

BARNHAM PARISH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2018

Chairman's Report on 2017-18

This report will cover several topics including:

The Council
Proposed Merger
Barnham Community Hall
Housing Developments
ADC's Local Plan

1. The Council

a. Chairmanship - The year started with the resignation of David Phillips from the Parish Council after 18 years service, many of them as Chairman. The Council acknowledged his contribution and publicly thanked him. This meant the election of a new Chairman and Keith Ballard stepped up and took on the role until his decision to move away from the area and therefore in March 2018 the Council had to appoint another new Chairman and I John Robinson was elected to take on that role until the Annual Meeting in May.

b. Councillors - The Council itself also saw several changes with Roy Whitby resigning at the end of last summer and, very sadly, Roy Hartrick passed away shortly before Christmas. This left the Council with vacancies, but we were very pleased to welcome new Councillors in January 2018, Susan Forrester and Isabel Thurston who joined Stewart Pritchard, Ella Simmons, Sue Groome and of course myself. We do still have two vacancies but in view of the current proposal to merge the Parish with Eastergate we haven't actively been pursuing additional members, but if anyone is interested in joining us please do speak to me or our Clerk, Alison Crabb.

As well as conducting the usual business of the regular Parish Council meetings, including consideration of planning applications in the Parish and issues raised by residents the Council has continued to organise regular litterpicks, although unfortunately the March pick had to be cancelled due to the 'beast from the east' making its first appearance! Sue Groome will be speaking later in the meeting about a proposal to supplement the main Litter Picks. The Council will also shortly be putting in place the benches that will be purchased from the funds received from the Joint Downland Arun Area Committee (which now no longer exists). The plan is to put two benches on the Triangle outside the Murrell's arms and to also undertake some other remedial works to tidy up the area. It is hoped to do this in the very near future.

A review of the County Council's Area Committee Structure resulted in Barnham Parish and other local Parishes being moved into a reorganised Joint Western Arun Area Committee (which includes the area of Bognor Regis) not a decision the Parish Council welcomed.

Another issue that caused a lot of consternation was dog fouling and dog behaviour on Murrell's Field following several complaints and incidents over last summer. It was recognised that the it was a minority of users but awareness of the problems had to be raised and working with a very pro-active group of dogwalkers the issue has improved. The Council is proposing to put up new signage around the Field reminding all users of their responsibilities when using the facility.

The Parish Council also took the decision to support the undertaking of a Local Governance Review to merge with Eastergate Parish Council and currently awaits the outcome of that review. It also agreed not to increase the precept in January, with the decision meaning a slight reduction in the amount paid by each household due to the increase in houses in the Parish during the past year.

2. Barnham Community Hall

As reported last year Barnham Community Trust was formed to run Barnham Community Hall and the Field and, as will be reported later, the Trust has had a very successful first year and the relationship with the Parish Council continues with the recent renewal of the Licence to Operate. The lease plans have still not progressed due to various circumstances and will now be put on hold until the outcome of the Parish Council merger proposal is known.

Following the resignation of David Phillips the Parish Council needed to nominate a representative to serve on the Board of Trustees and I agreed to take on the role and was duly appointed at the recent Trust AGM.

4. Housing Developments in the Parish

The development of land north of Yapton Road and East of Garden Crescent has been mostly completed and the Eric Wall development in Lake Lane is well under way. It is anticipated that work will commence on the Angel's Nursery site and The Lillies Nursery site some time this year. With those two developments commencing this will see all the agreed Barnham Parish sites in the Neighbourhood Plan having started or been completed. However, with the increased number of houses required to be built through Arun's Local Plan the possibility of the Parish having to see further applications coming forward for other developments will not be going away. The Council has already had a presentation on behalf of the owner of Tars Farm in Church Lane for to seek views on a proposal to construct 8 houses on land on the Farm. The Council sent a strong message of objection and as of today nothing further has come forward. The Council will also almost certainly, along with Eastergate Parish Council, have to look at a review of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify further housing sites

5. Arun District Council's (ADC) Local Plan

In July 2015 inspection of the Local Plan was suspended by the Planning Inspector and after many months of work by ADC officers it was inspected again in September 2017 and following consultation on the proposed modifications to the Plan it is currently with the Inspector and a preliminary result is expected imminently. The biggest impact for Barnham is the fact that the Local Plan will give a green light to a new 3000 house village within the farm land of Barnham and Eastergate.

JOHN ROBINSON
CHAIRMAN, BARNHAM PARISH COUNCIL