Speed Limit Reminder (SLR) sign in Pound Lane, which has a 40mph limit which residents have said is regularly exceeded by road users. Although an SLR alone will not stop speeding problems, they are a useful tool in the armoury. Morleys Green will provide funding for a new SLR and we are looking at acquiring one with a speed data logging capability so that a better picture of speeding patterns in the parish can be determined.

The Parish Council is also preparing for the release of Morleys Green developer funding which will finance modifications to the A3090 road layout in Ampfield. This will also include an extension of the cycleway (which currently terminates on the A3090 south side at Pound Lane) through the village. Although this work

may take some years to complete, an initial funding release will enable TVBC Highways to develop plans for this project and the Parish Council will be involved in this early work. We will of course keep Ampfield residents fully informed of developments.

We have continued to participate in the Parish Lengthsman programme during the year and small highways works have been completed during the four visits we have available. Some examples of this activity are Knapp Lane drainage ditch clearance, street sign cleaning, grass verge cutting and notice board maintenance.

During the past year the Parish Council has attended two HCC hosted county wide consultation meetings of Parish Councils to input on the impacts of various areas of potential HCC budget reductions. We are in a time of significant budget restraint and can only expect further challenges to come.

AMPFIELD COUNTRYSIDE HERITAGE AREA & FOOTPATHS



The purpose behind the creation of the Ampfield Countryside Heritage Area (ACHA) some 25 years ago, was to recognize and conserve those features of our environment that are of natural, geographical or historical significance so that they will be available for the benefit of the next and future generations. Members of the ACHA group believe the best way to achieve this is to encourage greater knowledge and understanding of the area in which we live. With this in mind, over the past year,

we have continued with the series of talks and local guided walks.

The annual Boxing Day walk through Ampfield Wood was a great success, despite the mud, and enjoyed by around 20 walkers, plus a good collection of dogs. The walk finished up, as ever, by the car park of the White Horse, thus providing an excellent opportunity to relive the events of the morning in convivial surroundings.

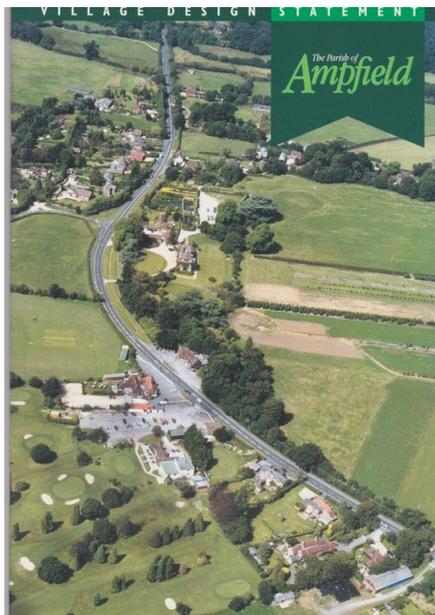
We were exceptionally lucky this year because the 2016 Spring Heritage Talk was given by Wolfgang Bopp, the director of the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens. Wolfgang is an enthusiastic and gifted speaker and his account of the history of the Gardens was both fascinating and inspiring. Around 50 people turned up to listen and to enjoy an informal chat with Wolfgang over coffee and biscuits at the end.

We are continuing our project of rewriting the Keble Way booklet, covering local walks through our area and hope to have a number of these published on the council website www.ampfield.org.uk during the year.

A full programme is being planned for 2016. Please see the website and the notice boards for details.

UPDATE TO THE AMPFIELD PARISH VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

The Ampfield Village Design Statement (VDS) is a valuable document. It helps to ensure that any development in our village respects and reflects its distinctive character. When it is adopted by the Local Planning Authority as a Supplementary Planning Document, it has genuine legal weight.



The existing VDS is now approaching 15 years old and to keep it relevant it needs to be revisited and reaffirmed as a current demonstration of the aspirations of the parishioners of Ampfield.

With this in mind, Ampfield Parish Council has initiated an evaluation of the VDS that will bring it up to date. At our March meeting Council agreed this project would be led by Councillor Graham Roads, with support from Allan Clark and Julie Trotter.

Although not as complex as the original work, this project must rely heavily on the input and expertise of all our parishioners. Anyone who is interested in helping with this important project is invited to contact any councillor directly or confirm their interest at the Parish Assembly, where the subject will be discussed.

