



PIRBRIGHT PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2008-9

I have just completed my first year as Chairman of the Parish Council, which has been most enjoyable with a lot happening in the parish. Jon Standing is our newest member of the Parish Council and is contributing professional expertise on parks and trees. He has also become our representative on the Surrey Heathland Project

Sadly Derrick Searle, our caretaker of Lord Pirbright's Hall since July 1994, retired because of ill health last year and the Parish Council nominated him to receive the Mayor's Award for Community Service, which he received at a ceremony in the Guildhall on Saturday, 25th April. I am pleased to announce that the LPH caretaker is now Onk Cheeseman, who is excellent in looking after the Hall as well as the Grounds.

Rhoda Nevins

Finance: the precept for the past year showed a small increase over that of the two previous years and, with a few compensating differences, the net expenditure was largely in line with budget. The main overspends were tree surgery and pest control around the pond on the Green, partially offset by a windfall hiring by ITV for the Trinny & Susannah programme.

The precept for 2009-10, which we had to calculate in November 2008, proved very difficult to estimate in prevailing conditions. We agreed a budget of £41,362, an increase of 3.9%. However, when divided by the new figure provided by Guildford Borough Council to calculate the Band D figure of Council Tax, this became 7.6%. We believe that the change in this multiplier figure is caused by fluctuations in the number of personnel and their families in the Camp, which is beyond GBC's control.

Donations made during the year were:

Churchyard	£550
Heathland Project	£500
Twinning Association	£263
Flood Forum	£100
Guildford Embroidery	£200
Royal British Legion	£50
Surrey Community Action	£25
Surrey Playing Fields Assoc.	£10

In addition the Parish paid 50% of the production costs of PeriNews and the cost of cutting the meadow in the Fox Corner Wildlife Area.

Projects carried out by the Parish Council in 2008-9 included upgrading the electrical wiring in the cricket pavilion and improvements to the Sandpits car park (see right). **Projects for this year** are improvements to the drainage of Blind Lane. All such projects receive 50% grant aid from GBC. Like all prudent parish councils, we carry some **funds in reserve** and we are constrained by the Audit Commission to retain not more than one year's precept as a **free reserve**. We also have **allocated reserves** for projects that we have budgeted for in one year but not completed until the next, such as purchase of a 5-aside goal for the recreation ground to be installed this summer. We also earmark specific reserves for future events such as purchase of a new Peribus or major repair to the hall roof. At the end of the last financial year we had just less than one year's precept left for what Mr Rumsfeld called "unknown unknowns" - that is, the proverbial rainy day. B.C.

The job of the **Highways & Environment** Committee is to review the highways, byways and open spaces of the parish. Direct responsibility includes Pirbright Green and parts of the Sandpits site in School Lane, which the parish owns. Elsewhere, we liaise with the relevant County or Borough Council department.

Having acquired the Sandpits car park in 2007, we obtained funds to drain and level the surface. The work, including the erection of new signs, started last year. The car park now operates in a more orderly and safe manner. Later this year we'll decide whether it needs improved surfacing and directional markings.

On land not owned by the parish our power is limited to that of intermediary: listening to residents and passing requests on. The little annoyances that crop up all the time (potholes, fly tipping, overgrown footways and paths, defective streetlamps, etc) are relayed to SCC or GBC and we keep track of progress in our Maintenance Issues Schedule . AK.

Major improvements to the highways and environment may require years of campaigning, usually jointly with our borough/county councilor and local activists; sometimes also with our neighbouring parishes. Notable recent successes have been the improvements, just completed, to Pirbright railway arch and the rebuilding of parts of the Malthouse Lane byway. In neither case have we achieved all we wanted, but they are big improvements.

On the downside, you should know that the Pirbright arch project used up the pot of money that SCC had set aside for Pirbright's second phase of road safety measures. Thus future planned improvements to our roads will have to take their turn with all the other such requests in Surrey and that means being more selective. Our strategy is to prioritize particular black spots that are considered to be a danger to pedestrians and lobby for improvements.

On **Pirbright common**, we are liaising with the Brookwood member of Woking Borough Council over access between the Cemetery and the rear entrance of Brookwood Station and also to Brookwood Heath, where two gates have been blocked by the Cemetery owners. The Friends of Pirbright Common have formed a group to look into these issues because the Parish Council has no official right to interfere in matters outside its boundaries, although they affect many local residents.

The **Surrey Heathland Project** has completed its original remit to restore areas of the commons and heaths throughout Surrey, but will continue to maintain the areas in the parish with grazing by cattle and ponies. J. S.

The number of **planning applications** considered during the year— predominately household extensions— has declined, presumably because of economic downturn and cautious climate. Government guidelines have introduced new and more concise permitted development guidelines which now require, in some cases, regularisation via a Certificate of Lawfulness prior to commencement. Commercial applications have included the Institute of Animal Health, with an acceleration of short term improvements while progressing the long term redevelopment of the site. The National Rifle Association is undertaking sympathetic conversions to existing building stock while preparing the grounds for accommodation that may be required for the Olympic Games.

It is always important to note that the Parish Council's main objective is to try to communicate

At **Lord Pirbright's Hall** we have refurbished the men's cloakroom, financed by grants from the Parish and GBC, and made good the walls in the kitchen, where the paint had flaked from many years of steaming kettles. Higher costs, especially for gas and electricity, forced us to increase some hiring rates for the Hall from April, the first major increase in five years. With a high number of hirings, this gave a small surplus in our figures so we do not wish to raise charges in the current year. However, we may have to apply a winter surcharge to cover increases in heating costs (the gas bill was £807 up on 2007). **Projects for this year** include some redecoration and the second phase of mechanisation for the Hall clock. B.C.

your contributions and concerns to GBC for which our former committee chairman, Andrew King, prepared a very useful document to assist parishioners, which is available from the Parish Shop or via the Parish website. J.B.

*Activities for children and young people during the year included the **Christmas party**, hosted jointly with the Church and attended by some 90 children, plus many parents.*

*In March the Parish Council gave permission to local teenagers, Jack and Chloe, to have a **Car wash and coffee morning** at LPH to raise funds towards the costs of a group from Winston Churchill School visiting Bishop Ngala School in Kenya. Three girls from Pirbright were highly commended for their dance in a further fund-raising event at the school.*

Pirbright's Conservation Area is currently being reviewed by GBC, and in March a team of officers came to conduct a walkabout with three Parish Councillors and Mike Nevins. Pirbright was designated as a conservation area in 1973, with boundaries tightly drawn around the buildings.

Development within conservation areas must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and all planning applications submitted will be assessed against this requirement. Householders' permitted development rights are reduced within a conservation area and works to trees are controlled. We shall all have a chance to make comments on the findings of the review during the year.

*We hope to repeat the **junior cricket games** that were held during the summer on the green, using a pitch supplied by the cricket club, and followed by a traditional tea in the pavilion.*

*The **Junior Badminton Club** continues on Mondays, with extra activities including a fun challenge before Christmas and pancake making in March. We are currently planning a **Curry night**, with the dishes to be cooked by the members.*

Thank you everyone who helped with these activities.

L.G.

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman:
Vice Chairman:
Chair, Hall & Finance Committee:
Chair, Highways & Environment Committee:
Chair, Planning Committee:
Councillors:

Rhoda Nevins
Rosemary Richmond
Burnham Clinton
Andrew King
Julian Bohling
Michael Jackson
Jon Standing

Clerk to the Parish Council

Lindsay Graham

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