

NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT – APRIL 2009

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

It is with great pleasure that as Chairman I introduce the Annual Report of North Horsham Parish Council.

I am coming to the end of my second year as Chairman of the Parish Council a position that I have been proud to hold. Over the recent past it has become the custom for Chairmen to serve two years and then to stand down to enable another Councillor to take up the role and I will be following this pattern this May to allow another Councillor to take up the responsibility.

One of the main focuses of the Parish Council's work this year has been its consideration of the proposal by Horsham Football Club to establish its ground and headquarters at the Holbrook Club site. In June last year the Parish Council hosted a public meeting at North Heath Hall which was attended by representatives from the Football Club, the District Council and hundreds of residents. The concerns of people living across Holbrook at the potential impact of the Club moving to North Heath Lane were widely and robustly aired and it was clear that there was enormous opposition to the proposal. Subsequently the Parish Council voted at a full Council Meeting to object to the Planning Application and sent a representative to speak at the Area North Planning Committee when the matter was debated by District Councillors. Most will be aware that the District Council declined to grant planning permission but that the Club originally decided to appeal against this.

A date was set for the appeal but as reported in the local press this has now been withdrawn and the Club are now working with the District Council on alternative locations for the Club. I am sure that the actions and position taken by the Parish Council in opposing the project have contributed to a satisfactory outcome for its residents.

Amongst other things that have happened in the Parish over the last year that I place on record with some pleasure include the installation of the publicity roundel at Fitzalan Road the replacement kitchen at North Heath Hall and although not directly brought about by the Parish Council I was particularly pleased to see the enhancement to the 98 bus service. One disappointing issue on buses is that we have not been able to pursue our aim to enhance bus services in Holbrook.

This report sets out details of the work and achievements of the Council over the past year and I am pleased to be associated with these. In recognising the steps made and services provided, I must acknowledge and thank all Members of the Council for their all important contributions and express my appreciation to all the Parish staff for their efforts over the past twelve months.

For the future, I look forward to working with the new Chairman after the election process at the next Council meeting and to carrying out any role that may be asked of me.

Councillor Ray Turner

FACTS ABOUT NORTH HORSHAM

- Continues a parish council history that goes back to 1894, originally as Horsham Rural Parish Council and since April 1987, North Horsham Parish Council.
- Covers today 1,095 hectares with a population of 21,308 (2001) accounting for about 17% of Horsham District and 47% of the population of Horsham Town.
- Has 19 elected Members
- Controls assets of over £4m
- Holds 50 Council or Committee meetings a year, all of which are open to the public
- Employs a Parish Clerk, Deputy Parish Clerk, Administration Assistant, Property Maintenance Officer, a part-time Litter Warden and 6 part-time caretaker/cleaners
- Owns and maintains, three community halls, a recreation ground with two floodlit Multi Activity courts, four play areas, two major Open Spaces, a small allotment site and 27 street lights
- Publishes *NHPC News*, the Parish Council newsletter
- Nominates representatives to serve on over 12 local voluntary, public and community organisations.
- Holds monthly planning surgeries
- Commented on 190 planning applications in 2008/09 (212 previous year).

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

After a period of relative stability the Council experienced a flurry of Member resignations – three for personal reasons and one ceasing to be a councillor through non-attendance. The first vacancy was on the resignation of Ray Chapman in Holbrook West. The vacancy was duly advertised and for the first time for many years a Bye Election was claimed. Only one nomination was received and thus Michael Senior was elected unopposed. Whilst this vacancy was in progress both Brian Shaw and Stuart Overington resigned – Stuart has since moved away to Cowfold. Soon afterwards Kim-Jean Farhall ceased to be a councillor and even though all three vacancies were advertised residents did not claim bye elections. Thus the Parish Council encouraged applicants to put themselves forward for co-option – a much more low key process of appointment.

At the March 2009 Council meeting there were four applicants for three vacancies and the remaining councillors appointed Roger Wilton (ex District Councillor) to represent Roffey South and Maggie Davis and Roland Knight to represent Holbrook East.

If residents wish to know what it involves to be parish councillor further information including a short DVD is available on request from the Parish Clerk.

