



Slinfold Parish Council

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Chairman's Annual Report 2015/16

I am pleased to announce that two years after the Slinfold Parish Plan Area was designated by Horsham District Council, the Pre-Submission Draft Slinfold Neighbourhood Plan has now been completed and the statutory consultation period will start on 25th April and run until 6th June 2016.

A considerable amount of time and effort has gone into preparing the Draft Plan which can be viewed at www.slinfoldnplan.org, but its eventual success is very much down to residents taking time to read this document and then send in their comments or suggested amendments. If you would like to make representations with regard to and hopefully in support of the Plan, you may do so via the online form on the website, or in writing to the Parish Clerk. Hard copies of the Plan are available on application from the Village Shop.

Following the Pre-Submission consultation period, any comments received will be considered and a final Plan will be submitted to Horsham District Council who will arrange its independent examination. A positive examiner's report will then mean that the Plan can progress to a local referendum, when residents will be given the opportunity to vote and bring the plan into effect.

Gatwick Airport noise has been a constant agenda item for the last year, following the changes to flight paths. The Parish Council has continued to lobby Gatwick Airport Ltd, the Civil Aviation Authority and National Air Traffic Systems on this issue. Noise monitoring equipment has been installed in the village so that the impact of overflying on Slinfold can be measured.

However, the most effective way of ensuring that Slinfold's voice is heard is for residents to report aircraft noise by email: noise.line@gatwickairport.com or telephone: 0800 393 070 giving your name, postcode and time of disturbance. We will only be listened to if we protest loudly and clearly and keep on complaining!

The Recreation, Youth and Environment Committee, chaired by Councillor Jane Slipper, has had a very busy year which culminated with the official opening of the revamped King George V (KGV) Playing Field on Saturday 16th April 2016. Designed in consultation with the young people of the village, a new mini MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) and additional play equipment has been installed and can now be enjoyed all year round, whatever the weather. Thanks are due to the committee Chair, Councillor Jane Slipper, and our Clerk, Mary Burroughs who have worked so hard to deliver this great new facility.

The Youth Club continues to thrive, meeting on alternate Fridays in the Village Hall. Through our contract with Horsham Matters, the Parish Council continues to fund our Community Youth Worker, Dan Fairchild, who provides much needed support and activities for the young people of the village. Dan can be contacted at danfairchild@horsham-matters.org.uk or on 07702 815925.

In response to the BT initiative “Adopt a Kiosk”, the Parish Council has agreed to adopt the two telephone kiosks in the village for alternative community use. We are looking into the possibility of having a mini library/book exchange in the red telephone box on The Street. West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) has also agreed to plant a Sorbus torminalis (commonly known as a wild service or checker tree) between the Shop and the telephone box to replace the black poplar which had to be felled the year before last.

As well as the work involved in progressing the Neighbourhood Plan, members of the **Planning and Development Committee**, chaired by Councillor Gael Stenton-Chandler, reviewed and commented on 65 planning applications during the year. A number of these applications affected trees within the parish and the Parish Council is grateful for the advice provided by the village Tree Wardens, Rob Sims and John Burrell.

Speeding is an issue for many residents and the **Highways Committee**, chaired by Councillor Gordon Constantine, asked Sussex Police to undertake a traffic assessment of roads in and around the village. Having reviewed their report’s conclusions and recommendations, 500 wheelie bin speed awareness stickers (“Polite Notice – Please Slow Down”) were purchased and distributed to houses along the main road through the village and along Hayes Lane. If any residents would like some stickers for their wheelie bins, please contact the Clerk. A request to further reduce the speed limit along the Five Oaks Road was rejected by WSSCC as the current 40mph limit was considered appropriate and in accordance with WSSCC’s Speed Limit Policy.

Regular meetings are held with members of the WSSCC Highways department to highlight areas of concern and review progress of scheduled works. One notable improvement is the long overdue resurfacing of Greenfield Road which is now in the system.

The Clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer and regularly reports to the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** which is responsible for overseeing the finances of the Parish Council.

Total income 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 was £78,258, which includes precept of £51,277. We have reclaimed VAT, grass cutting, administration and insurance contributions, Environmental Cleansing and Neighbourhood Plan grants and received interest on bank accounts in all totalling £26,981. Total expenditure for the same period was £126,379 on staff costs (Clerk and Environmental Officer (EO), Neighbourhood Plan, community projects such as drainage works in Hayes Lane and new play equipment in King George V field as well as other smaller costs including administration, office supplies, hall hire, grass cutting, insurance, subscriptions, audit, playground upkeep and inspections and grants to the community.

Total cash holdings and investments at 31 March 2016 are £270,190, which includes a ring-fenced balance for Six Acres of circa £150k. Other monies are earmarked for specific use which include the Neighbourhood Plan, a new bus shelter roof and community projects such as drainage work and Cherry Tree.

The precept for 2016/17 has been set at £50,888, on average just £58 per household and no increase to residents this year.

The last year has seen a few changes; two councillors stepped down – Steve Mockford in September and Andrea King in November; and we said goodbye to Tobias Mothe who had been our EO for four years. We were happy to welcome our new EO, Dennis Elmes, in December and a new councillor, Adrian Roberts, who was co-opted in February. We currently have a vacancy for a parish councillor so if you are interested in becoming involved with representing your local community, please contact the Clerk, Mary Burroughs. Any resident

who lives in the Parish or lives within 3 miles of the Parish boundaries, or is employed in the Parish and over the age of 18 may become a parish councillor.

Looking ahead to the next twelve months, as well as getting the Slinfold Neighbourhood Plan formally made part of HDC's Development Plan, the Parish Council is looking forward to the finalisation of the sporting facilities and formal handover of Cherry Tree recreation field to the parish. Following the successful improvements to the KGV play area, the Recreation Youth and Environment Committee will be turning their attention to other open spaces in the village, starting with the Six Acres kick-about area; consultations with residents and young people have already begun. Also, the Parish Council intends to take over the freehold of the village shop, once a number of matters have been resolved.

Finally, this year, the Queen is 90 and the Parish Council has arranged with the Red Lion to host Slinfold's celebration of her Official Birthday on Saturday 11th June – it should be a jolly village affair, whatever the weather; and an opportunity for the whole community to come together. If you would like to get involved, please contact either Councillor Jane Slipper, Councillor Gael Stenton Chandler or the Clerk.

At the end of another busy year, my thanks are due to our Clerk, Mary Burroughs who provides support and guidance to me and the other councillors; and our EO Dennis Elmes who is out and about in all weathers keeping everywhere tidy and litter free. Thanks also to the members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group who along with our administrator Jane Bromley, have worked tirelessly on what has been at times a challenging task. I must mention too our District Councillors, Tricia Youtan and Stuart Ritchie, and our County Councillor, Liz Kitchen, who attend our monthly meetings whenever they can and represent Slinfold at District and County level.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow parish councillors for all the time and effort they give on a completely voluntary basis. I believe every councillor is concerned for the well-being of the parish and has the best interests of the village at heart; and we are not the only ones. There are many groups of individuals whose work makes Slinfold the vibrant community it is today and I am delighted to welcome so many of them to our Annual Parish Meeting as we reflect on the past year and look forward to the next.

Camilla Gibson

Mrs Camilla Gibson, Chairman, Slinfold Parish Council

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