FRIENDS OF CHAPEL \WOOD

The Friends of Chapel Wood are a group of volunteers that meet on the second Saturday of each month with a view to managing and caring for our community woodland, Chapel Wood, and our woodland burial ground. It is pleasing to report that, over the past year, the Friends have made progress on a number of the longer term projects.



Currently, we are concentrating on three main project areas. The idea is to reduce the size of the rhododendron to the proportions of a woodland hedge. This should effectively 'borrow' the view of the trees in Ampfield Wood behind, whilst allowing a degree of privacy for those visiting the burial ground.



The theme of 'borrowed' views remains with the second of our projects. The intention is to reduce the height of the rhododendron and laurel that are growing just to the south west of the church, thus opening up a view of the canopies of the oaks and beeches growing in and around the pond area.

The third major project being undertaken currently is the replacement of the dipping platform that was irreparably damaged when an oak tree fell on it a few years ago. We hope to have this installed by the summer. We have a design and a model

and are currently investigating the sourcing of materials.

In addition to the above we have continued the regular maintenance of the pond and its surrounds, kept the footpaths clear of encroaching undergrowth and improved the vistas in the open woodland. None of this would have been possible without the willing time and effort provided by our group of woodland volunteers. We all owe them a great debt of gratitude for the efforts they make on our behalf



BADDESLEY DIVISION COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Hampshire County Council will need to find savings of £81.5 million by the end of the 2016/17 financial year. Most of these savings have already been achieved through the Transformation programme, by reducing the cost of back office services and functions, a strategy that was introduced to help to prevent cuts to frontline services. The Local Government Finance Settlement for Hampshire, announced on 17th December 2015, was a further cut of £48 million. This is a decrease of 37.4% and is £29 million more than the Council were anticipating. In February this year the government gave a one off amount of additional funding of £18.69 million to Hampshire, over the next two years, but there will be no more transitional grant funding for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The significant reduction is because more money has been allocated to the authorities in the North of England at the expense of the Southern Shire Counties & District authorities. Over the next four years funding to Councils from central government will continue to be reduced, resulting in further Council Tax increases, above inflation increases on the cost of local authority services and at the same time frontline services will be cut or reduced. During the next financial year we will see increased charges of between 5% & 8% for the County Council's Nursing & Residential homes. The mobile library services will be phased out, and many of the Hampshire Waste & Recycling Centres will be closed down or opening hours reduced. There is no denying that this next phase of cuts is going to be much tougher and people will now start to notice the difference.

The County Council has sought devolution from Government, seeking more powers and funding devolved to elected local government at county, district and parish level in England. If agreed, it would mean the retention of business rates in order to help fund council's services. The shire areas of England are very important to the nation, contributing around £203 billion per annum in terms of Gross Value Added. The County are also seeking more powers back from unelected agencies.

The Chancellor will decide shortly whether to allow this devolution bid. It will then need to go back to all the Councils in Hampshire in order to scrutinise what the package contains.

During December 2015, Hampshire Highways team were busy responding to the heavy and intense rainfall, with emergency crews responding to 95 calls of flooding and removing 18 large trees blocking highways in the first weekend of 2016 alone.

The County Council have invested extensively in support of Superfast Broadband and now almost 97% of premises in the County have access to this

facility. The County have been awarded £3.1 million to invest in a digital strategy to help transform, modernise and secure sustainable public services across Hampshire for the future. This investment will help to implement new ways of working digitally, to support the redesign and transformation of services so they try to match people's expectations for the 21st Century.

The County's capital programme, £563 million over the next three years, will build and improve long-term assets that will position Hampshire as a great place to live and to work now and in the future. Finance will be allocated to provide for more school places. For several years I have highlighted that this is urgently required. Many parents have been unable to gain access to their local schools. At last this situation may be improved.

In February, I placed a motion before the Full Council which urges the Government to introduce a sugar tax and clearer labelling of the sugar content in drinks and food products. These changes are essential for people to make more informed choices and counteract the impending damage to the public's health and resultant impact upon our health services. The Councillors voted unanimously to support this.

