



# Slinfold Parish Council

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2011

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

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## **The Council**

**Chairman:** Mrs. Rosemary Hillyard

**Vice Chairman:** Mr. Erik Sorensen

Hilary Bates (co-opted Mar 2011)	Suncote House, Spring Lane, Slinfold RH13 0RT	01403 790238
Christopher Burke	69 Milton Avenue, Rustington, BN16 2PJ	01903 783922
Wendy Coad (resigned Feb 2011)	Gate Lodge, Stane Street, Slinfold, RH13 0RE	01403 790855
Gordon Constantine	7 The Cobblers, Hayes Lane, Slinfold. RH13 0SA	01403 791138
Margaret Dunkerton	Forge House, The Street, Slinfold RH13 0RP	01403 791299
Rosemary Hillyard	Little Hammers, The Street, Slinfold RH13 0RR	01403 791027
Nigel Jefferys (resigned Dec 2010)	Burley Edge, 1 Six Acres, Slinfold RH13 0TH	01403 791226
Fiona Jobling (resigned Feb 2011)	1 Railway Cottages, Spring Lane, Slinfold RH13 0RT	01403 791889
Paula Redmond (co-opted Mar 2011)	Jackdaws, Hayes Lane, Slinfold. RH13 0SA	01403 790187
Erik Sorensen	8 Six Acres, Slinfold RH13 0TH	01403 790829
Gael Stenton-Chandler	Eagle Cottage, Stane Street, Slinfold RH13 0QX	01403 790149
David Thompson (co-opted Aug 2010)	Woodland Cottage, Guildford Road, Clemsfold, RH12 3PW	01403 791540
David White	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 Annual Council Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Cllrs.

Coad, Jefferys and Jobling stood down during the year and Cllrs. Bates, Redmond and Thompson were co-opted.

### **Committees**

- 1. Finance and General Purposes Committee (including Miscellaneous Properties, Administration):**  
N. Jefferys (Chairman), C. Burke, M. Dunkerton, R. Hillyard & E. Sorensen. D. Thompson was co-opted as a member and Chairman of the committee following N. Jeffery's resignation
- 2. Recreation Youth & Environment (including Youth Issues, Litter, Street Lighting, and Burials):**  
F. Jobling (Chairman), W. Coad, G. Constantine, M. Dunkerton, N. Jefferys & E. Sorensen
- 3. Highways, Byways and Transport:**  
G Stenton-Chandler (Chairman), C. Burke, G Constantine and R. Hillyard

### **Advisory Groups**

- 4. Planning and Development:**  
C. Burke (Chairman), M. Dunkerton, F. Jobling, G. Stenton-Chandler & D. White
- 5. Industrial Liaison Group:**  
R. Hillyard (Chairman), G Stenton-Chandler co-opted March 2011
- 6. Parish Action Plan:**  
F. Jobling

#### **Emergency Plan**

R. Hillyard, N. Jefferys and Clerk M Burroughs

- 7. Legal Issues & Public Information:**

D. White with the support of the Parish Council as required

#### **Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Child Memorial Village Hall – One Trustee	M Dunkerton, W Coad (Y Club)
Parish Cottages – Two Trustees	R Hillyard, E Sorensen
Slinfold Charities – One Trustee	R Hillyard
Slinfold Sports Association – Two Cllrs.	E Sorensen, G Constantine
HALC & SALC (Association of Local Councils)	R Hillyard, E Sorensen
Slinfold Village Shop Association – One Cllr.	M Dunkerton
CARES	To be agreed
North Horsham CLC	R Hillyard
GACC	C Burke
Policing Panel/Neighbourhood Watch	G Stenton-Chandler

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

The Parish Council became full strength (11) in August 2010 when David Thompson was co-opted. Nigel Jefferys, Wendy Coad and Fiona Jobling resigned during the year; Hilary Bates and Paula Redmond were co-opted in March 2011.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank Nigel, Wendy and Fiona on behalf of the Parish Council for their valuable input.

The full Council meet every month with a good attendance record. With the requirement to attend the various other meetings of Sub-Committees, Advisory Groups and meetings of outside bodies there is a reasonable but significant amount of call on Parish Councillors' time.

