



BRAMSHOTT & LIPHOOK PARISH COUNCIL

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**THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR THE PARISH OF BRAMSHOTT &
LIPHOOK TOOK PLACE AT 7.30 PM IN THE LIPHOOK MILLENNIUM CENTRE
ON MONDAY 21st MARCH 2016.**

PRESENT:

Cllr M Croucher (Chairman)
Cllr B Easton
Cllr J Ives
Cllr D Jerrard
Cllr J Kirby
Cllr T Maroney
Cllr J Poole

There were 20 members of the public and one members of the press present. Also in Attendance, Cllr F Cowper Ex HCC, Cllr R Standish EHDC & Cllr A Glass EHDC.

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all present and explained the emergency exits.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23rd March 2015.
Approved by all present at the meeting.

3. ANNUAL REPORTS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE – CLLR. T MARONEY

The Finance & Policy committee consists of the 4 chairs of each committee including myself, the Chairman of the Council and one other councillor. I took over the F&P chair from Cllr. Don Jerrard at the end of January, so this report reflects the bulk of his tenure. On your behalf, I would like to thank them all for their proactive involvement and enthusiasm during the year, and for the encouragement, advice and support that Don and I have received.

The committee normally meets 6 times a year, although this year we held a seventh to consider the implementation and implications of VAT and the Parish Plan. The Committee's core work concerns the financial wellbeing of the Council's activities. This involves setting the budget and precept, ensuring that internal controls are robust and that management of risk is adequately addressed. It also has responsibility for staff matters.

Financial controls are exercised through quarterly budget reviews. These incorporate a forecast of the likely annual outturn, based upon current expenditure and revised assumptions. These enable us to redirect funding to meet unforeseen needs as and when they arise. The account is audited on a regular basis by Eleanor Green from Do the Numbers Limited, our internal auditor, and the final annual accounts by DCK Beavers. Both have offered the executive officer and councillors' sound, professional advice throughout the year on procedural, manning and taxation issues.

The council also conducts a programme of risk assessments to ensure a safer environment for the public and staff. This includes an annual review of documentation, policies and procedures and an evaluation of potential risks followed by an action plan to implement all recommendations.

On the personnel front, the new staff structure did not work as planned with the departure of the property and grounds manager at the end of his probationary period and the resignation, following completion of maternity leave, of the LMC officer. As a result the planned sales targets set in the budget were not achieved and the administration suffered. However, I am delighted that the current staff are beginning to redress the balance with increased usage and improving sales. You will hear more about this from Cllr. Jane Ives shortly. We have also recruited a new deputy executive officer, Melanie Kite with a broader remit, which will include the Millennium Centre.

As you all know, in addition to maintaining community facilities the council manages the Liphook Millennium Centre (LMC). This is an invaluable and well used community asset which is heavily subsidised. Unfortunately the building was never finished and, after 15 years, is in need of essential repairs and refurbishments. You may recall that we reported the likely cost of this essential work last year. I can now add that the total cost is likely to be in excess of £120k. We will fund this primarily from our reserves, but will also be seeking grants from various bodies.

As this work will prove expensive we will breach the VAT rules on partial exemption, i.e. we will no longer be able to reclaim VAT thereby adding 20% to the final bill. We therefore had no alternative but to make the painful decision and "Opt to Tax" on the LMC. This will enable us to reclaim all the VAT on the construction work. The impact this will have on users and the action we can take to mitigate this is currently under review by the LMC committee. It should have little impact on registered businesses, who can reclaim VAT or on charities involved in fund raising events as these are zero rated.

The Council also has responsibility, as corporate trustee, for looking after the War Memorial Recreation Ground (WMRG). The recreation ground is maintained by the council, on behalf of the trust, along with Radford Park and other council land. The major change has been the loss of income following closure of the old pavilion with the sad loss of a well-loved nursery. The 70 year old wooden building was condemned following receipt of a surveyor's report. The council is well aware of the shortage of nursery places within the Parish, but does not have the resources, nor the direct responsibility, to address this issue; this rests with Hampshire County Council's Children's Services.

