



ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR

01 April 2010 – 31 March 2011

Mr Gavin Collins
Chairman Parish Council

Chairman's Report

At the time of going to press, the Council eagerly awaits the outcome of its application for planning permission for allotments at Manor Fields. This is a challenging area of planning law and a very complex issue to resolve as there is also a covenant on the land. The Council appreciates the patience of the Allotments Society as the Council resolves the legal issues before cultivation of the land can begin. The Council is delighted that its application for s106 planning obligations funds for the new skate park at Jubilee Fields has been successful and it is hoped that the skate park can be installed ready for use this summer.

The Council was delighted that the Dauxwood Pre-School were successful in their funding bid and achieved their long term dream of a new pre-school building. The Council agreed to allow them to extend their garden, subject to planning permission, to enable the children to enjoy enhanced outdoor facilities too.

At long last, the building works at the Village Hall are almost complete. The Council agreed this year to the underpinning of the south west corner of the main hall, but the problems were found to be greater than anticipated resulting in more work and costs. However the Village Hall was finally able to install the wheelchair exits to the main hall, including creating a sun terrace in front of the lobby, funded from s106 planning obligations funds.

The Friends of Station Road Gardens continue their work on the gardens and are concentrating their efforts on fundraising following the reinstatement of the project in January 2011.

Development has dominated the Council's agenda this year. At the time of going to press, a planning application for c500 houses is expected by the consortium of developers for land east of Billingshurst following the District Council's consultation on their Interim Statement on Managing Development earlier this year. Nothing has emerged in the consultation to change this Council's viewpoint from vehement objection to further development in Billingshurst.

Tobias Mothe joined the Council as Litter Warden this year and special thanks should be recorded to him for clearing the snow to the doctor's surgery. Cllrs. Grant and Margetts worked hard to ensure the Council's emergency plan was enacted swiftly to assist the efforts of our district and county councils to minimise the disruption caused by the severe weather.

The Council was sorry to lose Mike Bobker this year, as his resignation was within six months of the election, a bye-election could not be demanded and the Council decided not to fill the vacancy by co-option. Thanks should be given to Councillors Barry Barnes and Cliff Griffin who have both served more than 40 years with this Council, and to Councillors Alan Grant and Gillian Yarham who have served for 10 years. I would also like to thank Councillors Helen Abbott, Jake Edsor, Colin Milne and Gillian Yarham and wish them well as they leave the Council this May.

A special thank you from me for the Parish Clerk, Beverley Bell her support to me as the Chairman and to the Council as a whole has been outstanding and allowed the Council to continue to enhance the services it provides whilst also supporting and preparing the Council for the future including changes through from the Localism Bill, regaining Quality Status and obtaining the power of well being as well as supporting the Council in its objection to large scale future development.

As this is the last annual report of the term of this Council, I would like to thank everyone over the last four years who has served on this Council and the contribution they have made to the community of Billingshurst. I would also like to thank the Parish Council staff who provide excellent behind the scenes support to the Council to ensure that our meetings run smoothly and that our property is maintained to high standards.

And finally, the Parish Council achieved Quality Status four years ago, a benchmark of the high standards it has achieved and it is encouraging that 18 people have stood for nomination for the 15 seats on the Council and I wish the future Council well.

Gavin Collins - Chairman

Planning and Environment Committee Report

The Planning and Environment Committee has continued to meet once a month and has commented on approximately 147 planning applications for the parish this year. The Committee had a presentation from Bellway Homes Limited on their application for 55 houses on land at Daux Avenue. The Council strongly objected to this application which was refused by Horsham District Council and has been taken to appeal by the developer. The appeal will be heard by way of Public Inquiry in May 2011.

Andrew Smith of the Housing Department at Horsham District Council and David Standfast, Chief Executive of Saxon Weald, attended the September meeting to talk about affordable housing and the potential to link affordable housing to local people through section 106 agreements. The Committee recommended to the Council that a Housing Needs Survey be produced for Billingshurst, which was agreed and carried out by Action in rural Sussex in late 2010. Unfortunately, the results were not available until mid March 2011, too late for the Council's submission to HDC's Interim Statement consultation.

