



# Slinfold Parish Council

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2008

**Mr Alan Mawer**  
**Chairman of the Parish Council**

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## **The Council**

**Chairman:** Mr Alan Mawer

**Vice Chairman:** Mrs Rosemary Hillyard

|                               |  |              |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Mr Christopher Burke          | 1 Mitchell Gardens, Slinfold RH13 0TY                      | 01403 791866 |
| Mrs Margaret Dunkerton        | Forge House, The Street, Slinfold<br>RH13 0TH              | 01403 791299 |
| Mrs Daphne Harding            | 5 Streetfield Road, Slinfold RH13 0SE                      | 01403 790738 |
| Mrs Rosemary Hillyard         | Little Hammers, The Street, Slinfold<br>RH13 0RR           | 01403 791027 |
| Nr Nigel Jefferys             | Burley Edge, 1 Six Acres, Slinfold<br>RH13 0TH             | 01403 791226 |
| Mr Alan Mawer                 | York Cottage, Lyons Road, Slinfold<br>RH13 0RY             | 01403 790917 |
| Mr Adrian Skeates             | 2 Churchyard Cottages, Clapgate Lane,<br>Slinfold RH13 0QU | 07743 505392 |
| Mr Erik Sorensen              | 8 Six Acres, Slinfold RH13 0TH                             | 01403 790829 |
| Mrs Gael Stenton-<br>Chandler | Eagle Cottage, Stane Street, Slinfold<br>RH13 0QX          | 01403 790149 |
| Mr David White                | Chimney Corner, Park Street, Slinfold<br>RH13 0QU          | 01403 790435 |

## **Council Staff**

**Parish Clerk:** Mrs Mary Burroughs

**Environmental  
Cleaving  
Operative:**

Mr Alan Baker

## Council Structure

**Committee and Advisory Group Membership and Representatives on Outside Bodies as agreed at the Parish Council Meeting on 17 May 2007. The Youth Issues and Recreation and Environment Committees were amalgamated as agreed at the Parish Council Meeting on 31 January 2008.**

### Committees

- 1. Finance and General Purposes Committee (including Miscellaneous Properties, Administration):**  
R. Hillyard (Chairman), C. Burke, M. Dunkerton, E. Sorensen.
- 2. Recreation Youth & Environment (including Youth Issues, Litter, Street Lighting, and Burials):**  
D. White (Chairman), M. Dunkerton, N. Jefferys, E. Sorensen.
- 3. Highways, Byways and Transport:**  
A. Skeates (Chairman), C. Burke, R. Hillyard, G. Stenton-Chandler, D. White.

### Advisory Groups

- 4. Planning and Development:**  
C. Burke (Chairman), M. Dunkerton, A. Skeates, G. Stenton-Chandler.
- 5. Industrial Liaison Group:**  
R. Hillyard (Chairman), A. Skeates.
- 6. Parish Action Plan:**  
R. Hillyard, A. Mawer.
- 7. Legal Issues & Public Information:**  
A. Mawer, E Sorenson, D White.

### **Representatives on Outside Bodies**

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Child Memorial Village Hall – One Trustee     | M Dunkerton.             |
| Parish Cottages – Two Trustees                | R. Hillyard, E Sorenson. |
| Slinfold Charities – One Trustee              | R. Hillyard.             |
| Slinfold Sports Association – Two Cllrs.      | E Sorenson. D White.     |
| Horsham Association of Local Councils         | R Hillyard, A Mawer.     |
| Association of Local Councils AGM             | A Mawer.                 |
| Slinfold Village Shop Association – One Cllr. | M. Dunkerton.            |
| Police Consultative Committee                 | A. Skeates.              |
| CARES   | E. Sorensen, D. White.   |
| North Horsham CLC                             | A Mawer.                 |

## **1. Chairman's Overview and Introduction**

The Parish Council has been at full strength with 11 members for most of the year. We had one vacancy in May when Janet Valentine stood down but that vacancy was filled quickly when Nigel Jefferys was co-opted on to the council on the 28 June.