A full list of the current Councillors can be found at the end of the Annual Report together with how to contact the Parish Clerk.

ALLOWANCES FOR COUNCILLORS

The Council has a Scheme of Members' Allowances, which is independently reviewed. Currently this was £430pa for 2008/09. A Parish Councillor may elect to forego payment of the allowance.

The Councillors listed below were paid the following allowances and expenses during the 2008/09 financial year.

Member	Allowance	Expenses	Total
Peter Burgess	£430		£430
Nik Butler	£430		£430
John Charles	£430		£430
Kim-Jean Farhall	£315		£315
Ruth Garner	£430		£430
Martin Loates	£430	£21	£451
Margaret Rogers	£430		£430
David Searle	£430		£430
Ken Spiers	£430		£430
Simon Torn	£430		£430
Ray Turner	£430	£89	£519
Sally Wilton	£430		£430
Totals	£5,045	£110	£5,155

TRAINING & CONFERENCES

Councillors and staff are encouraged to attend training courses organised by a number of outlets as well as conferences. The following is a list of courses/conferences attended during the year:

Councillors	Ray Turner	National Association of Local Councils Conference, Eastbourne (May 2008) Action in Rural Sussex and Sussex Association of Local Councils AMGs – Ardingly, (November 2008) NALC Larger Councils Conference – London (November 2008)
	Martin Loates	Councillors Training Day (April 2008)
	Sally Wilton	Councillors Training (April 2008)
	All Councillors	Planning Seminar – (September 2008)
Staff	Tom O'Hara (Parish Clerk)	National Association of Local Councils Conference - Eastbourne (May 2008) Local Council Advisory Service Seminar on Risk and Loss Prevention - Burgess Hill (September 2008) SLCC Regional Conference – Uckfield (November 2008) Action in Rural Sussex and Sussex Association of Local Councils AMGs, Ardingly (November 2008) NALC Larger Councils Conference – London (November 2008) SALC Clerks' Information Day (East Grinstead – March 2009)

SOME COUNCIL ACTIVITIES during the year...

The Parish Council has continued to **progress the Parish Plan** (adopted in March 2007). The meeting of the Parish Plan Steering Group is being arranged in the next month or two to review progress to date.

A year ago the North Horsham Parish Plan was posted on the National Association of Local Councils website as an example of best practice. Subsequently, the Council Chairman, Ray Turner and the Parish Clerk, Tom O'Hara were invited to give a presentation of the 'North Horsham Parish Plan Experience' at the NALC Larger Council Conference held in London in November 2008.

The Parish Council organised a very well supported **Public Meeting in the summer on the Horsham Football Club planning application** to use The Holbrook Club site as its new football ground. Subsequently, the Parish Council was pleased that the District Council rejected the application and that the inevitable appeal has just recently been withdrawn on the prospect of a different site elsewhere in Horsham.

..... ISSUES FOR THE COMING MONTHS...

- Biffa Mechanical Biological Treatment facility due to start construction in Winter 2009 with completion in 2011 - Brookhurst Wood Road, Holbrook
- Publication by the Parish Council of the very first 'North Horsham Residents' Guide'
- The relocation of bus shelters as a result of the changes to the route 98 bus service in Roffey
- Launch of hanging baskets in the summer in Fitzalan Road – a new initiative by the Parish Council in conjunction with Horsham in Bloom

COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY MATTERS

Website - The Council is committed to improving communication links with local residents, organisations and businesses. With this in mind the Council is embarking on a major revamp of the website, using different software. This is being undertaken in-house at no extra cost to residents. When you visit our website (www.northhorsham-pc.gov.uk) you will find useful information about services and facilities provided by the Parish Council. There are full details of the business of the Council – agendas, reports, minutes, etc. If you want to see your local organisation listed, please let the Clerk know. Enquiries for hiring each of the Council's three Community Halls can now be made on line at: hall.bookings@northhorsham-pc.gov.uk

NHPC News – The Council's newsletter is produced approximately quarterly and contains useful information about Council services, etc. The Council changed the delivery of the newsletter during the year by using the free newspaper the Horsham Advertiser. This has only been partially successful and the Council will also use the 3rd Horsham Scout Group (Holbrook) in the future. The Scout Group receives a donation to their funds for this service. If, as a result of these changes you have not received your copy recently please contact the Parish Office.

