

Cookham Parish Council

Annual Report 2016-17



Front Cover – Re-dedication Service of Cookham Dean War Memorial – 11th November 2016
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Foreword

Welcome to the Parish Council's third annual report. It's my first as Chair of the Parish Council and I hope it provides some insight into our work. Parish Councillors are elected by you to represent your views and manage local issues on your behalf. Please get in touch if there is something you would like to discuss. We will try to help where we can.

First, I'd like to say a few thank yous. Cllr Fiona Hewer decided to step down as Chair at the end of last year and I'd like to express my thanks for all of her hard work in chairing the Parish Council. I hope that she continues her excellent work as a Councillor for many more years. Also, both Jean and John Stretton retired last year after many years of dedicated service. This auspicious occasion was marked by a gift from Councillors and a letter from our local MP and Prime Minister, The Rt Hon. Theresa May. We all wish them well in retirement.

Second, we welcomed Ian Wernham and Jane Perry as new councillors following their election last year. I hope that they enjoy their time as Parish Councillors.

Third, as well as the usual business of managing some services locally such as street lighting, it is worth noting a few significant local projects and campaigns where we have been very active.

The Save Poundfield campaign group has done sterling work, along with the Cookham Society, to fight development of the Poundfield area. All Councillors have supported a motion to back local residents and fight this development. We have made some good progress and actively lobbied RBWM and others, but we are currently waiting for the decision from the Planning Inspector on the Oakford proposal (there is currently no news on the state of the Berkeley Homes proposal). We have also supported the No Chickens! campaign and looked at other planning issues, which remain a major concern for many residents.

Another big project, which has taken many years to come to fruition, has been the refurbishment of the war memorial at Cookham Dean. Many thanks to everyone involved, but especially Shez Courtney-Smith. It is now a fitting monument to those Cookham residents who gave their lives.

Looking ahead, there some exciting projects and some challenges coming up. We have agreed to review how we use the Alfred Major recreation ground, will continue with 'Keep Cookham Tidy' and keep a keen eye on parking issues, especially now that the station car parking is chargeable (which we opposed), which will inevitably shift parking issues elsewhere.

Finally, and sadly, Anne Osborne will be leaving her role as Parish Clerk at the end of March. We will all miss her valuable support and I would like to extend her our very best wishes for the future.

Best wishes

Andrew

Cllr Andrew Nye
Chair, March 2017

Committee Reports

Adoptive Acts Committee

Responsibility for Cookham parish cemetery, both war memorials, the tarrystone seat and street lighting lies with the Adoptive Acts Committee.

The cemetery and chapel continue to provide a well regarded facility for both Cookham residents and those from outside the parish. There were 37 burials and ashes interments over the last year. There was a small rise to the price of burial plots, in line with increased maintenance costs. The chapel has had some much needed window replacements.

The highlight of the year was the completion of the war memorial restoration at Cookham Dean. A dedication was held on the 11 November and attended by the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon. Theresa May MP, Rev. John Copping, Rev. Nick Plant, and local councillors and residents. It was a fine sunny day and children from Cookham Dean and Herries schools took part in the singing. In her speech, Cllr Fiona Hewer thanked Shez Courtney-Smith who organised the very complex work involved. The brass plaques from the war memorial are now in the cemetery chapel.

Cookham Dean War Memorial

This is a nationally important monument and was recognised with a grade II listing last year. The listing designation states:

“This is an elegant example of the cross type of war memorial, designed by FC Eden FRIBA and skillfully carved, also making use of a pleasing mix of local building materials including brick and knapped flint. Standing in a prominent position, the memorial commemorates those local servicemen who died in both the First and also the Second World War. Overall, it is considered that the memorial has special architectural and historical interest and meets the criteria for listing.”

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is responsible for the setting of budgets and control of finance, and governance of the Parish Council, including:

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

The total expenditure for 2016-17 is on target to be within the budget figure of £189,078. Our income included a precept figure £90,186, plus allotment rents, burial fees and a £30,000 grant from the War Memorials Trust towards the cost of the renovation of Cookham Dean war memorial.

We are pleased to confirm that the contribution from the Parish Council towards the running costs of the Cookham Library will continue.

Although the Parish’s precept is only a small part of your total council tax bill from RBWM, we are pleased to report that there will be no change for the coming year.



Speak to Councillors at the village scout fair on 17 June or at the Christmas fair at Moor Hall.

Flood Committee

The Flood Committee sends representatives to the Parish's 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 have been engaged with RBWM and local bus companies to ensure access during flooding.

