

# **PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL**

## **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 6 MAY 2004**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2003/04**

#### **Introduction**

Last year we provided a written report for the first time. It was well received so I have decided to continue this practice. The report contains some personal items but could not have been produced without the contributions of the Chairmen of our three Committees:

Ivor Kiverstein	Finance & Policy
Jan Botting (me!)	Planning & Services
Peter Lee	Recreation & Open Spaces

#### **The Parish Council**

I feel that I must start my report by thanking the Committee Chairmen and all the Councillors who have worked so hard for the good of the Village. You may remember that a number of former Councillors decided not to stand at the elections last May and that we had to arrange a further election in July. Our District Councillors, Brian Donnelly and Roger Paterson, stepped in for several months to fill the breach, for which we were most grateful.

We welcomed a number of new Councillors during the year and we are now a relatively young Council (at least in terms of experience) with a new Chairman. We have lots of ideas for improvements and are working closely with Pulborough Community Partnership and helping them to implement their Action Plan. We are doing our best and will welcome your views on how Pulborough can be improved.

Before taking Committee reports, a few general issues and developments deserve special mention.

#### **Parish Council News**

Last year we circulated copies of a first, pilot, newsletter which we had hoped to publish twice a year. Unfortunately, the high costs of producing a newsletter in that format would have meant a further increase in the Precept. We have therefore changed the format and aim to publish a newsletter paid for by advertising, four times a year. The newsletter will be delivered to your home free of charge and will hopefully keep you up to date with Village activities and useful contacts. You should just have received the first edition. Please let us know what you think.

If you visited Lower Street in January, you may have noticed our electronic information sign on the wall of the Doctors' Surgery in Lower Street. The sign survived for one week after which it had to be removed for reinforcement. We hope that it will be available again soon to promote community events as well as Parish Council activities.

### **Skateboard/BMX Ramp**

We have had the good fortune to acquire a skateboard half pipe ramp at very little cost to the Parish Council. The equipment is suitable for both skateboards and BMX bikes. It will need a little refurbishment and requires installation on a hard standing base. If it is well used, we propose to form a young persons' user group and to consider the installation of other equipment over a period of time.

We are hoping to install the ramp at the south end of the Cousins Way recreation field, adjacent to St Mary's School fence and some distance from any houses. The field is already a meeting place for young people during the summer and the equipment will provide a focus for their activities.

### **Pulborough Community Partnership**

The Parish Council took the initiative in joining with Billingshurst, Steyning and Storrington to secure funding from the Countryside Agency for a 'Healthcheck'. This project produced an action plan which is being implemented by a group of local people who have formed Pulborough Community Partnership.

The Partnership has a long list of projects covering just about every aspect of Village life, including a project to improve the area around the Old Swan Bridge. Please let us know if you can help.

### **Public Toilets**

Horsham District Council has closed the public toilets in the main car park and at Swan Bridge because it was not economic to continue the contract. The Parish Council is very concerned about the loss of this vital amenity but has so far been unable to suggest alternatives. Please let us know if you have any ideas.

### **Committees**

The Parish Council has three Committees whose role is outlined in our newsletter.

### **Finance & Policy**

The Committee is engaged in a major overhaul of the Parish Council's business procedures to ensure that they are efficient and meet legal requirements. This is a very time consuming process but is essential to the effectiveness of the Parish Council.

Deciding the Parish Council's budget – and hence the Precept collected via the Council tax – is perhaps the Committee's most important role. The budget includes provision for grants to local organisations. Applications are invited in September each year. The Parish Council awarded grants totalling £6,295 this year to a variety of organisations including the Community Care Association, the Youth Club and St Mary's School.

The Committee is also responsible for communications. It organised the Annual Parish Meeting and was responsible for two major initiatives during the year:

- The negotiation of arrangements for our new newsletter and production of the first edition
- The creation of a new Parish Council website. Do look: at [www.pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk).