There is a statutory provision for the payment of an allowance of £430 p.a. to all elected members of Parish Councils. This Council previously voted to keep the allowance at only £250 p.a. Currently there is no take up of the allowance, with the exception of a few out of pocket expenses, however, the option is there for Parish Councillors to claim in the future, if they so wish. It was agreed in 2008 to approve a payment of up to £200 p.a. to the Chairman for out of pocket expenses, under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1972. During this financial year, only £47.65 has been claimed.

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

### **i. Finance**

The Parish Council complies with the statutory requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations, in the management of its accounts and financial affairs. The appointed external auditor is Mazars of Southampton; the independent internal auditor is Mark Mulberry & Co of Epsom. The Parish Clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer and reports regularly to the Finance Committee and full Parish Council.

The Parish Council's internal audit has taken place and the accounts will be submitted to the external auditor in June. The full accounts will be available for inspection by residents in June/July. The following figures are therefore unaudited balances.

Total income 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 was £65,724, which includes precept of £51,279. We have reclaimed VAT, grass cutting and insurance contributions for Cherry Tree, an Environmental Cleansing Grant from HDC, interest on deposit accounts and various grants from WSCC, in all totalling £14,445.

Total expenditure for the same period was £50,718 on staff costs (Clerk and Litter Warden), administration, office supplies, hall hire, grass cutting, insurance, subscriptions, audit, playground upkeep and inspections, the Youth Club, publications and grants to the community.

It is recommended that the Parish Council hold a minimum of 50% of the precept amount as a contingency. Total cash holdings and investments at 31 March 2011 are £270,654, including Six Acres (£142,175), Youth Club funds and amounts held for specific budgeted projects. This includes a fund to replace the equipment in the play areas, a contribution towards a MUGA in KGV and a community loan in respect of the Village Shop.

The precept for 2011/12 has been set at £51,279, exactly the same as last year; the Parish Council has not sought an increase. We recognise that some households may have seen a very small increase on their Council Tax demand as a result of the way Horsham District Council calculate and allocate our precept request. This should still equate to around £55 per property at band D equivalent for the year.

## ii. Highways

- **Hayes Lane** – WSCC, Highways has, at the Parish Council's request, increased gully clearing to twice a year. There were severe weather warnings issued by the Met Office throughout the winter months, and whilst we recognise that there has on occasion been an increase in surface water, this has soon subsided. The Parish Council would however remind residents, should they be concerned that their property will flood, inflatable sacks are available upon request; thankfully there has been no requirement for them this year despite all the rain and snow. It seems all the hard work by WSCC and the Parish Council is now starting to pay off.
- **Severe Weather** – Your Parish Council sprung into action during the severe weather at the end of last year. Having worked closely with WSCC and HDC last autumn, we were able to increase the level of gritting in and around the village and have grit/salt provided so that we could help ourselves by clearing an area outside our property. This is an on-going initiative and our requirements are considered annually.
- **School Car Park** – We are still hoping to resurface and increase the size of the car park, using S106 monies from Slinfold Golf Club. Plans are currently with WSCC for approval. However, since costs have increased considerably due to the requirements of HDC and WSCC, completing the project is proving to be extremely problematical, in spite of many hours of voluntary input by Parish Councillors
- **WSCC, Highways Forward Plan** – The Council submitted recommendations for work to be included in this plan. These include the resurfacing of Hayes Lane and parts of Lyons Road. Some work was carried out during the year and improvements around the Duck Bends in Lyons Road are pending.
- **Footpaths and Bridleways** – The Parish Council is in liaison with WSCC Countryside and Access Rangers to keep paths and bridleways in good condition and safe to use. Any matters of concern should be reported to the Clerk.
- **War Memorial** – The post and rail fence by the War Memorial has now been repaired with a contribution from WSCC.
- **Leaf Clearing** - the Parish Council instructed Landscape Services to provide additional leaf clearing services around the school and in parts of Hayes Lane during the autumn. We hope to increase the level of leaf clearing next year.
- **Speed Limits** – the Parish Council continues to campaign for a 20mph speed limit in the conservation area as well as a 50mph limit on the A281 between the Clemsfold and Roman Gate roundabouts. Also between the Slinfold Village signs on the A29. It is not an easy process but we are working with our County Councillor, Mick Hodgson and WSCC Highways, to achieve this aim.
- **Noticeboards** - You will have seen that there are two new noticeboards in the village; these are community noticeboards and are intended for residents to post leaflets of interest to the village. I am pleased to note that there has been no vandalism to the boards in spite of the fact that they had to be specially ordered without locks. Replacement boards for Lyons Road and Six Acres are planned for this year.
- **Six Acres** – having now adopted the land around Six Acres, the Parish Council has set up contracts for ground maintenance. Later in the year (when planning

