



Slinfold Parish Council

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ANNUAL REPORT 2009

**Mrs Rosemary Hillyard
Chairman of the Parish Council**

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The Council

Chairman: Mrs. Rosemary Hillyard

Vice Chairman: Mr. Erik Sorensen

Christopher Burke (Chairman, Planning)	1 Mitchell Gardens, Slinfold, RH13 0TY	01403 791866
Wendy Coad	Gate Lodge, Stane Street, Slinfold, RH13 0RE	01403 790855
Margaret Dunkerton	Forge House, The Street, Slinfold RH13 0RP	01403 791299
Rosemary Hillyard (Chairman)	Little Hammers, The Street, Slinfold RH13 0RR	01403 791027
Nigel Jefferys (Chairman, Finance)	Burley Edge, 1 Six Acres, Slinfold RH13 0TH	01403 791226
Fiona Jobling	1 Railway Cottages, Spring Lane, Slinfold RH13 0RT	01403 791889
Mr Adrian Skeates (Chairman, Highways)	2 Churchyard Cottages, Clapgate Lane, Slinfold RH13 0QU	07743 505392
Mr Erik Sorensen (Vice Chairman)	8 Six Acres, Slinfold RH13 0TH	01403 790829
Mrs Gael Stenton-Chandler	Eagle Cottage, Stane Street, Slinfold RH13 0QX	01403 790149
Mr David White (Chairman, Youth Recreation and Environment)	Chimney Corner, Park Street, Slinfold RH13 0RU	01403 790435

Council Staff

Parish Clerk: Mrs Mary Burroughs

**Environmental
Cleansing
Operative:**

Mr Alan Baker

Council Structure

Committee and Advisory Group Membership and Representatives on Outside Bodies were agreed at the Parish Council Meeting on 29th May 2008. Cllr. Alan Mawer stood down in September 2008; Mrs Rosemary Hillyard was elected as Chairman and Mr Erik Sorensen as Vice Chairman.

Committees

- 1. Finance and General Purposes Committee (including Miscellaneous Properties, Administration):**
N. Jefferys (Chairman), C. Burke, M. Dunkerton, R Hillyard & E. Sorensen. N.B. N Jefferys was elected as Finance Chairman in October 2008.
- 2. Recreation Youth & Environment (including Youth Issues, Litter, Street Lighting, and Burials):**
D. White (Chairman), W. Coad, 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, D White.
- 5. Industrial Liaison Group:**
R. Hillyard (Chairman), A. Skeates.
- 6. Parish Action Plan:**
R. Hillyard, N. Jefferys.

Emergency Plan

R. Hillyard, N. Jefferys.

- 7. Legal Issues & Public Information:**
E Sorensen, D White.

Representatives on Outside Bodies

Child Memorial Village Hall – One Trustee	M Dunkerton.
Parish Cottages – Two Trustees	R. Hillyard, E Sorensen.
Slinfold Charities – One Trustee	R. Hillyard.
Slinfold Sports Association – Two Cllrs.	E Sorensen. D White.
Horsham Association of Local Councils	R Hillyard, E Sorensen
Association of Local Councils AGM	R. Hillyard
Slinfold Village Shop Association – One Cllr.	M. Dunkerton.

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Police Consultative Committee
CARES
North Horsham CLC

A. Skeates.
E. Sorensen, D. White.
R. Hillyard.

1. Chairman's Overview and Introduction

The Parish Council was at full strength (11) until Cllr. Mawer resigned in September 2008. Cllr. Harding resigned in October 2008. One of these vacancies has been filled by Fiona Jobling who was co-opted in January 2009; there remains one vacancy.

The full Council meet every month with an average attendance 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 of £430 p.a. to all members of Parish Councils. This Council voted to keep the allowance at £250 p.a. 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. It was agreed in November 2008 to approve a payment of up to £200 p.a. to the Chairman for out of pocket expenses under s15 of the Local Government Act 1972.