Returning to the budget and precept. As I mentioned earlier, we are committed to funding major work on the LMC, demolishing the old pavilion and have recruited a new deputy executive officer. In setting the budget we were aware of time we volunteer councillors spend on parish business. In addition, we all incur costs without realising it such as telephone calls, electricity, print cartridges, petrol etc. The Hampshire Association of Local Councils, our professional body, has advised town and parish councils that they ought to introduce a small, annual allowance to cover miscellaneous expenses. We have therefore adopted this advice and incorporated a £200 allowance per councillor. These changes, combined with rising equipment and vehicle maintenance costs, have resulted in an increase in the precept next year for a Band D property of £6.88 or 57 pence per month for each household.

In addition, financial grants to local organisations have been increased to £20k. The organisations we will be helping this year are:

Ser	Organisation	Amount	Purpose
a.	St Mary's Church, Bramshott	£2,800	Grounds Maintenance
b.	CAB	£4,000	CAB Local Provision
c.	Liphook in Bloom	£1,700	Contribution: Cost of Planting
d.	Carnival Committee	£2,250	Carnival & Bonfire
e.	Royal British Legion	£250	Remembrance Service
f.	Peak Centre Trust	£3,000	Contribution: Running Costs
g.	Home Start	£450	Volunteer Costs
h.	Liphook Tennis Club	£1,900	Resurfacing Hard Court
i.	Bramshott War Memorial Trust	£250	Maintain War Memorial
j.	Jubilee Sailing Trust	£300	Voyage Subsidies
k.	Age Concern, Liphook	£1,600	Contribution: Purchase of Minibus
l.	Reserve (Small projects)	£1,500	Small in-year grants
	Total	£20,000	

In addition, we have agreed to subsidise use of the Millennium Centre by the Youth Club.

Following the findings from a working party consisting of Cllrs. Michael Croucher, Jane Ives and Thea Jourdan we have agreed to have a new website designed. However, staff shortage has meant a slight delay but work is still on going.

Similarly, following Phil Jordan's announcement in last year's report, we have formed a working party to conduct a feasibility study to look into moving staff from the Haskell Centre to the LMC. Cllrs. Jane Ives, Thea Jourdan and Jeanette Kirby have kindly agreed to conduct this research along with the executive officer. Draft terms of reference have been agreed and EHDC have kindly agreed to provide professional advice by allocating officer time to this project. It is anticipated that their findings will be available in the autumn.

Looking to the future, with the adoption of the Parish Plan the Council now has the evidence to support future investment plans. It has therefore been looking more closely at the contribution we, as a council, receives from developers. This funding comes from S106 Agreements and is held under two categories: Open Space and Recreation (POS) and Environmental Improvements (EI). Currently there is £125k in the former and £36K in the latter, this will increase when Silent Garden, the former OSU site, Lowsley Farm Phase 1 and the Beaver's Estate Station Siding are completed. However the S106 regulations were changed in May 2014. As a result EI has been replaced by a new category: Community Facilities (CF). If planning permission on Lowsley Farm Phase 2 is granted the community will receive approximately £60k for POS (Open Space) and £260k for CF. The Council has therefore agreed that the priority projects should be finding land for and creating more sports pitches with appropriate facilities along with more public toilets.

During the discussion with EHDC it was noted that the EI category will, in due course, contain more funds than there are currently projects. We are therefore looking for more suitable projects. One suggestion being considered is to refurbish the dilapidated building by the car park in Radford Park into a tractor storage shed and nature classroom for the schools to use. That said, we are also looking for alternative suggestions. We understand that these could include improvements to the historic Square – the heart of our village.

Thank you for listening. Are there any questions?

Mr Young asked that with extra houses being built in the area and with balances of £250,000 held by the council, why was it necessary increase the precept by 10%.

Cllr Maroney explained the areas of the budget that had increased and the reasons for this. In terms of the balances held, about £100,000 was needed as a general reserve and the rest was earmarked reserves the largest of which is to fund the LMC repairs. The £32,000 increase in the precept funding necessary repairs, replacement equipment, casual staff at the millennium centre and the reduced income and therefore higher subsidy at the millennium centre.