### **Planning & Services**

We have been kept busy again this year considering planning applications – 136 this year – which is about the same as last year. It is heartening when Horsham District Council take notice of our local knowledge and agree with our recommendations. We also comment on the naming of new developments and were pleased with the naming of Swan Corner, Five Bells Close and Strawberry Field.

We were very disappointed that the planning application for the old Spiro Gills site was not decided during the year. We pressed Horsham District Council for an early resolution of the application because the continued delay is causing great difficulties for the doctors, their staff and their patients. Hopefully, this will now move forward.

We do have outstanding concerns about the effects on traffic of a new medical centre and food store on the A29. Whilst we support the proposed developments, we are concerned that the additional traffic will cause further congestion and present hazards on this very busy road. We have submitted a paper and met with senior officers of the County Council to press our concerns before binding agreements are made.

We have also submitted a paper to Horsham District Council in response to an invitation to comment on the Local Plan Review. We are anxious to retain policies to safeguard the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside, to preserve the Conservation Area and to protect the shopping area of Lower Street from residential development. We have opposed any development on the East Glebe Field but supported a reasonable amount of development on the West Glebe Field if this will help to save the East Glebe Field. Following a favourable response from the Village Appraisal, we have given our support in principle to the development of the site at Riverside Concrete.

The Planning & Services Committee monitors the standard of street cleaning and is always open to ideas for inexpensive ways of cheering up the Village. Each autumn, Members plant daffodil and crocus bulbs around the Village and oversee our Christmas decorations and summer hanging baskets. The installation of the four Village signs was a significant achievement this year.

The Committee is also involved in the project to improve the area around the old Swan Bridge. Much remains to be done here but the area South of the bridge is already much tidier thanks to some hard work by The Environment Agency and County Highways.

### **Recreation & Open Spaces**

We have continued to work with local sports clubs and recreational organisations to improve the recreational facilities available to the community.

The Parish Council was heavily involved in the reconstitution of Pulborough Recreation Ground Sports & Social Club and enjoys an excellent working relationship with the new officers of the Club.

We commissioned a maintenance survey of the sports pavilion in the autumn. Unfortunately, the survey indicated a need for considerable work on the building. The surveyors suggested that a pitched roof should be erected over the rear of the building but that the part occupied by the Club was in poor condition and should be replaced. We are working closely with the Sports & Social Club to explore options for the design and funding of the necessary work.

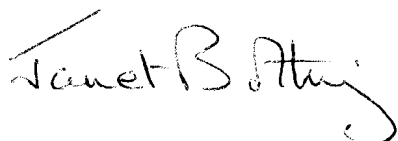
In the meantime, we have commissioned a local painter and decorator to paint the outside of the pavilion. We hope that most of the painting will be completed in time for the start of the cricket season to provide more attractive facilities for Pulborough Cricket Club, which has been promoted to the County League.

All the sports clubs have active junior membership, which we are keen to encourage. Unfortunately, Pulborough Rugby Football Club has outgrown the facilities in Pulborough and is hoping to acquire a field at Cootham. The move would not be for two or three years but seems the best solution all round. The Club has ten junior teams and when they are all at home causes horrendous congestion around the recreation ground.

Apart from developing plans for the pavilion, the Committee's major current project is the proposed installation of the skateboard equipment. The Committee is also kept busy with the maintenance of the recreation grounds; the children's play areas and the allotments, as well as monitoring the Parish Council's open spaces at Nutbourne Common, Pocket Park and Rivermead.

### **Employees**

None of this would be possible without our hardworking and conscientious staff. Our Clerk - Jenny Dorling, our Litter Warden - Brian Tee, our Groundsman - Jim Leadbeater, our Caretakers at the pavilion - Arnold and Gloria Martin, and the Administrator for the Multi Sports Facility - John Jupp, all play important parts in maintaining the facilities and amenities of the Village. I would like to thank them for their support and for all their work on behalf of the Village. Last but not least, thank you, goodbye and best wishes in whatever you do, to our Assistant Clerk, Howard Barrett.



Janet Botting  
Chairman