Even when it's dry, the Parish Council continues to pursue a better response to flooding from key agencies and to support residents. Working with the Cookham Society and others, we have improved communication links that have enabled a better understand and improved the resilience of the Lightlands Lane sewage pumping station, which failed in the February 2014 floods.

We are also concerned at the number of planning applications to build and extend properties in the flood plain, which could lead to problems in the future.

Get involved and keep in touch

Councillors are always ready to hear resident's views on local issues and try to help where they can. We would also welcome ideas for community projects and any issues the Parish Council could investigate or support.

You can keep in touch with what's going on by visiting the Parish Council's website or Facebook page, reading our Parish magazine column or looking at the notice boards around the parish. Details of all meetings are always published one week in advance.

Visitors to the Parish Office on High Road are always very welcome.

Footpaths and Open Spaces Committee

The Committee has continued to work on a strategic review of the Alfred Major recreation ground. It has researched design options with support from RBWM. We look forward to publishing our ideas and hearing residents' views in due course.

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.

'Fun in the Sun' events on the Alfred Major recreation ground were enjoyed by children in August and the Parish Council continues to support this school holiday activity.

We are delighted to have started working with allotment holders to form an Allotment Association to help us manage the allotments. Members will monitor the allotments and advise the Parish Council about any new issues or opportunities they would like addressed.

For the Thames and Chilterns In Bloom competition this year, we entered Cookham Village, Dean and Rise together in one category and were delighted to win a silver gilt award. Holy Trinity School entered the Mark Mattock Schools Challenge and impressed the judges with their growing projects, trip to Kew and other activities, which earned them a commendation.

We were delighted to have the valuable knowledge of members of the Cookham Dean Horticultural Society to help us decide the winner of the 'Best Front Garden' in Cookham, winner of the 'Best Front Garden' in Cookham, the prize being well deserved by Mr and Mrs Arnott-Patel of Strande Park. There were also three worthy winners of the 'Best Kept Allotment' prize, who were Mr Michael Edwards at Cookham Dean, Ms Heather Pearce at Sutton Road and Mr Keith Le Page at Cookham Rise.

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.

Planning Committee Report

The Planning Committee has met 14 times from April 2016 to January 2017 and reviewed 170 planning applications.

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

A large number of residents attended three committees in May, September and November and contributed their views on the proposed development of 35 new homes on Poundfield by Oakford and Berkely Homes and the conversion of the Pump House on Kennel Lane into a new home. Objections were submitted on all three applications and the RBWM's Development Control Panel agreed and refused all three. The Oakford and Pump House refusals have been appealed and non-RBWM Planning Inspectors will hopefully uphold the RBWM refusals.



The Save Poundfield campaign launch with the Prime Minister. Photo by Royston Willcocks.

The Committee has also formally supported RBWM's ongoing enforcements on the 'Chicken Farm' off Lightlands and Strande Lanes. The landowner appealed the enforcement and the (non-RBWM) Planning Inspector concluded the large poultry shed is illegal and needs to be removed.

Objections have also been submitted to RBWM on 34 other planning applications for various new homes or extensions, shop alterations and new agricultural buildings. Only 19 of these have so far subsequently been approved, generally because the Committee's views were too restrictive under the relevant planning laws and policies. Comments or concerns were also submitted on 24 other

applications and RBWM Tree Officers were asked to evaluate 21 others.

The Committee encouraged all residents to respond to RBWM's consultations on the 'Borough Local Plan', including the proposal for the area known as 'Poundfield' to be designated as 'local green space', which RBWM have continued to promote. The Committee also:

- Supported the development of 40 new homes on the gasholder site on Whyteladies Lane.
- Registered significant concerns about the risk of flooding if 20 new homes were added on the land east of Strande Park.
- Registered grave concerns about the damage to the Green Belt and countryside if 200 new homes were added to the large site between Cannondown Road and Long Lane and about the resulting pressures on local amenities and utilities, particularly sewerage.

The next consultation on the way to final inspection and approval of the Borough Local Plan is expected in summer 2017.

The guidance in the Cookham Village Design Statement has been re-promoted and the Committee decided to review how local planning restrictions may be further enhanced by setting Neighbourhood Plan policies.

The Cookham Conservation Area Assessment is being thoroughly updated after the significant input of the Committee and the Cookham Society. This is very important to protect the area's much valued village environment and heritage, an issue of significant relevance to the protection of Poundfield from development.

The Committee has also registered concerns about the addition of new phone masts in Cookham Dean and the initial proposal for a new Copas equestrian facility.