Mr Young asked why the cost of repairing the Millennium Centre should be met from local taxpayers rather than the developer who had not completed the building properly.

Cllr Croucher stated that the Sainsbury's contractor had £860,000 for the project and at the point that £1,250,000 had been spent, they were not prepared to spend any more on the building. This meant that certain areas such as the upstairs floors were never completed.

Mr Burns raised his concerns over the dog fouling at the sports pitches and what could be done about this problem. There had been proposals in the past implement dog controls.

It was stated that EHDC has the responsibility for enforcing dog controls in this area and the advice at the time was that it would be better for EHDC to continue that responsibility than it pass over to the Parish Council. It was agreed that more signs in the area would help. Cllr Glass volunteered to look into this matter to see what actions could be taken.

RECREATION COMMITTEE – CLLR BARBARA EASTON

The recreation Committee meets every two months: there is also an annual allotment inspection by the Committee, which usually takes place in early summer, and also a walk round by the Recreation Committee, which usually comprises of visiting the War Memorial grounds and Radford Park, although the Parish Council owned open spaces are more extensive, we also have responsibility for a small piece of land called the Bramshott Triangle, some land at Hammer Vale, the Millennium Green, land at Fletchers Field, and the Scheduled Ancient Monument and a small piece of land there at Radford Bridge.

This year saw the successful "Sports Day", thanks largely to the working Party set up by the previous chair of the Recreation Committee, Mr Paul Robinson, and led by the enthusiasm of our Sports Representative Mr Tony Rudgard, who was one of the driving forces on the working party; he helped bring together various sports organisations to take part on the day. I would also like to thank Cllr Ives, who despite having the Chairmanship of the Millennium Hall Committee also found time to focus on bringing the project together on the day. Many Councillors helped out, both in the working party and on the day itself, as did our ground staff supervisor Mr Peter Terry. Mr Rudgard has also carried forward his enthusiasm for holding the same event again this year, it will be again a Saturday in early July.

I have also tried to carry on the good work started by Paul Robinson in tackling the litter problem in Liphook and outlying hamlets; so far we have had 2 litter days, the second day was combined with the "clean for the Queen" campaign, and attracted a great many individuals and clubs to take part, over 70 people combined forces to collect litter on the first weekend in March.

I would like to also thank Cllr Jeanette Kirby for her tireless. work and enthusiasm for organising and taking part in the Radford Park Working Party on various Saturday mornings, she leads a band of volunteers there who are undertaking clearance and tidying up of neglected areas of Radford Park. I know that this working party also tidies up the Ancient Aqueduct areas. I know that this working party intends to tackle

invasive species in Radford Park, such as removal of the Himalayan Balsam. This is necessary to retain the SINC status of Radford Park. Having the SINC areas, in Liphook, such as on Bohunt Manor and at Hammer Bottom guarantees the area an unmeasurable ecological benefit, so as a Parish Council we have to be mindful that the SINC status of the site.

The last year saw the addition of several new councillors, and I was pleased to welcome Councillors Jourdan and Enticknap-Green to our Committee. Councillor Jourdan I know has a keen interest in the Conservation Areas and National Park Areas of the Parish, and Councillor Enticknapp-Green has a wealth of arboricultural and environmental qualifications which are of a positive benefit to the Council open Spaces.

I would also like to thank all our ground staff and remaining Committee members for the work undertaken during the last year. On some occasions such as sports day it means extra unpaid man hours are required, to achieve something to benefit Liphook as a whole. I would lastly like to thank Mr Eddie Trotter Vice chair, of the committee, who despite having been unwell himself, has always lent us his extensive experience when faced with an urgent project such as the logistics of moving the container within the recreation ground.

I would also like to thank Mr Peter Stanley and our Committee Clerk, Nicki Sosin, who manage the day to day problems of the Recreation Areas as they arise, it cannot be an easy task for them, Nicki, despite being a new employee has risen admirably to meet the challenge. Thank you.

