Annual Report 2015-2016

Cookham Parish Council working together for current and future residents "The Council is a first tier local authority that seeks to engage with residents, protect our environment wildlife and heritage, and supports a thriving village life through the delivery of services and community projects."

Core principle of Cookham Parish Council, August 2014



Chairman's Foreword

It has been another a busy year of delivering our core services such as allotments, burials at the Long Lane Cemetery, managing the Alfred Major Recreation Ground, clearing footpaths and maintaining street lights as well as managing Odney Common, letting Cemetery Cottage and community projects on Keep Cookham Tidy, surveying trees on Parish Council land and a flooding exercise.

In May 2015 the Parish Council held an afternoon tea to celebrate the achievements of outgoing Parish Councillors Pat Brockwell, Shez Courtenay-Smith, Derek Fry, Gordon Harris, Beryl McNeaney, Mike Wellman and Pat Woodbridge. Cookham owes a debt of gratitude to all those who have served as councillors and especially to the long serving Pat Brockwell, Gordon Harris, Mike Wellman and Pat Woodbridge and our former chairman Derek Fry.

It was a happy event, much enjoyed by Gordon and Jean Harris, which became more poignant for us all at the news of the death of Gordon Harris a few months later. He was much loved at the Council and is greatly missed.

Our celebration afternoon tea also welcomed new faces Eileen Bune, Christine Doyle, Susan Ground, Andrew Nye, Michael Saunders and Laura Tull as Parish Councillors. They have stepped quickly into action and you can read about their work in this report.

It was a particular pleasure this year to help Cookham Rise School win the Mark Mattock Schools Challenge Award, a three counties award for environmental awareness and activity, as part of our In Bloom campaign.

Our work on the refurbishment of the Cookham Dean War Memorial continues. The planning has taken longer than expected, but we are committed to understanding all the issues and making the right choices. We are grateful to Shez Courtenay-Smith for continuing to manage the project. You can read more about the plans inside.

The Council is grateful to our Clerk, Anne Osborne, and her assistant, Jill Gavin, for all their hard work throughout the year.

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Cllr Fiona Hewer Chairman, Cookham Parish Council March 2016

Committee Reports

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee of the Parish Council is chaired by Cllr Saunders and comprises Cllrs Barnes, Bune, Doyle, Ground, Jannetta, Nye and John Stretton. We have met 14 times since April 2015 and reviewed 214 planning applications.

The Committee is not a statutory consultee on planning matters, although comments and objections we submit to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) as the planning authority are given particular profile in their decisions to permit or refuse applications, along with the Cookham Society.

Over 50 residents attended two committees in September and November and contributed their views on the proposed poultry farm off Lightlands and Strande Lanes and the seven new homes proposed off Whyteladyes Lane. Objections were submitted on both applications. The RBWM's Development Control Panel unanimously agreed to refuse the poultry farm application and, at the time of writing, a decision is pending on the application off Whyteladyes Lane.

Objections have also been submitted to RBWM on 17 other applications covering five new homes, seven home extensions or alterations, a barn conversion, two new agricultural buildings, an extension to a public house, an additional off-road access, and a change of use from a restaurant to a residence and an oversized garage.

Five of these applications were refused by RBWM, including the oversized garage which has also now been dismissed on appeal to an independent Planning Inspector, and two others for a new home and restaurant change of use are awaiting appeal decisions. Of the other applications objected to by the Committee, at the time of writing, one was subsequently withdrawn, eight were permitted and one for three new homes at Woodlands Farm is likely to be determined by the Secretary of State.

The Committee submitted comments on 20 other applications and asked RBWM Tree Officers to evaluate 20 others.

The Committee encouraged all Parish Councillors to respond to RBWM's online consultations on the 'Borough Local Plan', including the proposal for the area known as Poundfield to be designated as 'local green space'. In response to the petition coordinated by the Cookham Society, this proposal has now been debated at an RBWM full council meeting and the intent to designate Poundfield as Local Green Space in the revised Borough Local Plan scheduled for later this year has been confirmed.

The Committee also submitted no additional new sites for possible development in RBWM's review of the Borough Local Plan and supported their proposals to replace the redundant S106 process with Community Infrastructure Levies for developer contributions to fund community facilities.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is responsible for the setting of budgets and control of finance and governance of the Parish Council. This includes:

- Compiling the annual budget, including the requirements for the Adoptive Acts, Footpaths and Open Spaces and Flood Committees.
- Recommending the Parish's precept to be collected by the RBWM for the coming year from Cookham residents.
- Overseeing the completion of the annual return and audit.
- Periodically reviewing our policies on such diverse matters such as, for example, data protection, complaints and financial controls.

