



ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

INTRODUCTION

A great deal has happened over the last 12 months and the impact of COVID-19 will certainly be with us for many a while yet. Your Parish Council has changed considerably with six members leaving during the year, all of whom are thanked for their valuable service to the village, and we have welcomed Cllrs James Gilbert and Elliott Lansdown-Bridge; at the time of writing this report, your Parish Council still has three vacancies and we would encourage anyone interested in serving this community to consider joining us.

We have been particularly fortunate in having a long serving Clerk/RFO whose advice and support have been invaluable to Parishioners and Councillors throughout a turbulent year which has seen the village continue to be supported by volunteers who help around the community in many ways including: Tree Warden, SOCCT members, the Conservation Group, the Village Hall Committee, Allotment Association, litter pickers and Neighbourhood Watch contributors. Our sincere thanks go out to you all.

COVID-19 additionally placed difficulties on those villagers required to self-isolate for whatever reason and we were delighted that over 40 households responded to our request for volunteers who could be matched with those in need; to date, we have matched 15 self-isolating households with volunteers who provide regular assistance with shopping, collection of medication, dog walking etc. Many of you have also extended the hand of friendship to your friends, to your neighbours and in many instances to people who until recently were complete strangers. This “spirit of community” is a positive that we all will be able to look back on when the current crisis ends.

All Council meetings and Committee meetings were open to the public and we have successfully held our first ever on-line meeting due to the social distancing requirement. Many issues and key events have taken place during the year: opposition to the second Gladman planning application; introduction of a new website, variation to the pavilion tenancy with Colden Common Football Club; the installation of an automated external defibrillator at the Pavilion, purchase of our own speed sign, meetings with HCC over plans for M3 upgrade works; the commitment of funds towards a crossing point at the NISA store; and continued opposition to the EBC housing plans and Southampton Airport expansion to name but a few. Further detail follows in the reports from our various committees.

PLANNING & HIGHWAYS REPORT 2019/2020

Councillors have examined and commented on 30 planning applications covering 15 alterations or extensions to existing property, 2 new builds, 5 tree reductions or removal, 3 change of use, 2 commercial and 2 others, plus requests for Enforcement Action by WCC. We still await an indication as to what will become of the Elderfield site and have been pleased to note the report by the Inspector which cast doubt over much of the plans by Eastleigh Borough Council to build 5,200 houses on the border of Winchester district.

Having hosted a number of site visits we have now formally committed funding to pay for a feasibility study into the proposed pedestrian crossing at the NISA store and have secured grants from WCC and County Councillor Warwick to go towards the final cost of this important project. Having examined several options for a new speed sign, both to deter speeding and gather data towards a request for

measures to mitigate the impact on the village when traffic is diverted during M3 closure times, we have now purchased an EVOLIS sign for use along main Road and await its arrival once the backlog of logistical issues linked to COVID-19 have been dealt with. We have thus withdrawn from the shared Parish speed sign scheme. Parking problems in the area of Boyatt Lane in particular have been raised to HCC and we await a site visit to discuss the way forward for the junction with Otterbourne Hill. As part of a Highways initiative (Op RESILIENCE), Otterbourne Hill has received attention to improve drainage and repair potholes; residents are asked to report, online at www.hants.gov.uk, any instances of potholes forming. Otterbourne has continued to be visited by the Parish Lengthsman and a great deal of work has been carried out clearing pavements and footpath maintenance, cutting back vegetation on verges, sign cleaning and clearing of gullies. We have additionally funded three days of work to deal with issues affecting health and safety and to improve the look of the village along Main Road and will be utilising the Lengthsman to improve access along the Jubilee Path.

RECREATION & AMENITIES REPORT 2019/2020

The play park and youth facilities continued to be inspected weekly for any problems and funds have been expended to ensure that all equipment remains safe and available for use. Minor work had been carried out to maintain the pavilion and, in response to concern raised by residents; a number of options were examined for the lease with our tenants, Colden Common Football Club. Councillors routinely monitored behaviour during matches and training sessions and as the Club had experienced some teething problems during the first year of its seven year lease, it was agreed to implement a Variation of Deed to amend the lease in order to better reflect how and when the Club could use the facilities and to meet the needs of villagers. The rental income from the lease enables us to recoup the costs of the Parish Council's upgrading and the Club has refurbished the interior of the pavilion and continues to improve the state of the football pitch, both of which are valuable assets to the village. Councillors agreed to fund a secure cabinet to house the defibrillator which is now available on an exterior wall for community use. Once the current situation vis a vis COVID-19 has stabilised it is hoped that residents would take the opportunity of using the pavilion for up to 12 community days per year as incorporated into the lease.