Mr Young asked what the position was with the skate park. It was stated that the park was closed temporarily following an inspection as works need to be carried out to the equipment. The park needed replacement but it was not currently in the best location, and a more suitable location needs to be found. The skate park is on the S106 list but as a low priority at present. A member of the public felt the facilities should be higher up the priority list.

LIPHOOK MILLENNIUM CENTRE – CLLR JANE IVES

The Liphook Millennium Centre Management Committee have had a busy year and I would like to highlight some of the changes that have taken place over the past 12 months and plans for the future.

I would like to thank the other 5 parish councillors on this committee for their valued input over the last year.

I am very pleased to report that the Millennium Centre has become increasingly busy over the last year and this is largely due to our diligent and hard working staff who had come up with some new ideas for bringing new bookings to us.

We have had a number of new events this year and hope to build on their success in the coming months. Roller discos for youngsters have now become a regular feature and have been very popular. We've had a wrestling evening which went down a storm and we hope to welcome them back next year. The first of our Film & Food nights was held recently where we showed Breakfast at Tiffany's accompanied by fabulous cocktails

and canapes. The next Film & Food night is on the 8th April where we will be showing the original Italian Job accompanied by Italian food and wine. Later in the year we have two further Film & Food nights where we will be showing Mamma Mia and Dirty Dancing. We want to keep our current loyal audience but also encourage a new audience along with a wider variety of films and film events. On that note we will shortly be announcing the next season of films and tickets can continue to be purchased at the parish office and we do sell tickets on the door subject to availability.

I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking Mr John Tough who has been running the monthly cinema for a number of years. John has volunteered his time freely and we are very grateful for his contribution. The cinema is shortly going to be re-launched by our Millennium Centre staff with some fresh ideas and we hope to be introducing films that will appeal to a much wider audience. We also hope to introduce online booking making it easier for those who can't get to the parish office to book their tickets in advance.

Our staff have been working very hard on establishing a monthly food market for the village. The first one was held on 12th March and joined up with the Artisan Market. We hope to get some more food stalls next time around and are really hoping to get a butchers, green grocers, cheese stall and such like.

Planning is currently taking place in earnest for a Village Day on Saturday 11th June. This date coincides with the national celebrations to mark the Queen's 90th birthday. So far we have a number of stalls and entertainment and more details will follow in the coming weeks. The Millennium Centre has a Facebook page which is the best place to find out up to the minute information about what is happening as regular updates are posted about all of our events.

The Village Day is also being used as an opportunity for any local voluntary organisation to come along at no cost and have a stall where they can promote their work and hopefully sign up some new volunteers. Many groups in the village are really struggling to find volunteers and we really hope this provides an opportunity to bring through some new people to join them. A number of organisations have already signed up for this and we hope to encourage more to do so.

We have been very pleased to recently welcome back the youth club which had to close last year. A new committee has been formed and the club meets every other Monday.

With regards the building itself some maintenance and improvements have been carried out over the course of the year. We have put new LED lights into the poorly lit corridors which are a vast improvement, CCTV monitoring now takes place in the foyer and this system is likely to be extended, the taps have been replaced in the toilets so that water cannot be left running. We have also purchased new projectors, a DVD player and new microphones and all of this is now controlled from a new lockable cabinet housing all the light/audio equipment.

However, the Millennium Centre is still in need of much refurbishment and the parish council have been in the unenviable position of not being able to spend the required funds without breaching VAT thresholds for local councils. This has severely limited what we have been able to do over the last few years, and in particular over the last year

when many issues have been identified that need to be fixed. The decision has now been taken by the Finance & Policy committee to opt to tax which means that funds can be released, which are currently held in council reserves, to carry out the much needed work on the Centre. This will have VAT implications for users of the facility but the committee, at its meeting last week, voted to pay the VAT for community and small business users until a fee review has taken place later in the year.

The Millennium Centre is still heavily subsidised by the Parish Council as it does not turn a profit, nor break even, but the committee are keen to see its place as a community facility maintained. This means we have pledged to support community users in particular and we welcome local groups who wish to make use of our managed facilities.