The full Council meet every month with the average attendance being between 8 and 9 Councillors. With the requirement to attend the various other meetings of sub-committees, Advisory Groups and meetings of outside bodies there is a lot of call on the time of Parish Councillors.

There is a statutory provision for the payment of an allowance to all members of Parish Councils. This Council voted to keep the allowance at £250 pa. Currently there is no take up of the allowance however the option is there for Parish Councillors to claim it in the future if they so wish.

In May 2007, Janet Valentine stood down after 3 years as Chairman of the Council. Janet ran the council meetings firmly but fairly and always allowed members to have their say on issues being discussed. I should like to take this opportunity to thank Janet on behalf of the Parish Council for her time spent on the Council and in particular the way she carried out her duties as Chairman with dignity and style.

In June 2007, Beverley Turner our Parish Clerk of 8 years left us to take up the role of Parish Clerk in Billingshurst. This could have been a very difficult position for us to fill because, after 8 years we had become reliant on Beverley's experience and knowledge of the job. However we were extremely fortunate to find an excellent replacement for Beverley from a very strong field of applicants. Our new Parish Clerk, Mrs Mary Burroughs took over the post in July and has quickly settled in.

## **2. Reports from Committees:**

### **i. Finance**

The Parish Council complies with the statutory requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 in the management of its accounts and financial affairs. The appointed external auditor for the Council is Mazars of Southampton; the independent internal auditor is Peter J Consultants of Lindfield. The Parish Clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer and reports regularly to the Finance Committee and full Parish Council.

The Parish Council audit takes place in May and June when the full results will be published. The following figures are therefore unaudited balances.

Total income 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 was £62,071, made up from the precept of £47,500, reclaiming VAT of £4,790 and donations towards grass cutting from Flint Group and the Sports Association, an Environmental Cleansing Grant from HDC, interest on deposit accounts and a grant from WSCC for the Youth Club of £1,275.

Total expenditure for the same period was £41,546 on staff costs (Clerk and Litter Warden), administration, office and stationery supplies, hall hire, grass cutting, insurance, subscriptions, external and internal audit, playground upkeep, Youth Club, publications, footway lighting – supply and new equipment and the Parish Design Statement. A further £3,200 will be paid for in 2008 upon the completion of repair work tendered for in the

King George V Field which will bring the total spend up to £44,746 against the 2007/8 budget.

It is recommended that the Parish Council hold a minimum of 50% of our precept amount as a contingency. Total cash holdings and investments at 31 March 2008 is £91,781, including contingency, funds held on behalf of the Village Hall, Youth Club and amounts held for specific budgeted projects.

The precept for 2008/09 has been set at £48,750. This equates to £56.52 per property at band D equivalent, an increase of 2.5% on 2007/08, which was £52.22.