The Committee objected to the change of use of the shop unit at 16 Jengers Mead for use by the Family Church, as the Committee was concerned at the loss of a retail unit, which was granted despite the Parish Council's and Community Partnership's objections.

The Committee objected to the application for 36 flats at Station Mills as it was over development of the site, and overlooking and overpowering for neighbouring residents. This application was taken to appeal and dismissed. The developer has now submitted an application for 14 houses for this site which the Committee preferred to the flats application and raised no objection.

In December, Mr Richard Cutler and Mr Neil Morris gave a presentation to the Committee on a proposed solar farm at Five Oaks and held an exhibition at the Village Hall in January. In March, Taylor Wimpey held an exhibition on their plans for 67 houses at Godden Land. Simon Baring and Co gave a presentation on possible plans for a live/workspace for the Old Betting Shop at the March meeting. The Committee raised no objection but asked that access be maintained for the dentist next door and flat tenant.

Horsham District Council are still in the process of introducing e-consultation for planning applications which has the potential to increase this Council's costs and make the viewing of plans by members of the public reliant on internet access. The Parish Council remains committed to involving the community in consultation on planning applications and will work hard to ensure no deficiency in the service we provide as a result of changes made by Horsham District Council. The Planning and Environment Committee will continue to meet on the first Thursday of every month.

Property Committee Report

The boundary dispute at Lower Station Road recreation ground was resolved this year with the installation of yellow boundary markers; and the owner of land adjacent to Jubilee Fields has installed stock fencing to prevent his horses straying on to the pitches. Signage was installed at Jubilee Fields notifying users of the Council's byelaws. There have been two break-ins at the sports pavilion this year, little was taken, but the subsequent insurance claims and repairs have been a drain on the time of the volunteers who maintain the facilities for the benefit of the community.

Funds were received from Willmot Dixon for the reinstatement of the former football field at Station Road Gardens following their use of the land for the swimming pool compound. HDC assisted in the appointment of the contractor and the reinstatement works are now complete. The Bowling Club has been permitted temporary access through the gate from the swimming pool access road to the Bowling Club for another year, whilst they seek a permanent access. The Council agreed to the installation of a noticeboard at Station Road Gardens by BAIT and gave permission for the installation of two commemorative benches.

The Committee was extremely disappointed when WSCC cancelled the bus shelter grants scheme this year after inviting applications and hours of work involved, however the scheme has just been re-instated and the Council's application from last year was considered and has been approved for three bus shelters: Five Oaks, Station Road opposite the Infant and Junior School and West Street opposite the Fire Station. The three bus shelters planned for Forge Way should be installed soon, after one shelter location has been moved following local consultation.

The Council had little success locating the owners of failed memorials in St Mary's churchyard and decided to appoint a contractor to make the minimum repairs to render the failed memorials safe. However the Council first had to make an application for a faculty (permission from Diocesan Advisory Committee for the works) and the outcome is awaited. The Cemetery Sub-Committee has suspended its investigations into an extension of St Mary's churchyard whilst the outcome of the Interim Statement consultation by HDC is known, as the consultation for option three 500 houses on land east of Billingshurst included land for a cemetery. The Council organised the re-building of the retaining wall in the south eastern side of the churchyard and re-surfacing of the path.

The Council declined an offer to purchase its land at Willow Drive, as it is an important part of the street scene.

A new lease for the Five Oaks playing field is being finalised.

Investigations continue into the upgrading of the street lighting in East Street. The Council has been approached by some of the traders in the southern end of the High Street with a request to extend the Christmas lighting from outside Budgens to Chapel Corner. The Council has obtained a quotation for the lighting upgrade and

has some reserves for the electrical installation costs, with the traders agreeing to try to fund the capital cost of the scheme from all the traders in the High Street and Jengers Mead.

The leylandii trees at Manor Fields had surgery this year and the Council placed its three yearly gardening contract with Gardencare again following quotation requests.