Members of the public may have noticed that the amphitheatre to the rear of the Centre has continued to cause us a problem. The ground has sunk even further over the past few months and we now understand, from carrying out investigations, that this area was never properly compacted when the Centre was built. Some urgent work is going to be carried out over the next couple of months to strip out the current amphitheatre, as it is beyond repair, fill in the hole and make good the bank. This will at least make the area safe and usable. Sainsbury's, who originally built the LMC, have expressed their willingness to come and have a look and perhaps offer some assistance in making the area look presentable again.

Another piece of work that is due to be carried out shortly is repair to the main hall floor which has developed a number of cracks. We have decided not to replace the floor as it would be very expensive and would mean closing the Centre for a number of weeks. The committee, at its last meeting, agreed a contractor to repair the floor later this year which will involve only about a week's work but will give the floor a new lease of life which should extend its life quite considerably.

We have continued to listen to users of the LMC by holding User Group Meetings and this has been a very useful tool in understanding what we are doing right and what we need to do to improve the facility for our users. We will continue to have these meetings on a regular basis.

However, we always welcome any member of the public who wishes to come along to our bi-monthly committee meetings. Meeting dates are publicised on the parish council website or you can pop into the LMC and ask a member of staff for dates and times.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking our staff – Karen Feeney and Caroline Lennox - who have worked so hard over the past year working many hours including evenings and weekends to provide an excellent service to our customers. I would also like to thank our Head Groundsman, Peter Terry, who has filled in the gaps at the LMC since our caretaker left a few months ago. Both Karen and Caroline are currently on temporary contracts and we will be putting a permanent staffing structure in place within the next few months.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Peter Stanley, our Executive Officer, for his support to both the committee and to me.

This concludes my report and I am happy to answer any questions from members of the public.

There were no questions.

PLANNING COMMITTEE – CLLR JEANETTE KIRBY

The past twelve months have seen a number of large scale housing planning applications, and some which raised wider concern within our community. In particular these have included:

- A proposal for up to 140 dwellings on land at Bohunt Manor, in the South Downs National Park
- Bohunt Academy application for a 6th Form College with a potential for an additional 500 students on the site.
- The siting of several residential caravans on a field bordering Devils Lane, outside the settlement policy boundary, and without planning permission.
- An application for 36 dwellings off the Headley Road, commonly known as Pope's field, which is adjacent to the approved SANGS for the Lowsley Farm development.
- The appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of 155 houses for Phase I of the Lowsley Farm approved development.
- The application for Phase II development of Lowsley Farm for a further 175 houses, following the site's inclusion as a Housing Allocation site by EHDC.
- A proposal to redevelop the Passfield Business Centre with 48 residential units, but the resulting in the loss of over 35,000 sq ft of employment space.

Large development proposals generate a lot of reports including road layouts, potential traffic generation, drainage and flooding, environmental impacts, and also affordable housing and community benefits. These take several hours to scan through, extract the relevant information and prepare a report. In addition there are often amendments and resubmission of documents. I would like to thank the committee members for their time and diligence in reporting their findings.

The planning committee has emphasised the key concerns regarding traffic generation from large developments and in particular the proposed development of 330 houses at Lowsley Farm together with the 6th Form College and Bohunt, both of which will result in significant increase in traffic along the Longmoor Road. There is now an obligation for a co-ordinated traffic management plan between both of these developments.

The application for a major housing development on the South Downs National Park was refused in July 2015. It was extremely unfortunate that the public were misled into believing that this site could be used to take the 175 housing allocation for Liphook. The SDNP has a completely separate housing allocation and the application did not comply with policies specific to the National Park.

http://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/files/3FAC7A8A21E813D806B2D418AE9A7BEC/pdf/SDNP_14_06426_OUT-DECISION-541018.pdf

The planning committee has also examined and commented on the :

Planning Contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy Consultation

SDNP Local Plan: Preferred Options Consultation

EHDC Housing and Employment Allocations Consultations

There were no questions.

PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Croucher explained that it had been a challenging year for the council. The loss of staff had led to a reduced capacity to deliver council activities. This in turn had required councillors to be more directly involved in the day to day running of the council than would normally be the case. The council, in common with other local councils, had a problem attracting new councillors. The time required was not always possible for those who had jobs and other responsibilities. The local community website had been used to make attacks on the council and some individuals. The councils internal auditor had recommended that the council should not use this website. The police had been asked to look into the comments made but are unable to take further action. However, with changes in legislation, it is likely that will re-examine the position in 6 months' time.

Cllr Croucher thanked all fellow councillors for their hard work. He also invited those present to join councillors after the meeting for a drink and informal discussion.

Mr Burns wished to thank staff and councillors for their continued support for the annual Carol Concert which was as popular as ever and attracted 350 people.

Mr Robinson asked when the Speed Limit Reminders would be in use. He understood they were in the Parish Office and could be deployed.

Cllr Croucher stated that there were a number of factors to consider. The recent street light PFI meant that some previous locations were no longer valid. Permissions were required from bodies such as the police for any new sites used. Speed Watch have been asked whether the existing locations are still the best places for deployment. Cllr Croucher also stated that the technology had moved on a lot and more statistical information is available in newer SLR's. In the past deployment has been through HCC, but now it would need to be done by the council's own staff. This would involve training and new safety equipment. It was felt that Speed Watch represented a better deterrent to speeding vehicles with their physical presence. Cllr Croucher goes to regular liaison meeting with the police so they can patrol problem areas.

Mr Young asked why the minutes of the last APM and the financial statements were not on the website. Cllr Croucher stated that they should be on the website as this was a requirement under the Transparency Code.

Mrs Mitchell asked what the priorities are for the council. Suggestions were roads, transport and bringing the Millennium Centre up to date.

Mr Robinson stated that he thought that there were developer contributions available for the improved station access. Although there was funding available it was far short of that needed for such a large project, which is the responsibility of Network Rail.

4. REPORT FROM EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REPORT FROM HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report by East Hampshire District Councillors, Rebecca Standish, Angela Glass and Bill Mouland, to the Annual Parish Meeting, on Monday 21st March, 2016

The year 2015 to 2016 has as usual been a very busy and varied year for East Hampshire District Council.

The year started with the General and District Council Elections, where a long campaign was undertaken not only by your elected District Councillors, but also those who had put themselves forward for election. At this time, Rebecca Standish was elected, in place of Cllr. Lynn Ashton, who had stood down, through pressure of work.

Now, a year later, there will be another local election in May, for a new County Councillor, following the resignation of Cllr. Ferris Cowper. However, Cllr. Cowper will remain as a District Councillor for Grayshott, and Leader of East Hampshire District Council. On the same day, there will be the chance to vote for a new Police and Crime Commissioner, and it is hoped that there will be a good turnout for these elections.

As has been reported throughout the year, there has been considerable progress on the three applications within Whitehill and Bordon, and the landscape is changing as the new relief road is constructed. The Quebec Barracks site has been demolished, and demolition is underway on the Louisburg Barracks site, whilst plans are finalised for the Prince Phillip Barracks site which will form the heart of the new town. The Bordon Enclosure has been created and offers a large area for family recreation. Progress on all these different parts of the scheme will be reported to you throughout the coming year. It is an exciting time for the area, with Government recognition of the importance of the regeneration which is taking place, and constant and continuing discussions with Government on the progress of the new town.

East Hampshire District Council continues to deliver approvals for new homes across the district, together with support for new and existing businesses. The Allocations Plan will be adopted at the beginning of April, which designates possible future sites for development. This will mark the end of the Second Part of the Local Plan. In addition, the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy will take place on the 8th April. This is the document which sets the amount of developers' contribution across the area, and will largely replace the S106 contributions previously collected.

The allocated site for Liphook, within the EHDC Planning Authority area, outside of the South Downs National Park, is Lowsley Farm, Phase 2, for 175 dwellings. This application comes before the District Council again on the 31st March.

In order to maintain the stability of the District Council, in the face of future cuts in Government funding, EHDC is actively pursuing commercial activities, and the acquisition of existing and potential commercial property, which will create the Revenue to replace this funding. As part of this, EHDC has recently purchased part of the former OSU site. The remainder of the site has been developed, and development continues on the Silent Garden site.

