



ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 2016 –2017

Cllr Paul Berry, Chairman of the Council

Once again it has been a very busy year for the Council.

We started the year with 14 **COUNCILLORS** and one vacancy. Following the resignation of Cllr Natalie Van de Braam, we co-opted Jon Perks and Sarah Wilson, as no election was called. As a result of them coming forward, we are now up to full strength.

On **STAFFING**, Beverley Bell our Clerk moved onto new pastures and we welcomed Greg Burt. Tobias Mothe, our popular Litter Warden will be leaving shortly and we are currently recruiting.

Our Councillors, who all give of their time freely, supported by Officers, run much of the day to day affairs of the Council through our **COMMITTEES** which all meet in public and to which anyone is always welcome to attend.

The **PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT** Committee continues to see a year-on-year increase in the number of applications to be considered and it has often been necessary for the Committee to meet twice-monthly in order to meet the strict deadlines set by Horsham District Council (HDC).

Over the past year it has considered 119 planning applications. The Committee did not object to six which were subsequently refused, and objected to 19 which were subsequently approved. Amongst this 19 were a development of 45 houses on land near to the GP Surgery, reserved matters applications for the 475 dwellings on land East of Billingshurst, the development of 87 dwellings on land at Kingslea Farm and 51 dwellings on land south of Marringdean Acres.

Decisions are awaited on applications for commercial development on land at Brinsbury campus and 14 dwellings on land currently occupied by Little Gillmans Cottage, Marringdean Road.

Continuing the planning theme, our **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING** Committee, upon which sit representatives of several partner organisations, has been working very hard, meeting monthly in addition to an ambitious program of very successful consultation events required to give our evolving plan the necessary community legitimacy. Throughout last summer and autumn, Councillors and

volunteers attended many events in the village, asking residents for their views, which continued in the New Year with four very well-attended events, 3 here at the Billingshurst Centre and one at Adversane. This information is being shaped into a *Vision and Objectives Statement* and actual policies which will be consulted upon further.

We received many submissions in response to our *Call for Sites* from land owners and would-be-developers. Many of these sites will probably be discounted as they will fail the key sustainability test. Of those that remain, we hope that some will be able to deliver some key new facilities identified by the community, in addition to the housing which all too often seems to be the price we have to pay for such facilities. Residents are asked to remember that the Neighbourhood Plan can't be used to necessarily stop development, but guide that development which we are obliged to have. We can't stop change but we can try to manage it to the community's benefit. We are very grateful to all residents who have responded to this ongoing project. Whilst I don't tend to like mentioning individuals on these occasions for fear of missing someone out, I am sure there would be universal support for thanking our Vice Chairman, Lesley Wilding for the unbelievable amount of work she has put in to this project, by way of the laborious task of number-crunching the hundreds of responses, which are on our website for all to see, into a meaningful format.

The **PROPERTY** Committee oversees the management of the Council's various sites and other equipment and street furniture in the Council's care. It too has been very busy over the past 12 months:

At Jubilee Fields:

- faded white lining in the car park was refreshed;
- the rope-climb trim trail equipment was replaced;
- non-slip surfacing was installed to the fishing lake pontoons;
- successful grant funding in the sum of £7,500 enabled significant improvements to the wooden skate ramp;
- emergency ditch clearances were undertaken;
- after ten long years of waiting, the land-transfer from HDC to the Parish Council has taken place;
- this transfer has allowed for the lease between the Parish Council and Billingshurst Sports & Recreation Association (BSRA) to be finalised.

At Station Road Gardens:

- last autumn, the Committee updated the Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of Station Road Gardens (FOG) and continues to work with the group in maintaining and improving the site;
- there have been close negotiations with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and the Weald School to get repairs carried out to the fencing that borders Council land; these works have just been completed and include the provision of a new pedestrian gate.

At Lower Station Road Recreation Ground:

- over the course of the coming months, it is hoped to progress the replacement of the bridge and combined access/gateway improvement projects.