Planning Surgeries (clinics) have been held once a month since January 2007 at Roffey Millennium Hall. These are held from 10am to 11am on the Saturday morning before each Planning, Environment & Transport Committee, when a Member of the Committee will be available to help you view planning applications and listen to your concerns. Residents that attend are encouraged to also attend the planning meeting on the following Thursday. More residents are beginning to use this new service. **Have you been along yet?**

Holbrook and Roffey Community Groups – These groups meet every three months in both Holbrook (at North Heath Hall) and Roffey (Roffey Millennium Hall). This is an opportunity to meet with councillors from the Parish, District and County Councils for the area. It is open to individuals as well as local organisations. Hot issues discussed recently have included the proposed relocation of Horsham Town Football Club on the Holbrook Club site in North Heath Lane. If you have not attended before make a note of the next meetings and come along- you will be made very welcome!

December 2008 saw the fourth **Community Carol Service** held at All Saints Church, Roffey, sponsored by the Parish Council. The service was very well attended with readings by local residents. The Council wishes to thank the Father Kevin Agnew for officiating. Arrangements are in hand for the December 2009 Community Carol Service at a venue to be arranged.

The Citizens Advice Bureau continues to hold its 'outreach' at Roffey Millennium Hall on Fridays, between 10am and 1pm. More and more local residents are using this local CAB outreach, which is proving increasingly popular.

SOCIAL MATTERS

Speed Indicator Device (SID) – A number of Parish Councillors and local residents have been trained in the use of SID and have used the Speed Indicator Device on several occasions in 2008. SID will be used again in 2009 so take note – please watch your speed AT ALL TIMES. More volunteers are needed – just contact the Parish Office on 01403 750786 if you are interested in helping.

Poster Display Roundel – The roundel at Fitzalan Road (wholly funded as a result of planning obligations from local development) is now available for advertising local organisations events.

Earles Meadow Boardwalk – The long awaited refurbishment of the boardwalk at Earles Meadow was completed in the summer, which together with major tidying up by local residents has greatly improved the accessibility and enjoyment of this 13 acre Open Space.

Roffey Community Project – Initial talks on this project began in early 2008 with the aim of linking all the many and varied organisations in and associated with Roffey to improve social well being of residents across the spectrum. The Parish Council is involved as a facilitator as well making a small grant to the Roffey Youth Centre. Much progress has been made, including:

- The opening of the Roffey Children and Family Centre in Godwin Way with a wide range of activities and health services for mums with young children; appointment of Elaine Blanks as overall Manager and a Family Outreach Worker – Carolyn Foote
- Appointment of Youth Worker, Paul Peacock and the gradual extension of activities for youngsters, including in the future outreach youth work
- £70,000 committed by London & Quadrant Housing Association to create a drop-in facility for South Holmes Tenants
- £3,000 secured to launch a 'Children Can Do' programme in Roffey
- £90,000 secured by Horsham District Council to improve the children's play areas at Littlehaven Lane and under consideration - Beech Road

GRANTS/DONATIONS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

The Parish Council makes a number of grants and awards to a variety of local organisations and individuals. This amounted to some £13,378 in 2008/09. Recipients were as follows:

Life Community Baptist Church	300
Victim Support	500
Horsham in Bloom	400 (NHPC best rear gardens)
New Runners Club	100
Royal British Legion	40
Horsham CAB	4,200
Horsham Age Concern	5,000 (towards new mini-bus)
West Sussex Mediation Service	150
Roffey Youth Centre	2,688 (extra evenings)

MONEY MATTERS

The Parish Council complies with the statutory requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 in the management of its accounts and financial affairs. The appointed external auditor for the Council is Mazars of Southampton; and the independent internal auditor is Peter J Consultants of Lindfield. The Parish Clerk undertakes day-to-day financial management, as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer with regular reports to the Finance & Administration Committee. Additionally, each Committee monitors its own budget on a quarterly basis.

The Council's Budget (Precept) for 2009/10, set in January 2009, was £280,733 - an increase of 2.6% on the previous year.

How then was your money spent in 2008/09? ...

The gross budgeted expenditure in the financial year 2008/09 was £427,951, offset by £172,743 of mainly hall lettings income, a Precept of £273,574 (part of the Council Tax) and £18,366 (net) from reserves.

The out-turn for 2008/09 is still subject to audit, thus the following are draft results at present:

INCOME	as at 31.03.09 £	Budgeted £
Precept on District Council	273,574	273,574
Environmental Cleansing Grant	6,080	
Interest earned at Bank	7,908	
Multi Courts hire	11,656	
Community Hall hire	146,621	
Allotment income, Misc income	478	
Section 106 Funding	<u>8,361</u>	<u>172,743</u>
	454,678	446,317
EXPENDITURE		
Establishment/General Administration	252,703	
Grants/Donations	13,238	
Loan Repayments	18,116	
Capital Projects	33,037	
Community Halls Maintenance	66,698	
Allotments Maintenance	625	
Play Areas/Open Spaces Maintenance	34,591	
Roffey Burial Ground (shared costs)	<u>6,000</u>	
	425,008	<u>427,951</u>
GENERAL FUND		
General Reserves b/f at 01.04.08	108,844	89,764
Add: Movement in year	29,670	0
Net Variance from Budget	0	77,087
Net Trans from(to) Earmarked Reserves	<u>9,898</u>	<u>(18,439)</u>
General Reserves b/f at 31.03.09	<u>148,412</u>	<u>148,412</u>

The Parish Council is confident of the sound financial position at 31st March 2009 and is pleased to report that it had no exposure to the banking crisis.

THE PARISH COUNCIL & HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

PARISH COUNCILLORS

HOLBROOK EAST WARD (5 Members)

Peter Crawford, 24 Drake Close, RH12 5UB	268837	Elected May 2007
Maggie Davis, 54 Primrose Copse, RH12 5PZ	241349	Co-opted March 2009
Roland Knight, 99 Pondtail Road, RH12 5HT	264072	Co-opted March 2009
Margaret Rogers, 22 Drake Close, RH12 5UB	255845	Elected May 2007
Tony Rickett, 33 Bluebell Close, RH12 5WB	217003	Re-elected May 2007

HOLBROOK WEST WARD (4 Members)

Peter Burgess, 27 Haybarn Drive, RH12 5JF	273533	Re-elected May 2007
Michael Senior, 97 Littlehaven Lane, RH12 4JE	07896879088	Elected January 2009
Ruth Garner, 4 Ramsey Close, RH12 5AF	263772	Elected May 2007
Ken Spiers, "Robins Post", North Heath Lane, RH12 5PJ268785		Re-elected May 2007

ROFFEY NORTH WARD (6 Members)

Nik Butler, 20 Farhalls Crescent, RH12 4DA	270597	Elected May 2007
John Charles, 123 Beech Road, RH12 4TY	265351	Re-elected May 2007
Martin Loates, 10 Bryce Close, RH12 4EF	269465	Elected May 2007
David Searle, 7 Earles Meadow, RH12 4HP	256267	Re-elected May 2007
Simon Torn, 9 Shepherds Way, RH12 4LT	262199	Re-elected May 2007
Ray Turner, 8 Conifers Close, RH12 4QH	259612	Re-elected May 2007

ROFFEY SOUTH WARD (4 Members)

Alan Britten, 32 Brushwood Road, RH12 4PE	272226	Elected May 2007
Mrs Pat Rutherford, 24 Brambling Close, RH13 6AZ	262001	Re-elected May 2007
Sally Wilton, 54 Beech Road, RH12 4TU	269126	Elected May 2007
Roger Wilton, 54 Beech Road, RH12 4TU	269126	Co-opted March 2009

HOW TO MAKE CONTACT:

By writing to the Parish Clerk – Tom O'Hara, Roffey Millennium Hall, Crawley Road, Horsham, RH12 4DT. Telephone/fax 01403 750786. Email: parish.clerk@northhorsham-pc.gov.uk

FEEDBACK (Tell us what you think)

The Parish Council would welcome any comments on the content of this Annual Report and would also be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Please contact any of the Parish Councillors or the Parish Clerk.