## ii. Highways

- **Hayes Lane** – The red imprint surface at the junction with Six Acres and outside Cobblers has been removed and the road re-surfaced.
- **Red Lyon Public House** – The footway surface outside the public house has been replaced with pea shingle impregnated tar. This surface will, within a few months, look just the same as the rest of the pavement in The Street.
- **Flooding and Re-instatement works** – Phase 2 drainage improvements have been completed in Hayes Lane. There have been at least 2 severe rainstorms during the year with little or no flooding of property being reported.
- **School Car Parking** – Parking outside the school during the day is still of some concern. Funding to cover the cost of increasing the capacity of the School car park is being explored with Horsham District Council. School Safety Zone enhancements will be implemented in 2008/9 to improve safety from traffic coming into the village along Park Street.
- **A29 and A281 speed limits and anti-social drivers** – There have been a number of complaints from residents along the A29 and A281 about noisy motorcyclists and the excess speed of traffic along these stretches of road. Two speed surveys have been carried out during the year but there was no conclusive evidence that speeds are excessive enough and, according to WSCC's judgement these are not accident black spots. The Parish Council continues to lobby the WSCC to have a 50mph speed limit on the A29 past Slinfold and a 'no overtaking' zone along the A281 through Clemsfold. Operation Crackdown leaflets have been sent to residents on the A29 and to the Clemsfold and Rowhook Amenity Society to make residents aware of how to report anti-social driving.
- **WSCC, Highways Forward Plan** – The Council submitted recommendations for work to be included in this plan.
- **WSCC, Highways - Pavement Inspection** – There is an increase in the use of mobility scooters by residents in the village, which has highlighted the poor condition of some pavements. These pavements, although satisfactory for pedestrian use need to be improved for use by mobility scooters. Work is planned in The Street and Lyons Road to improve access for mobility scooter users.
- **Downs Link** – Christopher Burke continues the work to secure a direct link in the bridleway along the Downs Link to connect Slinfold to a point at Christ's Hospital Railway Station. This link would make an invaluable contribution to the network of bridle and pathways connecting Slinfold to other parts of the county.
- **Footpaths and Bridleways** – The Parish Council is in liaison with the Countryside Rangers and WSCC Access Rangers to keep the paths and bridleways in good condition and safe to use.

### iii. Recreation, Environment & Youth Issues

- **Youth Issues** - the Youth Club started up again before Christmas and has proved a great success with membership now at 25. The administration required in complying with all the necessary rules and regulations included production of a Constitution, Risk Assessments and Insurance and I would like to pass on my thanks to David White and the Parish Clerk, Mary Burroughs for pushing this work through. Rita Skinner and Nick Gray are the Youth Club Leaders but are not employed by the Parish Council. The leaders have been instrumental in obtaining a grant from WSCC of £1,275 and in organising activities during 'club' nights on every Wednesday (term-time only). Thanks are extended to Rita and Nick for all their hard work.
- **King George V's Field** – CARES – the Community Association for Recreation and the Environment in Slinfold has been working on Phase 2 improvements to the King George V Field. A proposal was put before the full Parish Council in February to proceed with Phase 2 and build a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The Council voted to support the plan fully. A planning application for a MUGA in KGV will be issued to Horsham District Council over the next few weeks.
- **Six Acres Open Space and Entrance Area** – The Parish Council continues to pursue the adoption of the land along with a commuted sum for maintenance from George Wimpey. This adoption agreement was part of the S106 agreement signed by the developer and should have been binding on them to complete the transaction within a few months of completing the development. The Parish Council has been trying to get the developer to comply for the past 4 or 5 years with little success so we have now passed it back to HDC to have enforcement action taken against the developer.
- **Cherry Tree Sports Field** – Flint Group, the landowner, has installed a height restriction barrier across the entrance to Cherry Tree Sports Field to prevent unauthorised vehicular access.
- **Safety Inspections** – The Litter Warden continues to make a weekly inspection of the King George V's Field and the Six Acres toddler play area. HDC carry out monthly inspections of these areas, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents carry out annual inspections. Work will soon begin to maintain or repair equipment and fences in these play areas.
- **Footway Lighting** – The final phase of upgrades to the footway lighting in the parish were installed in 2007. All obsolete lanterns have now been replaced.
- **Litter** – Horsham District Council devolves environmental cleansing to the Parish Council with an annual grant for the provision of the service. Our Litter Warden continues to provide an excellent service to the parish, not just in collecting litter but also being vigilant and reporting other issues, such as problems in the play areas and overflowing litterbins to the Clerk.
- Dog litterbins continue to be well used on the Downs Link and three new bins will be installed April/May 2008 in Hayes Lane, Spring Lane and at the corner of Clapgate Lane.
- **Burials** – The Parish Council has a contract with the Parochial Church Council to ensure that the graveyard is open for burials; this contract is currently being renewed.
- **War Memorial** – The Parish Council donates £50 per annum to the Royal British Legion – Slinfold branch for the planting around the War Memorial.