EHDC remains confident that the future funding through these acquisitions will be buoyant, as has already been proved, and because of this, that part of the Annual Council Tax statement for EHDC, which you have received, shows a reduction of 2%, the only part of the Council Tax Bill which has been reduced, where all others have increased their precept. The ultimate aim is to remove the EHDC part completely.

The District Council maintains a close link with all areas of the District. It recognises the importance of Bramshott and Liphook, with its position as the first settlement within the District, on the A3 corridor. It will strive to do all that it can for Bramshott and Liphook, and as part of this, please do not hesitate to contact your three District Councillors for assistance.

Please also remember that we each have a £4,500 devolved Grant at our disposal, specifically to be used for the benefit of those who live within this parish. This year Bill Moulard has supported The Village Sports Day, a new disabled access to the Bramshott and Liphook Social Club, Liphook in Bloom and the Community Laundry. Angela Glass has supported Bramshott and Liphook PCC, for maintenance of the graveyard, Bramshott, the Bramshott village family event, The Peak Centre Trust towards new double glazing, Bramshott Open Gardens, and the Bramshott and Liphook Scouts' Archery Team, who were recent winners in the EHDC Sports Awards. Rebecca Standish has supported Crankers, who have taken over the LIDBA Bike Ride, and future projects include support for the Canada Day commemoration, a music project in the Infant School, support for the village Sports Day and the village Fun Day.

Finally, there has been a great deal in the news recently about devolution across the Solent area, which would include EHDC. As matters progress, the District Council will ensure that the residents of the District are kept informed of the latest developments.

The issue of reorganising local government has been a fast moving and ever changing topic since the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, announced his

“devolution revolution” at the Conservative party Conference in October. A BBC analyst said at the time that the devil would be in the detail and so it has proved.

Initial enthusiasm for the establishment of a devolved authority involving all the councils in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight faded when it became clear that a promise to allow retention of 100 per cent of business rates would be tempered by a loss in government grants.

There was also little appetite for the concept of an elected Mayor or an extra tier of bureaucracy,

It became clear, however, that councils like East Hampshire would have to join some form of devolved authority of their own accord – or be forced into an arrangement with other councils not necessarily of their own choosing. In other words, going it alone was not an option.

Currently, East Hampshire District Council is one of eight local authorities in Hampshire – the others are Havant, Portsmouth, Fareham, Gosport, Southampton, Eastleigh and the Isle of Wight – whose bid for a Solent Authority is being looked at favourably by the Government. Hampshire County Council, which still sees mileage in the original scheme, has been asked to join.

There would still have to be an elected Mayor – but the role would be ‘constrained’ in that a Cabinet made up of the leaders of the member authorities would have an important say in decision making.

Importantly, the leader of EHDC would be able to veto unwanted housing demands, ensuring that the Council’s own blueprint for development – carefully worked out by local members – stands firm.

As the leader, Cllr. Ferris Cowper, has stated: ‘The Solent CA offers a far superior opportunity to develop our much publicised and nationally renowned strategy for complete financial independence, with the opening up of the Solent area to our growing businesses and of course the business aspects of our Council.’

‘The bid offers all of us the opportunity to accelerate our vision of a new, financially robust model of Local Government in Britain. In the Solent CA we can do this through an exciting pilot in this compact yet powerful economic zone. I’m certain that the Solent CA bid is overwhelmingly the best for everyone in East Hampshire.’

Your District Councillors thank you for your continuing support, and we will endeavour to do whatever we can to assist all our residents.

Cllr. Mrs. Rebecca Standish
Cllr. Mrs. Angela Glass
Cllr. Bill Moulard

Mr Young asked about possible improvements to the roads and station parking. It was stated that roads are the responsibility of HCC and the parking is Network Rail.

In response to a question from Mr Robinson, it was confirmed that EHDC had purchased part of the former OSU site which will be used as employment land.