permission is sought and the bird nesting season is finished) work will commence on trees.

Many other highway issues have arisen during the year, including 'pot-holes'; the Clerk works closely with the appropriate authorities to ensure that corrective action is taken.

### iii. Recreation, Youth & Environment Issues

1. **Committee Meetings** – This committee holds public meetings twice a year and they were held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010 and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011. The Youth Club holds a public Annual General Meeting, which was on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011. Minutes of these meetings are available on the Parish Council's website.
2. **Developments at King George V's Field** – The Parish Council are the trustees for King George V Field and submit an annual return to the Charity Commission.

The Community Association for Recreation and the Environment in Slinfold (CARES) with the assistance of the Parish Council, submitted a planning application for a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) to Horsham District Council (HDC) on 19 January 2009. This application has been approved. CARES are now working towards obtaining quotes and grants for the MUGA as well as looking towards implementing a third stage of improvements.

3. **Six Acres & KGV Play Areas** – following safety inspections from ROSPA, HDC and our Litter Warden throughout the year these areas have received a clean bill of health, with the exception of a few minor (low risk) matters, which have been or are being attended to. The Parish Council continues to build up a fund to be used as and when the play equipment needs to be replaced.
4. **Slinfold Sports Association** – The Parish Council are leaseholders of the Flint Group for the Cherry Tree sports field and pavilion. The football and tennis clubs are sub-lease holders to the Parish Council. The 'Sports' Association meet approximately every four months. The Parish Council is represented at meetings and receives a copy of the minutes produced. The issue of the lease will be discussed with the new owners of the site as soon as is practical.
5. **Youth Club** – A committee consisting of Parish Councillors and Youth Leaders has managed the club. The club is affiliated to West Sussex Council Youth Services who are available for assistance if required. A grant of £540 was awarded by WSCC in 2010/11 with a further £3,000 being secured by the Clerk for on-going costs from 2011.

Young people continue to meet in the Village Hall on Wednesday evenings during term time, and although attendance has dropped off during the year, the leaders are actively recruiting new members. Volunteers are an integral part of the club and without them it would not be possible for the Youth Club to continue. Our thanks go to the Youth Leaders and volunteers for all their hard work during the year. The future of the Youth Club remains in doubt as WSCC and HDC are reducing their support but the Parish Council will continue to work with the authorities, leaders and volunteers, in 2011 to ensure that, if viable, the club remains open.

6. **Litter** – HDC devolves environmental cleansing to the Parish Council with an annual grant for the provision of the service. Our Litter Warden continues to

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provide a good service to the parish by, not just collecting litter, but also being vigilant and reporting other issues, problems in the play areas, overflowing litter and dog bins for instance.

7. **Dog Litter** – the bins continue to be well used.
8. **Burials** – The Parish Council has a contract with the Parochial Church Council to ensure that the graveyard is open for burials. £1,000 per year is awarded to the PCC to ensure that this and the maintenance of the area is continued.
9. **War Memorial** – The Parish Council donates annually to the Royal British Legion, Slinfold Branch for planting around the War Memorial.

## **Reports from Advisory Groups:**

### **i. Planning**

It has been another busy year for planning with more than 87 applications having been considered. The majority of our applications were considered by use of the Internet, using the HDC website, which has been specially updated. The website experienced a few initial teething troubles, however, it has now settled down to run reasonably smoothly.

Two planning applications were dealt with by holding specific planning meetings. These were regarded as being of special importance.