The allocation of Grant funding to councillors, has enabled me to help support various community organisations. After attending one of Mountbatten School's concerts, I was pleased to offer them support to purchase more musical instruments.

In order to balance its budget for 2016/2017, Hampshire County Council will increase Council Tax by 3.99%. This will result in a Band D property increasing by £41.40p, resulting in a Band D Council Tax of £1079.28p. It will mean more tax for Hampshire residents to pay, and services cut or reduced. The cost in Council Care homes will rise well above inflation. I, like many other councillors, was unable to support the budget, as there was a lack of detail about the levels of cuts and where the cuts would come.

It seems every year there is something to vote on! This year we have a very important decision to make about Britain and Europe.

HCC Cllr Alan Dowden

FINANCE REPORT

Council's straightforward accounting processes have been stretched a bit this year as we have had to dip deeply into reserves to fund assets, account for unbudgeted income from allotments, open new accounts to accommodate Section 106 monies and grapple with the banks to ensure cover under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. The next few years will bring new responsibilities and challenges as we manage significant amounts from developer funds.

Assets

The biggest single asset acquired this financial year was the Village Hall, the freehold of which was purchased from the Women's Institute on behalf of the community. Discussions started in 2012 and it proved to be a long, slow process before the transfer was completed early in 2016. The cost, excluding VAT but including legal fees, was just under £19,000. The purchase was funded from our reserves but discussions continue with TVBC about a grant towards the cost. We took possession of, and insured the new car park, to the side of the refurbished Hall in November 2015. Fortunately we were not yet in possession at the time someone drove into the brand new fencing around the car park! We will shortly sign the lease which transfers the management of the Village Green and all the other open spaces at Morleys Green to Ampfield Parish Council. This will provide significant new green spaces for the whole community to enjoy.

Current Financial Year 2015/2016

At the time of writing, receipts and payments for the current financial year 2015/2016 are not yet complete; Cllr Bryan Nanson will give an update at the Annual Parish Assembly on 25th April. However, receipts were just under £40,000 to end February 2016, made up largely of the Precept at £32,336 income of £2,083 from the Recreation and Burial Grounds, VAT refunds of £3564 and allotment fees of £1,890.

Expenditure to end February 2016 was just under £47,000. The purchase of the freehold of the Village Hall accounted for a significant part of that figure. Apart from that single purchase, most expenditure has been incurred in the maintenance of our major assets of Chapel Wood, the Burial Ground and the Recreation Ground, and on their loan repayments. During February and March time and money has been spent on getting the new allotments at Morleys underway. Just over £3000 was spent on laying paths to separate the plots and maintain a tidy site. This expenditure will be recovered through S106 developer funds related to maintenance of the Morleys Green site.

Precept and Budget for 2016/2017

Regular reviews of expenditure were carried out throughout 2015/2016 to monitor costs and determine outturn. A budget of £47,214 was set for the next financial year 2016/2017; this was a net increase of just over £7200 compared with the current year. Morleys accounted for £4,300 of that increase to pay for the first year of maintenance of the green spaces and the allotments. This amount did not affect the Precept as monies would be released from S106 developer funds to pay for it. The remainder of the increase was due largely to provision for an update of the Village Design Statement and to the notice board at the school, increased maintenance at the Recreation Ground, and provision for an employee pension in line with Government legislation. That expenditure together with anticipated receipts produced a Precept of £33,902. This is an increase of 4.92% over the previous year and is the first time that the Precept has been increased in 8 years.

Details of the audited accounts for 2014/2015, a statement of the Council's current financial position and a copy of the budget for 2016/2017 will be available at the Annual Parish Assembly.

VILLAGE HALL

It has been a very exciting and busy year for the Village Hall Committee which saw the completion of the largest project ever undertaken since the hall was built in the 1950's. 'Wow! What a transformation!' is the most common expression heard when people see the enhancements for the first time. Most of



the work on the £150,000 + extension was carried out during a shutdown period over the school summer holidays. The hall now proudly boasts a new large, well equipped, modern kitchen; a new small hall/annexe and a new committee room.

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ST MARK'S CHURCH

Since arriving in October it seems to have been non-stop! I am Vicar in three parishes; Ampfield, Chilworth and North Baddesley all being one Benefice. St Marks continues to go from strength to strength and I am enjoying meeting people of the village, those who come to church and those that don't.