In September 2008, Alan Mawer stood down as Chairman of the Council. Alan ran the council meetings firmly but fairly and always allowed members to have their say on the issues being discussed. I should like to take this opportunity to thank Alan on behalf of the Parish Council for his time spent on the Council as Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillor.

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 April and June when the full results will be published. The following figures are therefore unaudited balances.

Total income 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 was £62,709, made up from the precept of £48,750, reclaiming VAT of £3,040, 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 £500.

Total expenditure for the same period was £51,098 on staff costs (Clerk and Litter Warden), administration, office and stationery supplies, hall hire, grass cutting, insurance, subscriptions, external and internal audit, playground upkeep and inspections, Youth Club, publications, donations/grants and new dog and litter bins.

It is recommended that the Parish Council hold a minimum of 50% of precept amount as a contingency. Total cash holdings and investments at 31 March 2009 are

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£103,392, including contingency funds held on behalf of the Village Hall, and Youth Club and amounts held for specific budgeted projects.

Following a number of similar requests last year, the Parish Council is required to investigate the possibility of providing allotments. Our enquiries and negotiations are ongoing. To this end the provisional sum of £10,000 has been set-aside and is reflected in the higher cash balance currently being held on deposit.

The precept for 2009/10 has been set at £49,999. This equates to £53.89 (last year £53.52) per property at band D equivalent, an increase of 37p (or 0.7%) per property on 2008/9.

ii. Highways

- **Hayes Lane** – WSCC, Highways have been called out on numerous occasions to try to resolve the issue of flooding in Hayes Lane. There have been severe weather warnings issued by the Met Office throughout the winter months with little or no flooding of property reported. Whilst steps have been taken to minimise flooding of the road, and an improvement has been noted, the Parish Council continues to work with Highways to improve this matter further.
- **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 West Sussex County and Horsham District Councils. We are hoping to resurface and increase the size of the car park in the summer.
- **WSCC, Highways Forward Plan** – The Council submitted recommendations for work to be included in this plan, this included resurfacing the road around the duck bends in Lyons Road and widening the pavements in Park Street.
- **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. Some work has been completed in The Street and Lyons Road to improve access for these scooters, however WSCC has advised that no further work will be undertaken in the village as the remaining pavements are deemed to satisfy legal limits.
- **Downs Link** – WSCC, Rights of Way have resurfaced the Downs Link between Hayes Lane and Spring Lane.
- **Christopher Burke** continues to assist the work to secure a direct link to 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.
- **War Memorial** – the stonewall outside the memorial has been rebuilt this year by WSCC, Highways.
- **Litter & Dog Bins** – the Parish Council has installed new bins around the village during the year.

iii. Recreation, Environment & Youth Issues

- **Youth Issues** - the Youth Club started up again before Christmas 2007 and has proved a great success with membership now at 35. The administration required to comply with all the necessary rules and regulations included production of a Constitution, Risk Assessments, Guidelines for the Youth Leaders and Insurance. I would like to pass on my thanks to David White for attending to

these matters. West Sussex County Council awarded grants of £500 in 2008/09 and £1,000 in 2009/10 to offset most of the running costs. Rita Skinner and Nick Gray are the Youth Club Leaders but are not employed by the Parish Council. The leaders were instrumental in obtaining a grant from WSCC of £1,275 for additional equipment which has primarily been spent on a Wii and television, karaoke machine and in organised activities during 'club' nights on Wednesdays during term time – our thanks are extended to Rita and Nick for all their hard work.