Community Projects and Other Activity

Litter picks

The 'Keep Cookham Tidy' project began in Summer 2015 with seasonal litter picks. Attendance by volunteers is always welcomed and any children helping will receive a certificate. Organised picks will increase during the lighter nights and better weather. Cookham Scouts attended once last year to earn their help in the community badges.

Cllr Doyle and her husband can be seen litter picking some weekends and on school holidays, wearing high vis jackets with 'Keep Cookham Tidy' on the back. They enjoy getting car toots in recognition and having a chat with residents, so feel free to join in.

If you feel there are particular areas that need a clear up, please let the Parish Office know. Cllr Doyle would also be pleased to add your name to her database to receive email notifications of future litter picks.



Residents and Councillors on a Keep Cookham Tidy litter pick

Community safety

After a long delay, a new Community Warden has now been appointed. Elzbieta Debska-Sarwar can be contacted directly at RBWM or via the Parish Council office.

Twinning news

Our friends from our twin village in St Benoit, near Poitiers in France, came to visit during the weekend of 22-24 October 2016. The visit included a welcome party at the Cookham Parish Centre sponsored by the Cookham Parish Council, following by joining parishioners at St Elizabeth's RC Church, lunch at the Odney Club and then, on their way back to the Methodist Church for tea, following (and occasionally finding) a treasure trail set of questions set by Peter Bysshe.

On Monday, everyone went to the House of Commons for a very interesting tour, before taking a water bus to Tower Pier for Tower Bridge. On return to Cookham there was a dinner and some boules at the Cookham Dean Cricket Club, with entertainment from a breakaway group of Django enthusiasts from the Fabulous Shirtlifters. Everyone returned to France tired but happy.

In 2017 we are going to St Benoit for the weekend of 21-23 October. It's usually a wonderful trip meeting friendly people and we hope many more Cookham people will join in.

Patient Participation Group

Cllr Kellaway actively represents the Parish Council on the Cookham Medical Centre PPG, which meets every two months and produces regular newsletter updates.

Marlow Branch Railway Line

The Parish Council have been working with Marlow and Maidenhead Passengers Association (MMPA) GWR and Network Rail to mitigate the effects of the stopping of direct services to London.

GWR have now timetabled a semi-fast service starting at Maidenhead to connect with the 7:30am train from Cookham. Hopefully the majority of commuters from the village will get a seat and not have to squeeze on to an already full service from elsewhere.

We are also pushing GWR and Network Rail to honour their promise to provide funding for infrastructure improvements to allow at least two trains per hour during most of the day on the branch line.

The Parish Council and its Staff

Councillors (sub-committees)

Cookham Village Ward:

Cllr Ian Wernham (PC) (FGP)
Cllr Jane Perry (FPOS) (AAC) (FC)

Cookham Rise Ward:

Cllr Mike Barnes (FGP Chair) PC
Cllr Mandy Brar, Vice-Chairman (all sub-committees)
Cllr Eileen Bune (PC) (FPOS) (EC)
Cllr Martin Coker (AAC) (FGP) FC Chair
Cllr Chris Doyle (AAC) (FGP) (FC) (PC)
Cllr Fiona Hewer (FPOS Chair) (FGP)
Cllr Andrew Nye, Chair (all sub-committees)
Cllr Janet Palmer (AAC) (FPOS) (EC) (FC)
Cllr Laura Tull (AAC) (FPOS)

Cookham Dean Ward:

Cllr Susan Ground (AAC) (EC) (PC)
Cllr Christine Jannetta (FPOS) (EC) (FC) (PC)
Cllr Mary-Lou Kellaway (AAC Chair) (FPOS) (FGP)
Cllr Michael J. Saunders (PC Chair)

Key for Parish 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 (8.30am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday and also Tues 5-7pm) or email office@cookhamparishcouncil.org.uk.

Representatives on outside bodies

Councillors are appointed annually to various local groups and panels. Appointments for 2016-17 were:

Cookham Welfare Trust	Cllrs Brar, Tull
BALC/DALC Executive Committee	Cllrs Brar, Ground
Pinder Hall Management Committee	Cllr Barnes
Patient Participation Group	Cllr Kellaway
Marsh Meadow Management Committee	Cllrs Palmer, Jannetta
Marlow and Maidenhead Passenger Association	Cllr Coker
Parish Flood Liaison Group	Cllrs Coker, Hewer
Twinning Committee	Cllrs Jannetta, Kellaway, Palmer
National Trust Liaison	Cllrs Jannetta, Tull



Cookham Parish Council
March 2017

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