The first of these applications was that relating to a request from Slinfold Golf Club to re-model the current 9-hole course and driving range. The Parish Council had serious concerns in connection with the number of earth moving vehicles required. There were also significant ecological, environmental and mitigation issues in relation to the source of material required to re-model the course.

The other major application was that of a warehouse to be sited on the former Flint Group Site; a public consultation exercise took place in October. A good deal of disquiet was evident amongst residents surrounding the site in relation to the height and size of the building; there were also a number of issues outside the scope of planning. The Parish Council attended a meeting with the engineering firm (AJW Aviation) at their present location in Partridge Green in early January at which many of these concerns were raised. In regard to the height, the developers were able to guarantee that the proposed screening would fulfil a requirement not to impinge on the conservation area.

The matter was considered by a Planning Sub Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 2011. Although largely satisfied with the proposal, a recommendation to 'OBJECT' was considered the best way to highlight two major outstanding concerns namely:

- Conditions to be placed to prevent the whole site becoming an office only development;
- Additional screening is provided to the west of the proposal adjacent to the Downs Link.

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

This year there has been no opportunity for this group to meet since the demise of the Flint and SI Companies. However, arrangements have been put in place to meet with Parlison (the developer) and AJW (the applicant) in May 2011 to discuss issues concerning the site and other relevant matters following the change of ownership. We thank Flint and SI Group for their support and assistance in the past.

### **iii. Legal Issues**

There are a number of legal issues that must be complied with. The Parish Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are regularly reviewed. During the year, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) issued 'model' Standing Orders for adoption in 2011. The Finance Committee together with Cllr. White is working on this model with a view to the Parish Council adopting them after the elections on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2011. The Localism Bill and the 'Big Society' initiative will impact on our procedural issues going forward.

### **3. Community 21 Pilot**

Action in rural Sussex (AirS) and the University of Brighton are developing a web-based system that will ultimately be of benefit and interest to all communities who are actively involved in developing and implementing a community led plan.

Part of the development phase requires the active involvement of a number of communities who can test and trial the prototype system with a view to ensuring that the resulting completed system is what will be required by rural communities to enable them to undertake and manage these tasks. This will provide the community with a 'live' system for community consultations and community led planning development and progress.

Slinfold has been accepted to be one of the live pilots of the system and will be involved in its evaluation. In return for this commitment and participation AirS will offer detailed support, guidance and resources to ensure that the action plan process is progressed.

The great strength of the Community 21 project is that it allows a variety of Community leaders to participate. It has not been developed just as a tool of the Parish Council. The other great benefit is its "immediacy." Information can be swiftly disseminated around the local community and in turn information gathering is greatly facilitated. Provision will be made for those residents not with access to the Internet to participate via paper questionnaires.

However Community 21 should not be envisaged as purely a sophisticated software programme for developing community plans. Rather it should be seen as the starting point for residents seeking information about all aspects of their local community.

### **4. 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 four years now. During this time Mary has worked with enthusiasm to assist Councillors and the residents of Slinfold. I believe that our Council is extremely efficient largely due to Mary's diligence. She is an asset both to the Council and to me.

I would also like to thank:

- Mick Hodgson, our County Councillor, who despite a busy work schedule, attends most of our meetings.
- Alan Baker, our Litter Warden, will be retiring during the coming year. Many thanks to Alan who has been a regular presence around the village for six years.

Finally, and by no means least, I should like to express my thanks to the Vice Chairman, Erik Sorensen who will not be standing for re-election in May. Since I took up the post of Chairman of the Council, after the sudden departure of our previous

Chairman, Erik has been a great source of support and good sense to me. I think, and hope, I have heeded most of his advice; he will be sorely missed both by me, and all Councillors.

Unfortunately Chris Burke, Chairman of Planning, has moved out of the village and is no longer able to stand for election. Chris has also been of great support to me and has put many hours into what is very often a thankless task; there are many brickbats attached to this job, and very little thanks. However, he has my thanks and that of all Councillors and the Clerk, who have worked with him.

I would also like to thank Chairmen of the sub-committees and all Councillors who give their time voluntarily to serve on Slinfold Parish Council. Much 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 another successful year.

Mrs Rosemary Hillyard. Chairman, Slinfold Parish Council