

STORRINGTON & SULLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT, 2009/2010

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

The Chairman said that the Chairman of each Committee would be making their own reports. He then gave an overview of the situation:

As will be apparent to everyone, this country has gone through very difficult financial times in the past year and local government, including parish councils, has not been immune from this. The biggest effect on us is that fewer grants have been available and the number of hirings of rooms at the Parish Hall and Football Club has gone down thus reducing council income. Against this weak economic background, the Council felt that though it meant a reduction in its available financial reserves villagers would appreciate a continuation of the pattern of the last five years where the Parish Council tax increases have never exceeded the level of inflation and in some years have been substantially lower than this. The budget was therefore prepared with this as a primary aim and since salaries are a major part of the costs, a zero increase in the overall salary bill lead the way in achieving this. The outcome was that the increase in the Parish part of the Council Tax this year was held to a very low level

with an overall increase of just 1.45%.

During the year the long awaited improvements to the parish hall have been undertaken with around 50% of the money coming from receipt of a grant obtained from planning gain monies in 2008. To keep cost down, the plans were adjusted to take part of the existing corridor space and add this into office accommodation. These changes do mean that for the first time we now have a proper office for our clerks and that the much needed renovation of the Hall public toilets has been completed. The renovations also included the installation of fire and intruder alarms and a new electronic security access system.

Though not a direct action by the Parish Council, the Chairman felt that he could not ignore the significant event of the arrival of Waitrose in the village. The Parish Council believes that the long term future for our shops is centred around the need to have a strong supermarket as a draw to bring customers into Storrington and then getting them to shop in the smaller shops as well. Without such a supermarket it feels that there would be continued drift to out of town shopping or to the larger supermarkets in Pulborough. For this

reason, the council supported the idea of Waitrose coming to the village into a new store.

As villagers will know, however, Waitrose have instead taken over the ex-Somerfield store in Old Mill Square but are saying that this store is much smaller than they would like so we await learning what plans the company now has for the land it purchased off Old Mill Drive, including the project to open much needed new public toilets.

From time to time the Parish Council awards an Honorary Citizen of Storrington award. This award is given by the Parish Council to persons who it feels have made a particularly important contribution to the betterment of our community and this year the Chairman was pleased to attend a meeting at Trinity Church where he was able to present the award to Mr. Michael Pirkis for the outstanding community work that he has done over the years.

Cllr. Mr. R. Dawe

INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNICATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT.

Mr. Sanson reported that several environmental upgrades had been made to the Storrington Pond with the installation of an additional aerator and a circulating

pump. The Council is also looking at an environmental project based around pond improvements. The Newsletter continues to be published but now has a new publisher and editor. Late Night Shopping was a very successful event and there were new Christmas lights on the lamp posts together with an additional display designed by a pupil from Storrington First School.

Cllr. Mr. J. Sanson

RECREATION AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT.

Mr. Mason reported that this committee had had a very busy year. Following a lot of hard work, especially by Cllr. Mrs. Wheatley, the playground at the Sullington Recreation Ground was re-opened last summer. This principally was funded from grants from the National Lottery and Landfill Tax. A new ball court has been installed at Ravenscroft which was also funded by partners including Saxon Weald, WSCC, HDC and the Police.

A meeting was held with the allotment holders at Ravenscroft in an attempt to get them to self-manage the site via the creation of an allotment association. Unfortunately, despite trying to answer all their queries, at the end of the day they were unable to agree to the necessary terms. Therefore, this site would continue to be managed by the Council.

Following planning permission, the Football Club had installed

floodlights on Storrington Recreation Ground. The permission allows usage five months of the year in the winter. It is understood that the lights have been successful and there had been no problems of misuse.

Work had gone on around the Mill Pond, the Library car park and Old Mill Drive, with new landscaping, etc., the aim is to try and make it more user friendly, less intimidating and a more attractive area for people to use in comfort and to link in with the Riverside Walk that goes to the Hormare estate.

The Parish Council has looked at the possibility of installing public toilets in the Library car park for the period until the likely inclusion in an extended Waitrose store comes on stream. However, such a facility was initially expensive and would require substantial sums of money each year to cover running costs which would have to be funded by the Parish Council and this would entail a large increase in the Council Tax so it was currently not being pursued.

Cllr. Mr. C. Mason

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT.

Mrs. Worthington-Leese reported that 149 planning applications had been considered this year compared with 134 last year. The number of appeals had more than halved from 13 to 6. The relaxation of planning requirements introduced by the

government last year seems to have had no effect. The South Downs National Park came into being this month and the affect of this was not yet known.

A large application at St. Josephs, Church Street, for 40 warden assisted dwellings was withdrawn last year, but this had since been re-submitted by the architect and the owners. This was currently with Horsham District Council and a decision was pending.

An application in a neighbouring parish in respect of proposed landfill at Laybrook was of concern as this would result in a large number of lorries travelling through Storrington. The application has been withdrawn, but there is concern about future applications. The Council was also watching the pit in Chantry Lane because it was possible this would potentially include landfill with inert waste. There would also be additional extraction of sand, but most worrying of all was the suggestion that a new access road will be created through the South Downs National Park and there was a list of reasons why this was not a very good idea.

The Hampers Lane sandpit had been given an extension of three years to complete extraction there.

The most controversial applications have been: demolition of a bungalow in Old Mill Drive to be replaced by six terraced

houses - a decision was awaited. Having won the fight to get inappropriate signs removed from One Stop shop, the fight was lost in respect of Lloyds Chemists over a similar sign that the Council felt inappropriate. There was a current battle going on over a fence erected without permission in Fryern Road. HDC currently appeared to be making decisions in a rather inconsistent manner since a much smaller fence further down the road was refused but the larger one seems to be being looked at favourably at the moment. We will continue to monitor this.

Abbey House was redeveloped with eco friendly housing built from locally sourced materials.

A Parish Design Statement had been produced in order to protect the character of the parish and if adopted by Horsham District Council it would be taken into account whenever anything new was planned. Mrs. Worthington-Leese thanked Mrs. Read, the Assistant Clerk, who undertaken the bulk of the work. This document would be considered by Horsham on the 25th May and go to Cabinet in July. Once adopted the document would be printed and put on the website, etc.

The Council was still trying to have the Old School listed, but this was a very lengthy process.

H.D.C., had introduced e-consultation in respect of

planning applications and this parish was one of the pilot councils in this scheme. It is designed to use technology to speed up planning processing and attempts to reduce costs. There were, however, problems with it at the moment, these were under discussion so hopefully things would improve and eventually it may speed up the planning process.

Mrs. Worthington-Leese thanked all her colleagues on the Planning and Development Committee for all their hard work and support during the year.

Cllr. Mrs. A. Worthington-Leese

STORRINGTON & SULLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman – Ray Dawe
Vice-Chairman – Anna Worthington-Leese

Councillors:

David Atkins, Robert Carter, Ted Gibbons, Alan Head, Richard Jerman, Gillian King, John Macey, Chris Mason, Albert Mullard, Don Roper, Jim Sanson, Lisa Wheatley and John Williams.

COMMITTEES:

Information, Communications and Environment Committee
Chairman – Jim Sanson
Vice-Chairman – Don Roper

Recreation and Property Committee
Chairman – Chris Mason
Vice-Chairman – Lisa Wheatley

Planning and Development Committee

Chairman – Anna Worthington-Leese
Vice-Chairman – Albert Mullard
Finance and Budget Committee – comprised of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of Council and Committees.

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