

## BROADBRIDGE HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

### Chairman's Report 2008/2009

I am delighted to be able to start this report on a positive note and say that for the first time in many years the Parish Council (PC) is at full strength. In December, we welcomed three new Councillors - Stuart Jackson, David Milbank and David Trangmar - who are already proving to be valuable additions to the team. I must say thank you to Basil Stenning who retired from the Council towards the end of last year after many years of service.

The work of the Council has continued throughout the year with full Council Meetings held every month apart from August. All members of the public are welcome to attend and to speak if they so wish. Agendas and Minutes can be found on the notice boards outside the One Stop shop and in the entrance hall of the Village Centre as well as on our website [www.broadbridgeheath-pc.gov.uk](http://www.broadbridgeheath-pc.gov.uk). This also contains general information about the village and PC as well as a news page; please email the [clerk@broadbridgeheath-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@broadbridgeheath-pc.gov.uk) if there is information you would like included.

In October last year, the new Village Magazine was launched to positive acclaim. I am sorry to say that due to the publishers being unable to fill the advertising space, publication of the magazine has now been suspended. We are urgently investigating alternatives, as we are aware of the importance of the magazines to villagers. You can view the latest edition (minus adverts) on the website.

The West of Horsham development continues to play an important part in PC business with Councillors representing the village at meetings of the Reference Group where issues concerning the Masterplan are discussed. In October, Horsham District Council (HDC) adopted the Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. This incorporated the highways option supported by the PC whereby a dual carriageway bypass would be built to the south of the new development and the current bypass closed (although there will still be road access from the Farthing's Hill roundabout down as far as Tesco).

As many of you will have seen from an article in the County Times, the recession is having an impact on the plans of the two developers associated with the development. Countryside Properties have already lodged outline-planning applications for development to the west of the A24 together with the highway infrastructure required to support the development. However, the current economic climate is very likely to make it impossible for Countryside to deliver the required level of affordable housing and the package of community facilities that should accompany this. Neither of the Countryside applications comply with the Masterplan and we have submitted detailed comments to HDC objecting to them both. At the time of writing this report, it was not known when these plans would be determined. Tom Crowley (HDC Chief Executive) will be providing a status update at the Parish Meeting.

Obviously there have been many other issues and challenges for the PC over the last year and I would like to mention a few other areas in which we have been active.

Unfortunately, in July we had some unwelcome visitors to the Common which made everyday use of the area for villagers virtually impossible. They eventually left after the PC employed bailiffs to serve them with an eviction notice and this prompted us to hold an open meeting to discuss how to prevent such an occurrence in the future. As a result of opinions expressed by local residents, and following advice from experts such as HDC and the Police, we have had new stronger metal posts filled with concrete installed around the perimeter of the Common. We are hoping that these will act as a deterrent, but if you see any unauthorised person or vehicle trying to enter the Common please report it immediately to the Police on 0845 60 70 999 or if any damage to property is being committed call 999.

On a happier note, following the award of the Big Lottery Grant, work on the new improved Play Area and Youth Shelter behind the Village Centre is moving ahead swiftly. Pupils at Tanbridge and Shelley Schools were consulted about the location and type of new equipment they would like to see and, as a result, four exciting new pieces of play equipment and a youth shelter have been ordered. In addition to installing the equipment, there will be new pathways and additional features to enhance the character of the area. The work will soon be underway and all should be ready for

the official ~~opening~~ on 20<sup>th</sup> June. I would like to thank the team who have worked on this initiative for the village, in particular Mary Burroughs, the Project Manager for her drive and enthusiasm.

Speeding through the village continues to be of concern to many people and our PCSO Jeff Grant has been actively recruiting volunteers to use SID (a device which flashes up the speed of oncoming cars and is used as a deterrent) in order to educate drivers to stick to the speed limit in the village. Please contact the Clerk if you are interested in helping us with this.

Another area of concern to residents is dog fouling and the PC is taking action to try and prevent the irresponsible behaviour of a few people who allow their dogs to foul on pavements and recreational areas. The Street Scene Team Wardens, who have the power to issue a fixed penalty fine for people who do not pick up after their dogs, are now patrolling the village on a regular basis. The PC is also liaising with the HDC Scrutiny Team who are looking into this problem, in particular, whether or not dog bins serve their intended purpose.

The PC receives many complaints about cars parked on pavements, verges and green areas and we have asked the appropriate authorities to take a hard line where relevant. Not only can this anti-social behaviour obstruct the pavements, but also it often results in damage to verges and greens. If damage is caused, it is quite likely that offenders will be asked to pay for it to be made good and, as has happened recently, if a pavement is obstructed, a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

During the year, we received requests for grants from some local organisations and I am pleased to say the PC has been able to help most of them in some way. Notable awards include - £750 to the Junior Football Club, £350 to the Scouts and £2,700 to the Youth Club which is now operating, with great success, on Friday Nights at the Leisure Centre. It would seem that this has contributed to a lessening of anti-social behaviour in the village although there are still some hot spots. One of these is the Singleton Way Play Area where we are working with our PCSO to try to overcome the problems.

The two new bus shelters at Shelley Arms have now been installed and, following requests from users, the stop adjacent to the Shelley Arms has recently been fitted with sides to make it more user friendly. Unfortunately, the restricted width of the pavement prevents us doing this on the other side of the road.

During the last year, the PC received several local planning applications to evaluate and comment on, although there has been a notable decline in numbers compared to previous years. Planning meetings are held twice a month (if there are plans to review) and all meetings are open to the public.

I am pleased to report that the PC continues to run its finances in a sound and sensible manner and for the last financial year was able to fully discharge its legal and statutory responsibilities in an orderly manner. The Annual Accounts will be available for inspection in June 2009. For the financial year 2009/10, the precept has been set at £47,657, which for a property in Band D equates to approximately £40.92 a year – an increase of 2.5%.

As usual, I must say thank you to our Litter Warden - Jim Cate. He keeps our village tidy (not an easy job) and his dedication and hard work are much appreciated by everyone in BBH.

Thanks also to Mary Burroughs our Clerk whose organisational ability and tenacity are remarkable and to Helen Dayneswood, the Clerk for Strategy and Development, for her advice and expert knowledge on all things relating to the LDF. A special thank you to both of them for their support and help to me, particularly at the end of last year.

In closing, I must thank my fellow Councillors for their commitment to duties carried out on behalf of the village of Broadbridge Heath. Particular thanks to Malcolm Curnock - Vice Chairman, Geoff Clark - Chairman of the Planning Committee and Judith Jones - Chairman of the Recreation Committee.

Viv Edwards  
Chairman  
April 2009