



# BROADBRIDGE HEATH PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

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Broadbridge Heath Parish Council is a civil local authority and is the first tier of local government. It is an elected body and is funded by the Precept and an Environmental Cleansing Grant. Other income is from rental of other assets.

Broadbridge Heath Parish Council continuously works towards improving the village by providing services at a local level. Through an extensive range of discretionary powers, we provide and maintain a variety of important and visible local services including open spaces, play parks and equipment, benches, bus shelters, and litter bins.



As part of the acquisition of several parcels of land on the new developments, the Parish Council recently acquired the new parish office. Use of Section 106 funds has assisted in setting up the building as a primary place of work for the council officers. It provides a space to hold all meetings, also offering a community space.



The full Parish Council as a corporate body meets at the parish office monthly and there are regular scheduled meetings of the Parish Council's Committees – Finance and Establishment, Planning, Personnel, Recreation and the Allotments Sub-Committee. Meetings of the Parish Council usually start at 7:30pm, and the Committees usually start at 7.45pm. Meetings are held in public, and everyone is welcome to attend. There is fifteen minutes set aside at the beginning of all Council and Committee meetings for members of the public to ask questions, raise issues of concern, make a statement about local issues, or draw relevant matters to the Council's attention.

Details of meetings, including a calendar of meetings can be found on the Parish Council's website. Also available to view is the Parish Council's Action Plan setting out the council's objectives over the coming year.

Please follow our Facebook page, which we endeavour to grow, by sharing positive news and updates.

## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Parish Council has, during the disruptions caused by the Covid 19 Pandemic Regulations, continued to discharge all its duties by means of 'virtual' zoom meetings and internal delegated procedures; these have enabled the Council to continue its day-to-day business. These Regulations have now been revoked. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk have managed these difficult circumstances with their usual efficiency and good cheer, dealing with these online meetings and constantly changing Government guidelines, for which I am extremely grateful.

The Parish Council is committed to encouraging local community engagement, and developing relationships between the Council, individuals and community groups.

To underpin this commitment, the council has now established the new role of a Community & Facilities Officer. I am therefore very pleased to welcome Claire Palmer, who has recently been appointed to this new post. Hopefully, over the coming months, residents will meet Claire as she carries out her duties across the village.

The Parish Council's Website continues to be a source of information for the Community by continuing to provide up-to-date links to the latest information, as well as sources of help and practical support for those who have needed it.

The new Parish Office building was finally transferred at the beginning of 2022. It's a separate building on land adjoining the Neighbourhood Centre and will shortly be open for residents to get help and advice on community matters. If the matter of concern is not the direct responsibility of the council, then staff will help signpost residents to the appropriate organisation. I would also like to invite residents to attend our monthly Parish Council meetings, details of which are published on our website.



The Parish Office was funded by money provided by Countryside Properties UK Limited under a Section 106 Planning Agreement. These agreements are a mechanism by which a development becomes acceptable, in planning terms. They secure financial contributions, to not only improve existing infrastructure, but also to facilitate the building of additional new infrastructure.

As reported in my last Chairman's Annual Report [2020/21] the Parish Council continues to work actively with Horsham District Council, Countryside Properties plc and their respective legal teams to facilitate the legal transfer of the allotment, play areas and open spaces that are subject to the Section 106 Planning Agreements.

The failure to actually achieve the transfer of these community areas has been, and continues to be, a protracted and frustrating process for both the council and residents. I say this because the Parish Council is not actually a signatory to these agreements and therefore does not have the ability to pursue their enforcement. The power of enforcement of any obligations is solely the responsibility of Horsham District Council, as the local planning authority.

The Council will communicate with residents as and when each facility is in the ownership of the Parish Council.

During the year 2021/22, six Councillors resigned after collectively giving many years of great service to the Parish Council and the local community. On behalf of the Council, I would like to express my thanks and wish David Milbank, Jeanne Coker, Emily McGowan, Roy Neilson, Paul Wales and Louise Potter all the best for the future.

I and the Council were very pleased to welcome, in the last council year, four new co-opted councillors: Sarah Chandler, Debbie Lambert, Sam Hazell and Karon Smith. They responded to a call for new councillors, which is one of the ways of becoming a parish councillor. It is fantastic to see the commitment and enthusiasm already shown by these new members.

Currently the Council has three councillor vacancies, offering a great opportunity for anyone who wishes to become more involved in the local community. Details are available on our website or from the Parish Office, or why not attend one of our public council meetings and see for yourself.

The Council continues to fund youth support work through '4theYouth' Horsham and Age UK, West Sussex by sponsoring Hayley, our Village Agent.

I hope that residents will have noticed the monthly 'Cuppa and Chat' event hosted by Hayley. Do pop in and support this local social group, generally held on the first Tuesday of the month.

Parish Council projects this year have included the completion of the Triangle landscaping, and more daffodil planting at the Ducky, with the help of Horsham Green Gym. On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank Green Gym and all the community volunteers for their time and dedication to the village.



There are plans in place to improve the quality of the water and encourage more wildlife in the Ducky Pond through clearance of debris and planting of marginals; the construction of a dipping/observation platform will be an additional feature.

We await the final permissions from West Sussex Highways to proceed with an access strip to allow machinery on to the Village Centre recreation ground, so the refurbishment of the existing playground can go ahead and the exciting new Monster Playground that should have been completed by autumn 2020, until the pandemic halted our plans, can be created.

The Council is grateful for the work of the Gala Association volunteers for supporting The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and The Queen's Green Canopy initiative by planting three trees. They are also organising a 'Big Jubilee Lunch', with support of the council, on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June from midday on the Village Centre recreation ground.

The Council is also marking the Jubilee by commissioning a commemorative booklet that, in a pictorial format, reflects the many changes to the village over the seventy years of The Queen's reign.



The Parish Clerk, Lucinda, has guided us well this year making her a valuable asset that will help the council achieve the best for Broadbridge Heath and all its residents. She is ably assisted by Olivia, our Assistant Clerk who, over the year, has continued to take the lead on more of the daily business of the Parish Council. I am extremely grateful for their support.

I would also like to thank County Councillor Christian Mitchell and District Councillors, Louise Potter and Matt Allen, for all they have done to help us over the last 12 months.

Finally, I would like to thank and commend my fellow councillors for the work they have undertaken in the past year.

*Terry Oliver*