The Clerk attended the SALC Health and Safety training day in November, and the Clerk and Assistant Clerk continue to conduct quarterly property inspections. Sadly, dog fouling continues to be a problem, particularly in the play area at Cherry Tree Close, but on a more positive note, planning permission and s106 planning obligations funding has been obtained for a new skate park at Jubilee Fields.

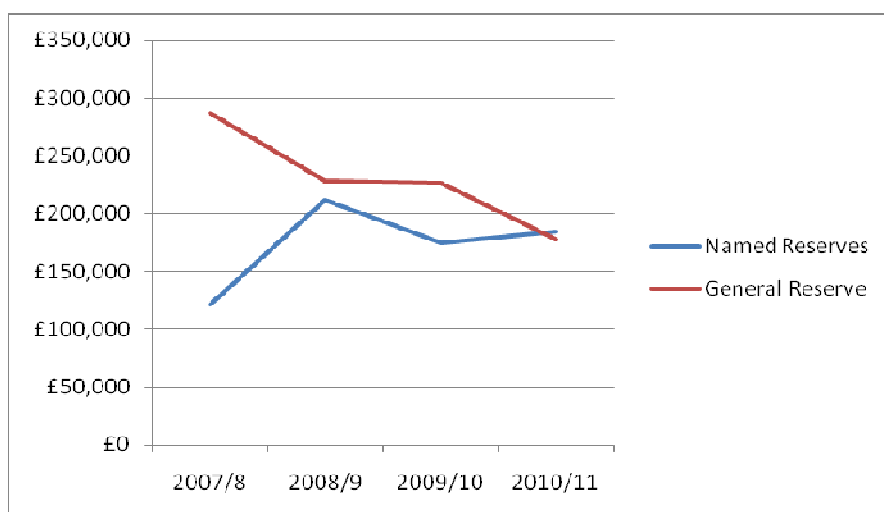
Finance & General Purposes Committee Report

The Finance and General Purposes Committee has closely scrutinised all Council expenditure, resulting in a much tighter budget and less surplus at year end. This has resulted in the general reserve declining, but is more transparent as the Council will need to show in its budget if it wishes to precept for specific projects and to maintain its minimum recommended reserves. As a result, the Council's overall fund holding is reducing year on year from £441,036 as at 31 March 2009, £400,918 as at 31 March 2010 to £362,709 as at 31 March 2011.

The Council's income for the financial year was £311,774 from the precept of £246,481, bank interest of £689, environmental cleansing grant of £14,181 from Horsham District Council and the remainder of the income derived from grants and planning obligations funds.

The Council's expenditure this year was £349,983, including £43,657 spent on grants to the Village Hall for structural repairs and £36,103 to upgrade the street lighting in Natts Lane and Marringdean Road.

The Council's named reserves have decreased from £268,200 at the start of the financial year to £184,930, and the Council's general reserve is £177,779 at year end. This is approaching the minimum contingency the Council should hold in accordance with audit regulations guidance. The Council has set the precept for 2011/12 at £242,214 which equates to £68.94 per annum for a band D Council Tax property and a reduction of 2.1% on 2010/11.



Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2011

31 March 2010 £	INCOME	31 March 2011 £
4,225	Parks and Open Spaces	-2,400
11,013	General Admin	12,823
623	Salaries	35
21,157	Highways	17,147
2	Public Lighting	1
248,496	Precept	246,481
2,243	Interest	689
12,214	One Off	34,131
4,107	VAT	2,867
0	POSB	0
304,080		311,774
	EXPENDITURE	
41,005	Parks and Open Spaces	37,795
50,775	General Admin	45,616
117,705	Salaries	122,505
20,295	Village Hall	20,372
3,231	Highways	4,004
3,523	Public Lighting	2,728
2,275	s137	3,866
8,950	Election	0
98,439	One Off	113,096
344,198		349,983
	General Fund	
	Balance B/Fwd 01/04/10	400,918
	Add Income	311,774
	Deduct Expenditure	349,983
	General Fund 31/03/11	362,709