Some acts of vandalism and anti-social behaviour were dealt with during the year including: damage to the football pitch, graffiti in the children's play area and removal of a considerable quantity of broken glass from the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). Irresponsible use of a disposable BBQ had also set fire to a wheelie bin which was totally destroyed at the MUGA and a bus shelter by the Common had one of the large glass windows smashed. Such acts of vandalism and anti-social behaviour not only spoil the look of our village, but cost each of us as minor repairs and replacements are met from the Parish Council budget. That said, we will always ensure that repairs are dealt with swiftly and we are properly insured should a large claim be needed.

Thanks to the anonymous generosity of a villager, we were able to dress the village lamp posts with poppies in time for Remembrance and were also delighted to be able to contribute Parish funds towards the soldier silhouettes "On Parade" at the War Memorial. We continue to be grateful to Terry Revell and his team of volunteers who ensure the War Memorial always looks at its best. Feedback on the poppies and soldier silhouettes from villagers and those transiting through the village was extremely positive and we look forward to repeating the process in future years. Additionally, we were successful in having our War Memorial recorded as a Listed Monument which will protect it for future generations to enjoy; this is particularly relevant as we look ahead to marking the 100th anniversary of our War Memorial dedication in December.

The proposed litter pick event to be held jointly with Otterbourne C.E. Primary School in spring was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, but it is hoped to reschedule the event for later in the year. The issue of irresponsible dog owners not picking up their dog mess continues to be a problem along footpaths, open spaces and the recreation ground.

Reports of crime within the village have increased during the year with a spate of burglaries and the targeting of the car parks around the village hall and church a particular cause for concern. Several cars had been broken into during wedding and other services at the church and we are in the process of putting signage in place to warn users of the need to remove items of interest in their cars from public view. Police "Beat Surgeries" have been held in the village hall and we have stressed to the Police and our PCSO, the need for greater engagement to deter criminals.

In the coming year we are determined to improve the look, in particular, of the children's play area through repainting and pressure washing; work that will hopefully progress once current restrictions are eased. The bus shelters and benches throughout the village continue to be maintained and cleaned under contract for the benefit of residents and the open areas are kept in good order for all to enjoy. The Tree Warden has begun a survey of all trees on public land within the village to map and record the state of trees and to provide a basis for ensuring their health for future generations of villagers to enjoy.

Our aspiration to introduce "Otterbourne in Bloom", a series of raised flower beds throughout the village, failed to generate support, both from business as well as from villagers, and we therefore downscaled our aspiration to a more manageable proposal however, due to COVID-19, this has been put on hold until the situation stabilises.

Sadly, our plan to mark the 75th Anniversary of V.E. Day on Friday 8th May with a themed tea party and accompanying entertainment for villagers and invited guests has also fallen foul of COVID-19, but the response from those wishing to participate and from those prepared to "entertain" has been extremely high and we will look to host the event at a later date.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION REPORT 2019/2020

Accounts for 2018/19 were audited and approved by the external auditor; there were no matters arising.

Unaudited accounts for 2019/20

The Accounts for 2019/20 have been signed by Otterbourne Parish Council. The internal audit has been postponed until 23 June due to the Covid-19 restrictions and a report to Council will be made at the 21 July 2020 Parish Council meeting. When the Internal Auditor has completed his section of the Annual Return it will be sent for external audit.

The total income for the year (ex VAT of £2,790 6%) was £44,557 and the main items of income were:

- Precept of £38,255 (86% of total income)
- Rent from the footpath and pavilion £1,629 (3% of total)
- Allotment rents £781 (2% of total)
- Bank Interest £379 (1% of total)
- Grants and other minor receipts £723 (2% of total income)

Grants we received were:

- From WCC: £500 towards the 75th Anniversary Celebration of VE Day.

The total expenditure for the year was £37,448 (ex VAT of £2,283 6%) and the main items of expenditure were:

- Admin costs, including the clerk's salary, insurance, audit and legal fees, subscriptions and office expenses £16,645 (44% of total expenditure)
- Recreation ground and open spaces £7,141 (19% of total expenditure)
- Amenities, including street furniture, allotments, war memorial £1,434 (4% of total)
- Highways, including speed restriction sign, parish street lights and footpaths, additional hedges/verge/tree work £3,609 (10% of total)
- Churchyard Maintenance, including Old Churchyard on Kiln Lane £930 (3% of total)
- Donations £2,145 (5% of total)
- Lengthsman (final invoices as Lead Parish of the shared scheme) £3,261(9% of total)

Donations we made were:

- £25 towards the War Memorial Remembrance Wreath
- £120 towards printing of the parish magazine
- £1,500 to SOCCT towards maintenance of the Sparrowgrove and Oakwood copses
- £500 to Action against Destructive Development (ADD) towards costs to contest the Eastleigh Borough Council Local Plan

In 2019/20 we drew £10,000 of Reserves for refurbishment of the pavilion. By the end of 2020/21 we will have replaced £3,000 received from the tenancy rental back into reserves and we will continue to do so from the remaining years on the Lease.