I have been welcomed at the coffee morning at the Village Hall on Thursday mornings and have enjoyed the Village Market and Lunch club. It seemed that Christmas was soon upon us and St Mark's hosted a Carol Service, Children's Crib Service and Midnight Mass as well as a Christmas morning services. All of them were well attended and had a wonderful atmosphere, but I think it was the Crib Service that we had most fun, with visiting children dressing up and taking part in the play 'The Grumpy Innkeeper'. There was much laughter and noise – not for the faint hearted!



This year we have made a change to our weekly services. There will be a service every week at 9.30am, so whichever Sunday you come you will be met with a warm smile and hopefully an encounter with God. We look forward to meeting you all at any of the services whether you are a regular churchgoer or just trying it out.

The Ministry team, the Revds. Vanessa Lawrence, Clifford Stride and Hilary Healey and Licensed Lay Ministers, Mrs Sally Kerson, Mr Jonathan de Vile and Mr Roger Healey, continue to take services and give pastoral care. Mrs Kerson is the parish administrator, working from the Parish Office in North Baddesley. You can find their contact details in the Ampfield Messenger or on the Benefice Website at www.chilworthchurch.org

The Church Building is in good repair and we are hoping that shortly it will be open all through the week during the day for everyone to see what a beautiful

building it is both outside and in. And that it will be a place of peace and quiet for those who would like a moment's reflection and prayer. We are grateful to the Friends of St Mark's for their support in the upkeep of our building.

Our close links with the school continue, the congregation provide governors and support and we love to welcome the children into church for various festivals and lessons.

We are preparing for Easter with Services and activities for all ages and look forward to welcoming you all soon.

**Revd Victoria Ashdown
Vicar of the Benefice of
Ampfield, Chilworth and North Baddesley.**

VILLAGE HALL (continued)

(Continued from page 17)

In addition, the extension has been designed with its own new toilets so that the complex can be let either as a whole or as two separate self-contained units with the original chair store attached to the existing main hall being converted into a kitchenette which can double up as a bar. A small patio, a new large tarmacadam carpark and landscaping complements the new works.

Most of the costs were generously met by the Perbury Group who are developing the adjoining Morleys Green but the Hall Committee decided to upgrade the original design and agreed to commission an extra £30,000 of work. This was assisted by a grant of £25,000 from Test Valley Borough Council.

During the shutdown the opportunity was taken by volunteers of the hall committee to decorate all of the existing hall. The result is a hall that the founding WI members who built the original hall would be truly proud of.

In the meantime, community use of the hall has increased, the regular monthly market on the first Saturday remains popular, as does the new weekly Thursday Catch Up Café. Professional entertainment has returned to the hall and audiences have thoroughly enjoyed performances by the Coalporters, Iestyn Edwards (aka Madame Galina) and a traditional pantomime. More is to follow. Watch the noticeboards and Parish Website!

Denis Payne – Hall Committee Chairman

CLEAN FOR THE QUEEN

Clean for The Queen was a campaign launched by Country Life magazine in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy this year to clear up Britain in time for The Queen's 90th birthday on April 21st.



The Parish Council advertised for volunteers and the outcome was a wonderful demonstration of community spirit and involvement. Test Valley Borough Council provided the equipment – Hi-Viz jackets, litter pickers and rubbish bags



which were picked up promptly afterwards. Most of the roads in the parish were picked over the first 2 weekends in March with lots of bags being filled with all kinds of detritus – some of it stomach churning! On the Straight Mile the team collected 11 bags plus 4 wheels/tyres and a plastic engine screening part from a van, together with a variety of other items.

Photos of some, but not all, of the litter pickers are shown.

The campaign has generated lots of enthusiasm and several groups have plans to repeat the exercise in 6 months' time. The Parish Council has the necessary jackets and pickers – so do get in touch with us if you would like to join in.

AMPFIELD SCHOOL

We currently have 46 wonderful children at Ampfield which makes us one of the smallest schools in Hampshire. We are proud to be equal partners within the Federation of Ampfield & John Keble CofE Schools and to have our unique identity recognised and valued. By coming together, we have joined forces, shared expertise and strengthened both schools for the future. We aim to be confident about what we do, what we offer and be proud of our achievements.

Ampfield School was inspected by Ofsted in 2014 and was judged to be 'Good'. In January of this year, the school was inspected by the National Society on behalf of the Church of England. We were delighted to receive 'Good' as an overall grade and Christian Distinctiveness was graded as '**Outstanding**'. The report recognises that we have been able to develop and reinforce the quality of experience for all children within a nurturing Christian environment:

The school's nurturing, compassionate and inclusive atmosphere provides a happy and calm learning environment with mutual respect clearly evident throughout the whole school community. Pupils demonstrate excellent relationships and learning behaviour. This reflects the school's strong emphasis on explicit Christian Values.

The school lives out its vision by helping children to feel they belong, knowing they will be kept safe, physically and emotionally. Pupils who have joined the school recently say how happy they are since they joined Ampfield. The Headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and its place within the recently established federation.

Excellent attitudes are developed where pupils learn from mistakes, strive to do well and take responsibility for their learning.

As the only Church of England school in the Benefice of Ampfield, Chilworth and North Baddesley we are proud to serve the families from the local area and beyond. Perhaps it's time to take a fresh look at your local school. If you would like to visit to see us in action or to enquire about places or volunteering, please call the School Office on 01794 368219.

Marcus Roe

Executive Headteacher

Federation of Ampfield & John Keble CofE Primary Schools

BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT (continued)

(Continued from page 9)

Revised Borough Local Plan (2011-2029) Approved by Government Inspector and Adopted by TVBC

Having submitted the Local Plan to the Minister back in July 2014, and following a thorough public examination, the Planning Inspector eventually confirmed that our plan was sound and commended the council for the professional methodology used.

The adopted BLP seeks to protect the environment of the Borough which we all value whilst recognising that we need to provide homes for our own local residents, support the local economy and provide new leisure and recreational facilities. Some difficult decisions had to be made. However, no major development is planned for either Ampfield or Braishfield.

Clean for the Queen Week

To mark Her Majesty's 90th birthday, there was, at Her request, a national Clean for the Queen Week. Together with the Parish Council, I helped to coordinate the offer by TVBC to support this project. They provided litter pickers, plastic sacks, fluorescent vests and all the Health and Safety advice sheets, etc., and collected all the rubbish within 24hrs. Some two dozen parishioners kindly volunteered and did a sterling job. Most have offered to do this again on a regular basis. Much of the Parish is now covered but I do need volunteers for Hook Road, Hursley Road (from 302 to Hook Road) and the A3090 (Potters Heron to Ratlake). Please email or phone me if you can help. Email Cllrmhatley@testvalley.gov.uk Tel. 07970 501050.

Finally, there are two major issues I am far from convinced about. Firstly, academy schools may be a good solution for some schools, but it is not the only solution to a problem. However, in schools where there is no problem, why do you need a solution? Secondly, the recent last minute bid by Portsmouth and Southampton and some other Solent authorities (not TVBC) for a Solent Devolution Deal with its own elected mayor appears to be rushed and poorly budgeted for. At present I cannot see there being any net advantage for us in Test Valley to join them. Most funds will, I fear, be diverted to the new 'Solent City'.

Martin Hatley—Borough Councillor

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

To be held at

**AMPFIELD VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY, 25th APRIL 2016
AT 7.30PM**

The Agenda for this Annual Parish Assembly is:

Apologies for absence
Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 27th April 2015
Matters Arising
Chairman's Review of the Year
County & Borough Councillors' Reports
Planning
Village Design Statement
Allotments
Council Finances & Administration
Transport and Road Safety
Friends of Chapel Wood
Ampfield Countryside Heritage Area

Other Reports for 2015/2016 - 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

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

The Parish Council has links to:

Hampshire Association of Local Councils
Test Valley Association of Parish and Town Councils
Test Valley Community Services
Ampfield Village Hall Committee
Ampfield Countryside Heritage Area Group
Ampfield Primary School
Test Valley Passenger Transport Liaison Forum

Councillors also attend a variety of committees and consultations of interest to the Parish.

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

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How do I get in touch with Ampfield Parish Council?

Contact: Clerk to the Council: Doreen Matthews,
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Tel: 01794 368 437
Email: clerk@ampfield.org.uk