



## BROADBRIDGE HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

### Chairman's Report 2010/2011

The four year term of this present Parish Council (PC) will come to an end on 4<sup>th</sup> May and as I look back over these years it comes as no surprise that the work of the Council has been dominated by the proposed strategic development south of the village. We have continued to argue that this is the wrong location for such a large development because of the many inherent problems that will need to be overcome. You only have to look at the proposed traffic network, which has the potential for chaos for both local and through traffic, to see that we are right!

Despite our objections, it seems that the development is likely to go ahead and, subject to confirmation of a legal agreement, outline planning permission has been granted and it is likely that we will see work start on the site later this year.

Our aim now is to secure the best deal that we can for the village, both old and new. This will include traffic calming along the Billingshurst Road and the Old Guildford Road. In October the PC held an open evening so that residents could see three possible options that had been suggested. It was encouraging to see so many people and to hear the different points of view that were put forward. It must be remembered, however, that this is the first step in what is likely to be a lengthy process and it will be some time before we see any significant traffic calming. We will keep you updated and hope that, if and when, the development goes ahead, the organisations involved will come and explain what is going to happen in the next few years and the impact that this will have on daily life in the village.

Other work of the Council has continued alongside this and issues are discussed and decisions made at Parish Council meetings which are held every month apart from August. Agendas and Minutes for all meetings 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). All meetings are open to members of the press and public, who are entitled to speak if they so wish.

We also have various Committees which meet regularly. The remit of the Recreation Committee includes overseeing ongoing maintenance and improvements to the various recreation and play areas in the village. Their next proposed project will be the installation of some outdoor fitness equipment at the site in Charrington Way. This will be suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities and will hopefully be ready for use later this year.

Planning continues to be an important area for the PC, although it seems that we see fewer applications each year. This is possibly due to a combination of the uncertain economic climate and changes in planning laws which mean that owners are now able to make minor changes to their properties without planning permission. Recently, the Planning Committee has considered an outline application for 40 dwellings at Heath Barn and, after much discussion, decided to lodge an objection. It must be remembered that the PC is only a consultee on planning matters, but as the tier of government closest to the local people, it is hoped that our views are taken into account when applications come before Horsham District Council (HDC).

The income and expenditure of the PC is overseen by the Finance and Establishment Committee and our accounts are audited every year. I am pleased to say that our last audit report concluded that the PC runs its finances in a sound and sensible manner and fully discharged its legal and statutory responsibilities. The Annual Accounts for the last financial year (2010/2011) will be available for inspection in June 2011.

Mindful of the difficult economic times, the PC did not increase its precept for the coming year. It has been set at £48,280, which for a property in Band D, equates to approximately £41.39. Despite this, some of you may have noticed an increase of just a few pence; this is due entirely to the way individual bills are calculated by (HDC).

Last year I stressed the importance of the contribution made to the community by various organisations that operate in the village, many of which are run by volunteers. Talk of the 'Big Society' which, in the opinion of many people, has already been operating for many years, will place even more emphasis on work undertaken by the voluntary sector. I would like to take this opportunity to remind organisations that the

Parish Council does have a small amount of money to award grants to worthy causes in the village. Recent donations have included £1,000 to the Village Centre to help with re-decorating the Hall, £1,000 to the Football Club towards running costs and £951 to the Tennis Club as a contribution to the cost of renovating the tennis courts. £2,700 was also awarded last year to the Youth Club to fund a youth worker. A further £601 has been donated to other local organisations such as St Catherine's Hospice and Victim Support. If you think we could help your group or organisation please contact the Clerk for details.

There are many other aspects of village life that the PC gets involved in and I would like to mention just a few of them. For example, the bad weather at the end of last year caused problems for many of us and, mindful that we do not want to get caught out in the future, the PC made provision to have some new grit bins installed in the village. These are sited by the Charrington Way Bus Stop, in St John's Crescent and at the corner of Sleets Road and Old Guildford Road.

Communication about future plans and events for the village is important for the community and the PC is committed to producing a quarterly magazine which is distributed to all households in the village. Contributions from local organisations are always welcome.

Aided by our County Councillor, David Sheldon, we continue the fight for allotments in the village. Suitable land has been identified; we just have to convince the owners to lease it to us!

The PC has commented on several consultation documents over the last year and members have represented the Council at meetings covering such diverse subjects as Public Rights of Way, Travellers and Gypsies, Flooding, Winter Maintenance, the local Police Panel, BBH Youth Club and the Senior Persons Council. One particular issue that we made representation on, was the importance of keeping our mobile library and I am pleased to say that we have heard recently that this service will be continued for the foreseeable future.

We continue to get complaints about dog fouling, parking on the pavements, pot holes, fly tipping and street lights that are not working. We do pass these onto the responsible authorities, but it is worth noting that in many cases complaints can be registered directly with the relevant organisations via their website or just by making a quick telephone call.

As I mentioned earlier, this PC has now served its four year term and will be standing down at midnight on 4th May. Over the last four years, a few councillors have left and others have joined and I would like to thank them all for their commitment. I must single out two people in particular for their longstanding service to the village. Barbara Hutton is retiring from the Council after 13 years, 7 years as a Clerk and the last 6 years as a councillor. Barbara has worked steadfastly for the community of Broadbridge Heath and her guidance and sound advice will be much missed. The other person who I must thank is Sally Horner who resigned from the PC last September having been a councillor for nearly 25 years. I would like to thank Sally for all the time and hard work she has invested over the years on behalf of the village and wish her well for her new life in Greece.

Many of the existing councillors have stood for re-election, which as only 11 nominations were received for 13 vacancies, will be uncontested. Your new Parish Council will convene on 16<sup>th</sup> May. There are going to be important changes for Parish Councils in the next few years and if you would like to be a part of this (currently we have two vacancies) please contact the Clerk or myself for more details.

In closing, I have many people to thank, all of whom contribute to the smooth running of the Parish Council and community of Broadbridge Heath. Jim Cate, our Litter Warden, continues to provide an excellent service, for which we are all grateful.

Thanks also to Mary Burroughs our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer who carries out a difficult job with great professionalism and expertise and makes sure that what the PC decides to do, actually happens. Also, Helen Dayneswood, the Clerk for Strategy and Development, whose knowledge and advice about all issues related to the proposed development, is invaluable.

I must also thank my fellow councillors for their hard work and support over the last year, in particular Jonathan England - Vice Chairman, Geoff Clark - Chairman of the Planning Committee and Judith Jones - Chairman of the Recreation Committee.

Viv Edwards  
Chairman