The total expenditure for 2015-16 is on target to be within the budget figure of £128,000. Our income included a Precept figure of £88,418. Although the Precept is only a very small part of total council tax bills, we have found it necessary to increase our request to RBWM by 2% for the coming year. This will partially address the increased expenditure forecast for the next financial year covering increases in expenditure for Council staff pensions, a comprehensive review of the functions of, and facilities in, the Alfred Major recreation area, and additional work on the Cookham Dean War Memorial. The balance will come from a modest reduction in our reserves as recommended by our auditors.

However, we are pleased to learn that, due to changes in the number of properties in Cookham and the method of calculating tax used by RBWM, the overall end result is a 0.3% reduction in the amount contributed by residents through their annual council tax bills.

Footpaths and Open Spaces Committee

The Committee is comprised of Cllrs Nye (Chair), Brar, Bune, Hewer, Ground, Jannetta, Palmer, Tull and John Stretton and has a varied remit as its name suggests.

The 2015 In Bloom competition saw each of the 'Cookhams' achieve at least a silver award at regional level. Cookham Rise Primary School did particularly well and won the Mark Mattock Schools Challenge Award prize. We hope to build on this success for 2016.



Cllrs Brar and Palmer receiving one of the Thames and Chiltern In Bloom awards for Cookham.



Cllrs Brar, Hewer and Palmer with Mrs Julie Armstrong and pupils from Cookham Rise Primary School.

We have carried out our first tree survey to log and assess all of the trees on Parish Council land. As well as giving us a better idea of what we have, this has allowed us to put a rolling tree management plan in place so that we can ensure they remain safe and healthy trees for the future.

We have also started work on a strategic review of the Alfred Major recreation ground. This will look at facilities and a long term vision for how we use this excellent green space at the heart of the village.

Fun in the Sun events were enjoyed by over 100 children on two days in August. In addition last year, we asked the Berkshire Youth Project to provide two further days of sports and activities.

Other ongoing work has included regular management of the Woodbridge Harris wildlife reserve, encouraging full use of the local allotments and giving advice on various footpath issues. In our continuing campaign against dog fouling on footpaths and open spaces, ClIr Palmer has lead publicity events to encourage dog walkers to clean up after their dogs and the Parish Council has installed an extra all purpose bin.



One of the best allotment winners, Helen Philip, receiving her prize from Carolyn Foster of the Cookham Horticultural Society.

Best kept allotment winners Mr Michael Edwards Ms Helen Philip Mr Mark Dyball Cindy Welland and Andy Broadley Mrs Sally Moore Mr John Wilkinson Jill and Michael Davies Mrs Pam Campin Community Allotment Deana Andrews Patrick Raisey Madeleine Whicheloe Roy Gigg

Best kept garden winners Jill & Michael Davies

Peggy & Edward Spicer Rae-Michele & Robert Smith Paul and Patricia Patel Alan and Wendy Brayne Elizabeth House Harry & Joan Priestley Beryl McNeaney Geraldine & David Matthews Bernadette & Paul Wilmott Joy Galloway Costa Coffee Peking Inn Maliks Cookham Tandoori Kings Arms

Adoptive Acts Committee

The Adoptive Acts Committee is responsible for Cookham Parish Cemetery, both War Memorials, the Tarrystone Seat and 85 street lights.

The Cemetery and Chapel continue to provide a well regarded facility for both Cookham residents and those from outside the Parish. There were 22 burials and ashes interments over the last year. In line with increasing maintenance costs, the Committee added a small rise to the purchase price of burial plots for non-residents, but maintained the fees for residents.

The Committee are continuing to research the history of the Chapel bell, which is apparently of Russian manufacture and is currently stored in the vestry. We hope that over the next year it can be brought outside and become an interesting part of the Cemetery landscape.



Cookham Chapel.

The street lights owned by the Parish Council are maintained and repaired under a subcontract with SSE. The Committee also liaises with RBWM to control and improve the lighting provided by them.

The Cookham Village War Memorial was cleaned last year in time for Cookham Festival and the First World War Commemorations.