Spending plans for 2020/2021

When setting our budget for this year, we assessed all overheads and sought best value wherever possible, without seeking to compromise on services. This included new quotations for the insurance of parish assets and maintenance of open space areas. The budget has been set at £40,084 which is a small increase of 2.92%, equivalent to +£1.60 per household per annum at Band D. Within this budget we have allowed for two major items of spending:

- £10,000 towards the feasibility study for the pedestrian crossing on main road without which the project cannot move forward
- £3,000 towards pressure washing and repainting the recreation ground play and youth areas.

Our Reserves still remain good at the equivalent of one full Precept which is within the recommended audit requirements: £29,190 is held on deposit as a sinking fund to contribute towards replacement of expensive parish assets; and £10,000 is held as an emergency fund.

The Finance & Administration Committee is also responsible for a number of administrative matters including the appointment and monitoring of the auditor, reviewing our procedures to ensure that they comply with the relevant regulations and that we in turn comply with our own procedures. To this end we continually review the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, the insurance of our assets, risk assessments, the internal audit procedures and our banking arrangements. As always, we welcome any suggestions or requests from Parishioners for expenditure to be considered for next year.

We also implemented a review of our website in response to feedback from residents during the 2019 Village Fete which suggested that many were unaware of the website, that they didn't routinely read information displayed around the village and were thus lacking awareness of key issues affecting the village as a whole. A number of villagers indicated a willingness to sign up to a new website that could provide them directly via email with information on key issues and we have included this facility within the new website. We urge villagers to take a look at the website and to sign up with their email address so that we can keep everyone informed of what is happening in our village.

CONCLUSION

We hope that you have found something of interest within this expanded Annual Report that this year takes the place of our cancelled Annual Village Assembly. Notwithstanding the disruption associated with COVID-19, a great deal has happened and we hope to progress a great deal more in the coming year; please do take an occasional look at our website to see what has happened in our village and what is going on in our community. Our village remains a wonderful place to live; to raise a family and to work from but it does not maintain itself and we would be delighted to welcome you at our Parish Council meetings and to hopefully see some of you consider helping our community by joining the Parish Council. Please direct, in the first instance, any questions or observations you may have on this report, to Mrs Julie Ayre on Tel: 01962 775481 or email: clerk.otterbourne@parish.hants.gov.uk

With Best Wishes.

Councillors:

Kevin Stafford (Chairman)
Lesley Moody
Elliott Lansdown-Bridge

David Stirrup (Vice Chair)
Richard Stansbury
James Gilbert

Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer: Mrs Julie Ayre

OTTERBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS SUMMARY 2019/2020

Audited Year ending 31/03/2019 £	RECEIPTS	Unaudited Year ending 31/03/2020 £
37,607	Precept	38,255
0	Loans	0
281	Interest on Investments	379
767	Allotments	781
634	Rentals (footpath and pavilion)	1629
2,710	Grants, minor other receipts	723
13701	HCC Lengthsman income for Shared Parish Scheme	0
6,821	VAT Repayments	2,790
62,521	TOTAL RECEIPTS	44,557

PAYMENTS		
16,693	Administration (insurance, audit, office, clerk, subscriptions)	16,645
2,245	S137 Payments (donations)	2,145
23,613	Recreation Ground and Open Spaces	7,141
9,626	Amenities (street furniture, allotments, war memorial)	1,434
2,267	Highways (speed restriction sign, street lighting, verges)	3,609
0	Planning	0
930	Churchyard Expenses	930
10440	HCC Lengthsman fees for Shared Parish Scheme	3,261
7,168	VAT on Payments	2,283
72,982	TOTAL PAYMENTS	37,448

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS SUMMARY

50,165	Audited Balance at 1st April 2019	39,704
62,521	Add Total Receipts	44,557
-72,982	Deduct Total Payments	-37,448
39,704	Balance at 31 March 2020	46,813

Represented by:

13,529	Current Account Balance	7,622
26,191	Deposits/Investments	39,190
-3,280	Uncleared Cheques	0
3	Petty Cash in Hand	1
3261	Lengthsman account	0
39,704	Balance at 31 March 2020	46,813

The 2020 Statement of Accounts is unaudited and may be subject to amendment
 Mrs Julie Ayre, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer