

Report to the Parish Council by District Councillors, Bill Mouland, Rebecca Standish and Glass,
Monday 25th January 2021.

Tony Rudgard, MBE

It is with great sadness that I am beginning our Report with a tribute to Bramshott's oldest resident, and former District Councillor, Tony Rudgard, who died yesterday at the age of 97. Tony could easily be described as being one of the most community spirited residents we have ever had the privilege to know. As a resident of Bramshott for well over half a century, he was actively engaged with the promotion of sport, and facilities, across Bramshott and Liphook, in a role that up until the last three years or so, he was still giving advice upon. He was an active member of the Bramshott and Liphook Preservation Society, Liphook Golf Club, the Bramshott Open Gardens Committee, and President of Bramshott and Liphook Branch of the Conservatives, a title that was bestowed upon him in recognition of the many years of long and active service that he had given to the Party locally.

Tony was one of the instigators of Bramshott Open Gardens, originally created to help swell funds for the repair of St. Mary's, and now much expanded, as a result of which it is able to donate to several different charities and local causes.

As a very long-standing member of the Conservative Party, it was Tony who recruited Mike and I onto the Committee of Bramshott and Liphook Conservatives, alongside Anna, and the late Sam James, who were both District Councillors. In other words, it was Tony who among others, was responsible ultimately, for putting me forward for election as a District Councillor. As a former District Councillor himself, he knew exactly what he was doing, but never divulged the true extent of the commitment!

Tony was an indefatigable, and as Bill says, inimitable, member of the Branch. Always keen to help in whatever way he could, Tony was actively campaigning and leafletting into his late nineties. He put younger members to shame, and I include myself loosely in the term "younger", by staying the course and showing his stamina, often after others had packed up and gone home. He was a loyal supporter of Damian Hinds, who in return was constantly amazed at the contribution that Tony made.

Tony's wife, Jean, died several years ago, and the family planted an oak tree on the island opposite St. Mary's. This will be an enduring memorial to them both, but in particular, a reminder of all that Tony accomplished for the communities of both Bramshott and Liphook, during his long, long, life.

There will be an empty seat round the table, when we can next all meet, and the red wine, sausage rolls and quiche will last a little bit longer. He will be very much missed.

East Hampshire District Council

Leisure

The new Leisure Centre at Whitehill and Bordon stands ready for use. However, although it was opened on the 3rd December, and take up has been strong, it is now closed until able to re-open under Government guidelines. The take up of membership has been strong and its opening sees the culmination of a huge amount of work and a £30 million investment by EHDC in leisure facilities across the District.

Whitehill and Bordon

The regeneration programme continues, despite the lockdown, with construction work progressing across all sites. 724 new homes have been completed across three major development sites and in addition the Makers Market, for up to 17 permanent indoor shops, anticipates opening in April 2021.

The construction of the Green Loop a 7 mile walking and cycling link around the locality connecting the new and existing town, is continuing, with various sections completed or being built in stages. It will form the basis of the Green infrastructure network and provide a high quality, safe and well-signed route which connects the SANG, Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space, and other town green spaces, with residential, employment and town centre areas. The Greed Grid is a secondary network of footpaths and cycle routes, connecting the town to the Green Loop. Both of these areas are expected to be completed later in 2021.

Covid 19 Grants

EHDC continues to facilitate Grant Funding from central Government. The grants cover all periods from November through Tier 4, and into the present lockdown. Details of all available Grants can be found on the EHDC website, www.easthants.gov.uk

Planning

At full Council on the 14th January, members approved a Hybrid approach, with a two year extension to the Plan period, (2017-2038), as outlined in Option 4 of the Council Agenda for that meeting. This means that EHDC can continue with work on the Local Plan, while anticipating any changes being proposed by Government in its White Paper, Planning for the Future. One aspect of the proposals is to move to a more digitised system, which will greatly reduce paperwork produced currently, under the present system. This would be a welcome move away from the accumulation of plans, etc. that accompany each application.

In addition, at full Council, approval was given to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Protocol. EHDC started to collect CIL in 2016, and there is a large sum available, for which applicants can apply. This is top-up funding, and can only be used for the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, to support the development of an area.

Draft Budget

Draft Budget proposals have been presented to all Members, and will go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee tomorrow, then Cabinet and full Council in February, for approval.

District Councillor Grants

Our Grants are now nearly completely used up. However, I still have some of my Green Grant available, which can be used towards a Green project within Bramshott and Liphook. The cut off for applications to be received by EHDC is Friday 26th February, so if there are any Green projects waiting to apply, please contact us as soon as possible.

We have been pleased to be able to reserve £300 each towards the Liphook Food Bank, in order to support the invaluable and much appreciated work that they are doing in support of local families.