Flood Committee

The Flood Committee comprises Councillors, the Cookham Society and co-opted representatives from Cookham, the Flood Warden and Flood Co-ordinator. It was originally set up to produce our Village Flood Plan but its remit has since been extended considerably. During a flood we open a 'flood hub' which liaises with RBWM police and emergency services, passing information and answering queries from residents.

The Flood Committee sends representatives to the Parishes Flood Liaison Committee and the Borough Flood Forum to facilitate an exchange of information between the various tiers of local government.

During the last year we arranged a flood exercise which was run by our Flood Co-ordinator, Carol Long, after which a training session involving fire and rescue services, Environment Agency and RBWM was organised. Training was also provided to volunteers who will marshal pedestrians using the causeway if it is opened to vehicles during a flood situation.



Cllrs Coker, Hewer and Palmer joined by Flood Coordinator Carol Long, Flood Warden Paul Willmott, and Scott Salmon and Nick Read from the Environment Agency at the recent flood hub training.

During times of flood, local bus services from Maidenhead to High Wycombe get re-routed away from Cookham leaving the only link via rail. We are currently in negotiation with RBWM's Highways Department to have an emergency bus licence issued that will allow an automatic re-routing between Cookham and Maidenhead when the normal route is unusable.

Community Projects and Other Activity

Cookham Dean War Memorial

Following last year's successful application for a grant from the War Memorials Trust, the Council, with the guidance of former councillor Dr Shez Courtenay-Smith, proceeded with the preparatory survey work for the restoration of Cookham Dean War Memorial.

The survey, carried out in consultation with Historic England as well as the War Memorials Trust, identified a number of key issues, such as the replacement of the bronze name plaques, which required additional consideration to ensure that the restoration would be carried out in the most sympathetic way and be historically accurate. This unfortunately caused a delay in the start of the project which was then compounded by the onset of winter, when weather conditions preclude work of this nature.

In the meantime, the Council have benefited from the advice of the professionals involved with the project and feel that a satisfactory compromise has been reached which will allow the restored memorial to be durable for many years to come but with the integrity of the original design preserved. Work is now due to start in April 2016.



Cllrs Chris Doyle and Fiona Hewer with Dr Shez Courtenay-Smith with Helen Bowman from War Memorials Trust, John Radice, the Architect and Contractors at the Survey Day in November.

Patient Participation Group

Councillors Kellaway and Jannetta are the representatives on this group and attend regular meetings. The Cookham Doctor's surgery is up to full strength now with two new partners, Dr Kenney Tsoi and Dr Anu Swarmy. Dr Birdi is taking a short sabbatical this summer but will be organising a health evening in April 2016. All other posts have been filled.

The group is hoping to have a defibrillator owned by the surgery and installed on a wall outside it. The seven day access to routine primary care service seems to be working, as does the online access to appointments and prescriptions.

High Street Traders Group

This group has proved beneficial in bringing representatives of the high street businesses together to discuss how we co-operate during flooding and how to make the High Street more vibrant.

A new website has been set up this year: www.beinspiredbycookham.com.

Traders had complained that they were no longer eligible for the Rural Business

Rate Relief. This has been brought to the attention of RBWM and resolved.

Rural Business Rate Relief

Following the efforts of Cookham Parish Council, we are pleased to report that RBWM have reassessed the designation of parts of Cookham as a rural area.

Until recently, certain eligible businesses in Cookham were able to apply for a rebate on their business rates as Cookham was considered a rural area. The rebate provided a valuable reduction in running costs. Under new guidelines, this benefit was removed, based on the fact that Cookham's total population was over 3000.

Cllr Saunders was able to encourage RBWM to consider Cookham as 3 separate entities, which meant that, in terms of population, Cookham Village and Cookham Dean still fall within the specified criteria.

We are delighted to report that one business in Cookham Village has already successfully applied for the rebate.

Twinning Committee

The Parish Council has three representatives on the Twinning Committee: ClIrs Kellaway, Palmer and Jannetta. ClIr Kellaway was made very welcome on a visit to St Benoit last year and a reciprocal visit to Cookham is due to take place in October 2016 and the Parish Council hopes to host the welcome meeting.



Cllr Bune attending the opening of the Big Frith phone box library with Fenella Reekie, Deputy Head, Claire Phillpott, Governor, and pupils from Cookham Dean primary school.

Telephone Box Library

One of our first Community Projects was successfully realised in September when the de-commissioned Telephone Box in Bigfrith Lane was converted to a mini Library. Cllr Eileen Bune took the project forward with the able assistance of Claire Phillpott from Cookham Dean Primary School. The Box was redecorated and fitted with shelves to house donated books. The Library is managed by the School and they have received various comments from parents and children who are enjoying this new facility.