Reserves as at 31 March 2011

Reserve	Amount
Open Spaces	£2,700
Cemetery	£6,000
Memorials	£4,313
Village Hall	£6,344
Station Road Gardens	£42,000
Civil Emergency	£1,200
Street lights	£35,897
Play Equipment	£16,000
Skate Park	£19,915
Bus Shelters	£6,925
Allotments	£8,258
Planning	£11,379
IT	£0
Christmas Lights	£3,000
Billifest	£0
Community Event	£3,000
Toilets	£6,000
Trespass Legal Fees	£2,000
Football Field	£10,000
Named Reserves	
Totals	£184,930
General	£177,779
	£362,709

Donations were made to the following local organisations this year:

Date	Organisation	Amount
26/05/2010	Victim Support Sussex	£50.00
15/12/2010	Billingshurst Community Transport	£1,000.00
15/12/2010	Billingshurst Community Partnership	£1,800.00
27/01/2011	Royal British Legion	£16.50
24/11/2010	Billingshurst Village Hall - Rem Day	£34.97
01/03/2011	St Marys Church (lighting)	£140.00
26/05/2010	West Sussex Association for the Blind	£50.00
24/08/2020	Unitarian Chapel	£75.00
24/08/2010	W Sx Rural Mobile Youth Trust	£50.00
01/03/2011	West Sussex Mediation Service	£100.00
01/03/2011	Just Different	£50.00
26/05/2010	Girl Guides	£100.00
27/10/2010	Billingshurst Football Club	£350.00
01/03/2011	Disability Awareness	£50.00
		£3,866.47

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Council has processed five requests this year.

For the coming financial year, the Council will need to address its financial commitments over the life of the next Council using the Five Year Finance Plan presented by the Clerk to the Committee in September 2010.

Billingshurst Parish Council at 31 March 2011

Chairman: Mr Gavin Collins **Clerk:** Mrs Beverley Bell
Vice-Chairman: Mr Paul Berry **Deputy Clerk:** Mrs Wendy Wright

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Parish Councillors 31 March 2011		
Mrs H. A. Abbott	White Cottage, Stane Street, Five Oaks	01403 783577
Mr B. L. Barnes	13 Carpenters, Billingshurst	01403 780660
Mr P.M. Berry	8 Nightingale Walk, Billingshurst	07881 825517
Mr S. N. Buck	66 Arun Road, Billingshurst	01403 782599
Mr G. R. Collins	3 Cranham Avenue, Billingshurst	07912 368805
Mr D. Duke	19 Wicks Road, Billingshurst	07775 811559
Mr J. H. Edsor	Penfold, Parbrook, Billingshurst	07760 255433
Mr A. C. Grant	Tanners Cottage, Lordings Road, Adversane	01403 784165
Mr C. P. H. Griffin	Smithy House, Stane Street, Five Oaks	07803 908695
Mr D. A. K. Homer	24 Coombe Hill, Billingshurst	01403 782824
Mr R. M. Margetts	47 Coombe Hill, Billingshurst	01403 784487
Mr C. Milne	8 Rosehill, Billingshurst	01403 785205
Mr D. F. Rands	62 Arun Road, Billingshurst	01403 783551
Mrs G. Yarham	9 Carpenters, Billingshurst	01403 782282

The Council was formed in 1894. There are currently 14 Parish Councillors and one vacancy. The next Parish Council elections are on 05 May 2011.

The **full Council** meets the first Wednesday of each month and has the following Committees:-

Planning and Environment meets monthly
Property meets monthly
Finance and General Purposes meets monthly
Working Practices meets every other month
Station Road Gardens
Allotments
Complaints
Parish Plan

Each standing Committee includes the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council. The Council's Chairman and Vice-Chairman, together with membership of Committees are elected in May of each year at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

The Council has four Sub-Committees:- Cemetery, Christmas Lights, Bank Reconciliation and Budget and Working Parties: Bus Shelters, Neighbourhood Wardens, Quality Status, Skate Park, Newsletter, Emergency Planning and Parking Strategy.