Elsewhere:

- the committee was invited to provide HDC with a list of Community Priorities last summer. Following consultation with local groups and organisations, a list of upcoming and future projects in the parish was passed on.
- further funding was secured of almost £50,000 to upgrade and improve the public toilets in Mill Way, which should commence this year.
- we are inviting sponsorship of our High Street planters this summer. This is an opportunity for local businesses to promote their names to a wider audience at the same time as showing their support for the local community.
- unfortunately, the Diocese of Chichester's Church Buildings Council refused to permit the installation of a new electronic winder at St Mary's Church, to be funded by the Parish Council, pending funds being amassed for the more expensive repair of the historic winding mechanism. This means that the Parish Council will no longer be providing any further support to the maintenance or future repair of the clock.
- commitment has been secured from BT for the repair and repainting of the Listed red telephone box next to the Sorting Office in the High Street.
- Last summer saw the distribution of a brand new Parish Guide, funded entirely by advertising.
- finally, much positive feedback was received for the new Christmas lights, following the commencement of a three-year contract; we hope to be able to improve the scheme further as funds permit.

The **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES** Committee continues to keep a close eye on the Council's finances, about which the Clerk will report on in detail separately.

It also looks at highway issues, particularly traffic calming which seems to remain a priority for local residents; last year we put forward several schemes to WSCC and have made some progress. They have agreed to take forward schemes to slow traffic in Stane Street by The Alders; for a footway in Marringdean Road, and for lighting across the bridge leading from the village to Jubilee Fields. Agreement is nearly in place for new gateway features at Five Oaks. Hopes for speed-activated flashing light devices at other locations are progressing more slowly, as we may need to commission traffic data surveys for WSCC to permit such signs, even if someone else is paying for them. We lobbied for the 40MPH speed limit at Adversane to be extended further south to cover Brinsbury College, but this it seems is yet to be determined. Unfortunately, a request for a parking survey for the High Street was declined

In February, the Council decided to try to encourage locals to set up a Community Speedwatch scheme in Billingshurst and we will be publicising this soon.

The Council, working with the Flood Action Group continues to take a close interest in all drainage matters and will be progressing further *Operation Watershed*-funded projects in due course.

The Council continues to fund regular youth sessions in the village, in a tri-partnership with Horsham Matters and Pulborough Parish Council. It also supports other voluntary organisations in the village by way of our **GRANTS** program and in 2016-17 awarded the following:

Applicant	2016-17
Victim Support Sussex	50.00
Age UK	1,000.00
Central & South Sussex CAB	100.00
St Catherines Hospice	100.00
Billingshurst Community Partnership Luncheon Club	600.00
Billingshurst Community Transport	1,000.00
West Sussex Mediation Service	125.00
Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance	200.00
HomeStart	50.00
	3,225.00

The Council welcomes grant applications at any time of year, and we have just approved a new Grants Policy which should ensure consistency in the ways we consider applications.

We are often consulted on larger more strategic documents being prepared by other councils and in doing so, try to champion Billingshurst's corner when given the opportunity. In the last year we have been consulted on HDC's Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule and Economic Development Plan.

We raised concerns about the changes in opening hours at the Household Waste Recycling Site and more recently, HDC's changes in rural car parking charges; the Council was very disappointed that HDC seem to have ignored local businesses, the public and our concerns. For the sake of our local businesses, we do hope that our concerns are proved wrong.

The Parish Council continues to try its best to communicate with its residents using different media such as a page in the monthly Village Tweet, Facebook, Twitter and website. We are always happy to consider further suggestions.

The **BILLINGSHURST CENTRE COMMITTEE** continues to meet monthly to oversee the Billingshurst Centre of which the Parish Council is the Sole Managing Trustee (and meets as Trustee approximately 3 times per year.)

Daily management is left to Manager Norma Sullivan supported by an excellent team. Satisfaction amongst hirers continues to rise, which is also reflected in the accounts where income is set to exceed operational expenditure once again. Several improvements have been undertaken, most notably new curtains, tables and chairs, which have all been funded through Section 106 contributions.

A fuller version of this report will be put on the Council's website but in closing may I thank all Councillors and staff, both inside and out for all their hard work and support over the last year, and on that note, I am happy to take any questions.