Neighbourhood Action Group

The regular Neighbourhood Action Group meetings with Hurley, The Walthams and West Maidenhead have been replaced by online liaison between the Parishes, the Police and the Community Warden Team. We have continued to highlight the problems about oversized vehicles on Cookham Bridge and have helped to ensure that monitoring has been carried out by the Police and Community Warden. We have also raised concerns about crime and requested more PCSO patrols with the new Police Superintendent.

Cookham Dean Post Office

Despite the loss of services at the Jolly Farmer pub, we are pleased that the Post Office has introduced a Home Service in Cookham Dean. Customers can register with the scheme and request products and services delivered directly to their home.

The Post Office will be able to assess the demand for services in the area and review the provision they can provide. The Parish Council will continue to liaise with the Post Office to ensure that residents have access to the services they require.

Railway Branch Line

The Parish Council have been working with Marlow and Maidenhead Passengers Association (MMPA) to find out why the Marlow to Maidenhead line is not due to be electrified.

Apparently such an upgrade would be problematic because it would require either short electric trains (which are not currently part of the First Great Western rolling stock and would not be

suitable to provide a through service to Paddington) or the lengthening of the platforms at Bourne End station (which is not practicable in the physical space available).

In the meantime, Cllr Hewer has been in correspondence with Rt Hon Theresa May MP about this and other Crossrail issues. The Parish Council will continue its efforts to help secure the best future service for Cookham's commuters.



The Parish Council and its Staff

Councillors (sub-committees)

Cookham Village Ward Cllr Jean Stretton (AAC, FGP, EC) Cllr John Stretton (PC, FPOS, FC) Cookham Rise Ward Cllr Mike Barnes (FGP, Chair, PC) Cllr Mandy Brar, Vice-Chairman (all sub-committees) Cllr Eileen Bune (PC, FPOS) Cllr Martin Coker (AAC, FGP, FC) Cllr Chris Doyle (AAC, Chair, FGP, FC, PC) Cllr Fiona Hewer, Chairman (all sub-committees) Cllr Andrew Nye (FPOS, Chair, FGP, PC) Cllr Janet Palmer (AAC, FPOS, EC, FC) Cllr Laura Tull (AAC, FPOS) Cookham Dean Ward Cllr Susan Ground (FPOS, EC, PC) Cllr Christine Jannetta (FPOS, EC, FC, PC) Cllr Mary-Lou Kellaway (AAC, FGP) Cllr Michael J. Saunders (PC, Chair)

Key for Council sub-committees: PC, Planning Committee; AAC, Adoptive Acts Committee; FPOS, Footpaths and Open Spaces Committee; FGP, Finance and General Purposes Committee; EC, Emergency Committee; FC, Flood Committee.

Contact details for all Councillors can be found at www.cookhamparishcouncil.org.uk.

Staff

Anne Osborne, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer Jill Gavin, Assistant Clerk

Contact the Council at Clerk to the Council, Council Office, High Road, Cookham SL6 9JF, telephone 01628 522003 or email <u>office@cookhamparishcouncil.org.uk</u>. www.cookhamparishcouncil.org.uk

Representatives on outside bodies

Councillors are appointed annually to sit on various local groups and panels. The appointments for 2015-16 were:

Cookham Welfare Trust Samuel Lewis Pension Fund BALC/DALC Executive Committee Pinder Hall Management Committee Cookham Youth Project Patient Participation Group Marsh Meadow Management Committee Marlow and Maidenhead Passenger Association Neighbourhood Action Group Parish Flood Liaison Group Twinning Committee National Trust Liaison High Street Traders Working Group Clirs Brar, Tull Clirs Brar, Tull Clirs Brar, Ground Clir Barnes Clirs Hewer, Doyle, Tull Clirs Kellaway, Jannetta Clirs Palmer, Jannetta Clirs Coker, Saunders Clirs Brar, Hewer, Kellaway Clirs Coker, Hewer Clirs Jannetta, Kellaway, Palmer Clirs Jannetta, Tull Clirs Barnes, Jannetta, Kellaway



Cookham Parish Council 22 March 2016

www.cookhamparishcouncil.org.uk

Clerk to the Council, Council Office, High Road, Cookham SL6 9JF 01628 522003