A number of members of the public raised their concerns about the approval of houses without the necessary roads and infrastructure. It was stated that the Lowsley Farm Phase 2 being considered on 31st March did not include any proposals for roads and therefore nothing could be agreed on the road issues at that meeting.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

General County Council Comments

- This is my final report to the Annual Parish Meeting. I have resigned as the local County Councillor and I anticipate a by election will be held on 5th May, the same day as the Police and Crime Commissioner election.
- Despite differing opinions, the County Council insist that my role ended on the date of my resignation email and that no extension for handover of to conclude outstanding cases, is permitted. This report is delivered to you by me as your former County Councillor.
- The County Council has increased Council Tax by 3.99%. This comprises the maximum increase in “normal” Council Tax without a referendum, of 1.99% and the special opportunity to add a further 2% for Adult Social Care.
- During the year there have been significant reductions in expenditure and reduced manpower resulting in many projects being delayed beyond the original estimates. The Minor Projects Budget, which I made great use of to get highway projects implemented in the area, has been withdrawn from May 2016. The result is a dramatic reduction in improvements achieved for 2015-16 compared with 2014-15.

Main Highway Projects.

As your former County Councillor, I initiated or progressed the following works on your behalf during the year;

The following 2015-16 highway projects have been completed or closed

- Upper Hammer Lane, Bramshott Chase, school walk to Woolmer Hill School. I am really pleased to say that this has been completed. I regard this footpath as one of the achievements of which I am most proud.
- Improved traffic calming signage in Bramshott for the “Bramshott Lanes” network of minor roads.
- Resurfacing Devil’s Lane.
- Many minor queries such as broken fences, incorrect signs, drainage defects, isolated sewage flooding and underpass lights in the footway below the new A3, have all been dealt with.
- Improved school signage for Liphook Federated Schools.

The following projects remain open.

- Speed monitoring on London Road. Awaiting resources.
- Speed and safety monitoring of Burgh Hill Road. Awaiting resources.
- Extended 30mph speed limit on Longmoor Road. Awaiting resources.
- Canada Way Parking Controls, (approved and legal process are in hand.).
- Avenue Road Parking Controls, (approved and legal process are in hand).

Grants from My Devolved Grant Fund.

I have made the following grants locally from my County Council devolved grant budget during 2015-16;

- The Peak Centre, £1,000 to assist with meal costs.
- Peer Production, £650 for a play at Bohunt School about the dangers of drug abuse.
- Age Concern Liphook, £2,000 towards a new mini 'bus.

Cllr. Ferris Cowper
Former Hampshire County Councillor for Grayshott, Headley and Bramshott
and Liphook
20th March 2016

Cllr Cowper led a question and answer session. IN response to concerns expressed about traffic and road problems in the area, Cllr Cowper stated that a new officer, Patrick Bingham had been appointed to deal with strategic traffic problems. He encouraged the council and local residents to contact Mr Bingham with their ideas and concerns as he has the time, expertise and ability to talk with those responsible at HCC. He is also the person to contact regarding the station access.

There was still a lot of concern about roads and congestion and the building of many new houses without the necessary infrastructure. It was felt that when EHDC met to consider proposals, they should insist the infrastructure is in place. Cllr Cowper explained that in large new developments this was possible but smaller developments in compact areas, this is a problem. There is also the additional issue of the SDNPA having responsibility for certain approvals. Cllr Cowper offered to asked his officers to try and pursue a better scheme for the 31st March meeting. Cllr Cowper also stated that there was a lack of funding nationally for roads and the situation in the country generally was set to get worse.

As this was the last meeting that Cllr Cowper would attend as a representative of HCC, the Chairman thanked him on behalf of the council for all his work over the past years on behalf of the community.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Croucher gave an update on the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Garnett had agreed to chair the Steering Group. She was not able to attend this meeting due to some work commitments. The plan development had been slow to start as it was important to have the right people supporting the work or risk it failing. There was a particular need for some younger representative to come forward. It was suggested by a member of the public that the schools should be asked to include something in their newsletters to parents as this could be a potential source of new volunteers.

Meeting Closed at 9.38 pm.