### **3. Reports from the Advisory Groups:**

#### **i. Planning**

The past year has been a busy one. From 1 April 2007, the Planning Sub Committee has dealt with 65 applications, the majority of which have passed with “no objection.” In regard to enforcement actions, which can take a disproportionate amount of time, these remain at a relatively low number. Of the large projects, permission was granted for an extension to the Golf Club.

We have introduced a new Planning Report format, published ahead of monthly meetings in tabular form. We are also making use of the District Council Planning website to good effect. This enables faster consideration of applications by those sub committee members with Internet access and reduces the time for those still using paper. Such a system is flexible and enables us to benefit from any future development of the Internet by HDC Planning at the same time retaining a paper element as a backup.

The Planning Sub Committee is now using the Parish Design Statement as criteria for assessment to enable applicants to have objective information in advance of an application. This should help applicants for planning permission to understand the views of village and the Parish Council on planning, and hopefully reduce the number of applications receiving ‘objections’.

#### **ii. Industrial Liaison Group**

Members of the group met with the Flint Group and SI Group twice this year to discuss issues concerning their sites and other relevant matters. We thank both companies for their continued support and assistance.

**iii. The Parish Plan**, published in 2003, is due to be reviewed and updated. This work will begin during the coming year.

#### **iv. Legal Issues**

There are a number of legal issues that have to be complied with and we have recently completed our review of the Parish Council’s Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. A revised Code of Conduct was adopted by the Parish Council in June 2007.

### **4. Consultations 2007/8**

- i. The Parish Council continues to assist CARES with development of the Multi-Use-Games Area for KGV.
- ii. Local Development Framework - Land West of Horsham Development – we continue to take a close interest in this development to ensure that we keep its impact on Slinfold to the minimum.
- iii. WS NHS Primary Care Trust - Fit for the Future. Members of the council attended the public meetings and the Parish Council submitted a response, which strongly opposed the closure of NHS facilities in West Sussex.
- iv. WSCC Review of Speed Limit Criteria. The Parish Council welcomed the changes to the way speed limits are set to enable local input in the decisions.
- v. Post Office Closures - The Parish Council opposed any plans to reduce the services provided by the village post office.
- vi. There continues to be a public session at every Parish Council and Committee meeting for members of the public to attend and address the Council or Committee directly. Our Clerk is always happy to read out written or emailed correspondence

for those who are unable to get to these public sessions but would like their views heard.

## **5. Acknowledgements**

I would now like to express the thanks of all the Parish Council to:

- Mary Burroughs, our Parish Clerk who has taken over the reigns without fuss or drama and has proved to be a real asset to me and to the Council.
- Alan Baker, our Litter Warden, who does such an excellent job around the village.
- Janet Valentine who stood down as Chairman in May.
- Beverley Turner, Parish Clerk from December 1999 to June 2007. In the time that Beverley was with us, the role of Parish Clerk has changed from something that a keen amateur could deal with to a much more complex job requiring special skills and a much more professional approach. Beverley's hard work and dedication saw the Parish Council through a period of great change as the level of bureaucracy and regulation in local government increased and new management and administrative systems had to be implemented.
- John Willcox, who with CARES and the Recreation Committee of the Parish Council are working towards Phase 2 improvements in the KGV field.
- Emma Grundy who stood down from the Council last month.
- Mick Hodgson, our County Councillor, who despite a busy work schedule, still manages to attend the majority of our meetings.
- Our District Councillors Robert Nye and Peter Rowlinson.

Finally, and by no means least, I should like to express my very special thanks to my Vice Chairman, Rosemary Hillyard and all the other Parish Councillors who give up their time voluntarily to serve on Slinfold Parish Council. A lot of their work, on Committees and Advisory Groups, goes unseen and unsung.

It has been privilege to be chosen by the Council to act as their Chairman and I should like to thank everyone for their support and hard work during what I believe has been a successful year.

Alan Mawer, Chairman