- **King George V's Field** – the Community Association for Recreation and the Environment in Slinfold (CARES) has been working on Phase 2 improvements to the King George V Field. A proposal was put before the full Parish Council in February 2008 to proceed with Phase 2 and build a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The Council voted to support the plan fully. Horsham District Council (HDC) has now considered a planning application for a MUGA in KGV. HDC's Planning Committee was minded to agree delegation of the application with the view to approval. Further clarification is however required on the hours of use, how the MUGA will be managed/ maintained, the nature of use, what sports are to be provided for and are there any local groups which are looking to use the facility. A response to these questions will be sent to HDC in 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 is now close to securing the transfer of land from the developer.
- **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 has progressed well this year with many improvements being made to the play areas. The inspection reports show only a few minor items outstanding.
- **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, by not just 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 were installed in 2008 in Hayes Lane, the Caravan Site in 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 was renewed in 2008.
- **War Memorial** – The Parish Council donates £50 per annum to the Royal British Legion – Slinfold branch for the planting around the War Memorial. The stone retaining wall was repaired by WSCC this year.

3. Reports from the Advisory Groups:

i. Planning

The past year has been another busy one. From 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009, the Planning Sub-Committee has dealt with 90 applications (65 last year), the majority of which have passed with "no objection". With regard to enforcement actions, which can take a disproportionate amount of time, these remain relatively few.

The Planning Report in tabular format, introduced last year has been of great benefit in allowing both members of the public and Councillors adequate notice of the findings of the Advisory Group. Although the report is published with the agenda ahead of the meeting, it is worth noting that it is the Full Parish Council that makes the decision using this as a base. However, representations by the public are always welcome. With regard to the use of the Internet, the Advisory Group is using a hybrid of paper and web-based material. Such a system retains the flexibility of any future developments, for example, if the paper element were to be discontinued by HDC, the group could easily manage such a change.

The Planning Sub-Committee continues to use the Parish Design Statement as criteria for assessment to enable applicants to have objective information in advance of an application. Applicants are therefore recommended to study this document to understand the views of the village and the likely opinion of the Parish Council in advance of a formal submission.

ii. Industrial Liaison Group

Members of the group met with the Flint Group and SI Group in October 2008 to discuss issues concerning their sites and other relevant matters. We thank both companies for their support and assistance.

iii. The Parish Plan was last published in 2003; it was agreed not to look at this in 2008.

iv. Legal Issues

There are a number of legal issues that have to be complied with and following a review of these documents, a revision to the Parish Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders was adopted by the Parish Council in April 2008. The Parish Council is also working closely with our solicitors Rawlinson & Butler and HDC to enforce the S106 legal agreement to adopt the land at Six Acres.

4. Consultations 2008/9

- i. The Parish Council continues to assist CARES with development of the Multi-Use-Games Area for KGV. A planning application was submitted in January 2009.
- ii. Local Development Framework - Land West of Horsham Development – we continue to take a close interest in this development to ensure that we keep the impact on Slinfold to the minimum.

During the past year the Parish Council has also responded to a range of consultations including:

- WSCC Street Lighting – June 2008
- Southern Water Resources Management Plan – June 2008
- The Boundary Committee Report – June 2008
- Horsham District Council Strategy – July 2008
- Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs – Sept 2008
- Code of Conduct – October 2008
- NHS Constitution – October 2008
- Facilitating Appropriate Development – January 2009
- All Our Futures – February 2009
- Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity – February 2009

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 Councillors to:

- Mary Burroughs, our Parish Clerk who has been with us for almost two years now. Mary has taken to the post of Parish Clerk with a real understanding of the issues involved and has worked hard to retain the good name of our Council. I thank her for her efficiency, competence and good humour. She is an asset both to me and to the Council.

I would also like to thank:

- Alan Mawer who stood down as Chairman in September 2008.
- John Willcox, who with CARES and the Recreation Committee of the Parish Council are working towards Phase 2 improvements in the KGV field.
- Daphne Harding who stood down from the Council in October 2008.
- Mick Hodgson, our County Councillor, who despite a busy work schedule, still manages to attend the majority of our meetings.
- Our District Councillors Peter Rowlinson and Robert Nye.
- Alan Baker, our Litter Warden, who does such an excellent job around the village.

Finally, and by no means least, I should like to express my thanks to my Vice Chairman, Erik Sorensen and all 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.

Rosemary Hillyard, Chairman