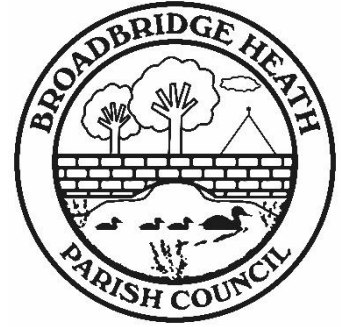


Chair's Report

2023-2024



Firstly, I am going to thank all my fellow councillors for all their hard work and commitment in supporting the Parish Council in ensuring the residents of Broadbridge Heath have a village they can be proud of. We all have the interests of the village at the forefront and despite the challenges faced, we consider that we are moving to achieve that.

At the last Parish Council election in May last year, only 7 out of 13 members stood for election. This has meant that the Council has had to seek to co-opt new members to sit as Parish Councillors. The following members have all been co-opted onto the Council since the election last May: Councillors Simon Leighton and Chung Wing Luk. On behalf of the Parish, I thank them both for dedicating their time to serving our community.

We currently still have vacancies for four Parish Councillors so if you are interested, please contact our Clerk, Lucinda.

The Parish Council is committed to encouraging local community engagement, and developing relationships between the council, individuals, community groups and other government and non-government organisations.

The Council's website, Facebook page and Notice Boards are a source of information for residents as they provide up-to-date links to the latest news and community information. There is a comprehensive range of useful information and guidance published to help and support those in need of it.

All Parish Council meetings have a public forum, and residents are encouraged to attend. Officers can be contacted by email and by telephone, or by calling in to the Parish Office. Our weekly drop-in sessions at the Parish Office, on Tuesdays from

10am-12pm, provide an opportunity for residents to get help and advice on a range of community matters. If, however, the matter is not the direct responsibility of the council then staff will help by signposting residents to the appropriate organisation.

During the last 12 months, the Council has continued to support local good causes. A total of £4,158.90 worth of grants were made to voluntary and community organisations:

- £300.00 - KSS Air Ambulance
- £100.00 - Victim Support
- £1,000.00 - BBH Magazine
- £1,182.00 - BBHPC Field Works
- £330.00 - Sight and Vision
- £750.00 – Sussex Green Living
- £496.90 – GALA Association [Village Fete]

As reported in previous Chair's Annual messages, the Council continues to work actively with Horsham District Council and Countryside Properties PLC/The Vistry Group to facilitate, after many years, the transfer of numerous areas which include the Churchill Way Allotments, two play areas and green open spaces.

These areas are specifically identified in the Section 106 Agreement dated October 2011, as areas to be transferred to the Parish Council via Horsham District Council, for the benefit of the residents of the parish. This process of transfer has been, and continues to be, a protracted and frustrating process for both residents and the council.

As stated, many times, the Parish Council's legal position is clear - the power to enforce any terms of the agreement rests with Horsham District Council, as signatories to the agreement and as the Local Planning Authority.

Recently the Council discussed, at length, the current position and decided to write to the Vistry Group board of directors expressing its concerns on behalf of the community. A copy of the letter can be found on our website.

I am now able to give a more positive update on at least the first three areas: Churchill Way Allotments, The Giggles and Leap Frog play areas - all of which are near to the point of exchange. Once the exchange of title for these three areas are completed, they will become the sole responsibility of the Council.

Early in 2024 the Council published and delivered to every household in the parish a BBH Bulletin titled "Your Community, Your Vision". This publication can be viewed on the Council's website.

Some of the Council's achievements are highlighted in the bulletin. These include the opening of the Weston Avenue Allotments, the new Monster Play Area at the Village Centre field, environmental improvements at the Ducky Pond, and obtaining a license from West Sussex County Council to enable the Parish Council to undertake maintenance of all verges along Broadbridge Way.

The Council's Action Plan 2024/25 focuses on a range of activities and projects that the Council has budgeted to deliver in the coming twelve months.

The Parish Office continues to be a focus for many community activities. Over the past year it has hosted community group forums, a free defibrillator community training session, expertly delivered by Southwater Community Responders, Wellbeing sessions provided by Horsham District Wellbeing and has served as a polling station in the recent election. Details of any community activities and events are always shared on our website and through our Facebook page.

Sussex Police, have, since the opening of the Parish Office, continued the regular public sessions for residents to meet and ask questions on any policing matters affecting them personally or the community. My personal thanks goes to our current PCSO Kyle Berriman for his interest in working on a collaborative basis with the officers of the Council.

Community Litter Pick events occur on a regular basis. The most recent event in the Easter holidays saw many children keen to play their part in keeping Broadbridge Heath litter free. Alongside these litter picking events, my sincere thanks go to the small group of community minded residents who volunteer, on a weekly basis, to keep our parish so clean and tidy.

Our Clerk Lucinda and Deputy Clerk Olivia continue to ensure all the aspects of running the Council are completed accurately, on time, and despite many pressures, maintain a professional and cheery outlook to all. I am extremely grateful and thank you for making my job a little easier at times.

A big thank you to my Vice-Chairman, Christine Knight and fellow Parish Councillors who again have supported me as Chairman this year.

Finally, I sincerely hope 2024-25 sees positive progress, and that the community of the Parish of Broadbridge Heath will remain a safe, caring community that we can all be proud of.

Councillor Terry Oliver

Chair of Broadbridge Heath Parish Council