Billingshurst Parish Council at 31 March 2017

Chairman	Cllr Paul Berry	Clerk	Mr Greg Burt
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Mrs Lesley Wilding	Office Manager	Mrs Liz Berry
		Assistant Clerk	Miss Jo Booth
		Office Admin	Mrs Sarah Meyer
		Litter Wardens	
			Haydn Beaumont + 1 Vacancy

Council Offices
Billingshurst Centre
Roman Way
Billingshurst
West Sussex
RH14 9QW

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Fax 01403 787699
Email council@billingshurst.gov.uk
Website: www.billingshurst.gov.uk
Facebook: [@BillingshurstParishCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/BillingshurstParishCouncil)
Twitter: [@BillingshurstPC](https://twitter.com/BillingshurstPC)

Parish Council as at 31 March 2017		
Cllr Barry Barnes	13 Carpenters, Billingshurst	01403 780660
Cllr Paul Berry	8 Nightingale Walk, Billingshurst	07437 287241
Cllr Garry Commins	130 Forge Way, Billingshurst	01403 780527
Cllr Adam Du-Lieu	110 High Street, Billingshurst. RH14 9QS	07835 935 064
Cllr Alan Grant	Tanners Cottage, Lordings Road, Adversane	01403 784165
Cllr Dave Homer	24 Coombe Hill, Billingshurst	01403 782824
Cllr Joe Horwood	32a High Street Billingshurst RH14 9PF	07539 953800
Cllr Miss Sue Kingston	15 Daux Avenue, Billingshurst	01403 782820
Cllr Paul Leaney	11 Rowan Drive, Billingshurst	01403 783812
Cllr Roy Margetts	47 Coombe Hill, Billingshurst	01403 784487
Cllr Andrew Pearson	Denecroft, Little East Street, Billingshurst	01403 782080
Cllr Jon Perks	6 Hawthorn Way, Billingshurst	07863 336 999
Cllr Ken Peters	31 Saddlers Close, Billingshurst	01403 780371
Cllr Mrs Lesley Wilding	26 Carpenters, Billingshurst	01403 783192
Cllr Mrs Sarah Wilson	37 Carpenters, Billingshurst	01403 786271

15 Councillors
0 vacancies
Next Parish elections May 2019.

The **Full Council** meets on the first Wednesday of every other month and has the following Committees:

Planning and Environment	meets at least monthly
Property	meets bi-monthly
Finance and General Purposes	meets monthly
Billingshurst Centre	meets monthly
Working Practices	meets bi-monthly
Neighbourhood Plan Steering	meets monthly

REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

Copies of Section 2 Annual Return for 2015-16 have been circulated/attached; these are the most recent audited accounts for the Council. As the 2016-17 year only ended 5 days ago, you will appreciate that limited figures are available. However, draft income and expenditure is as follows:

Income & Expenditure Accounts			
31 March 2016		INCOME	31 March 2017
£			£
0		Parks and Open Spaces	1,727
7,069		General Admin	10,296
0		Salaries	-
26,425		Highways	17,304
214		Public Lighting	5
248,589		Precept	280,790
10,955		CTR Grant	6,572
442		Interest	440
35,065		One Off / To Reserves	27,650
328,759			344,784
		EXPENDITURE	
42,479		Parks and Open Spaces	52,489
33,387		General Admin	65,184
141,736		Salaries	107,399
20,295		Village Hall	20,296
5,332		Highways	2,820
3,462		Public Lighting	3,878
5,865		s137	3,007
0		Election	-
51,639		One Off - From Reserves	18,957
994		VAT bfwd	-
305,188			274,030
23,571		Net Income	70,754

Points to highlight are:

1. As I say, these are only draft based on Receipts and Payments, not Income and Expenditure which is what the final accounts will reflect.
2. Income is up, due of course to the increase in precept;
3. Expenditure is down, due in part to a period when the Council was without a Clerk;
4. The Council did not undertake a project to provide Community Wardens;
5. Several applications for Section 106 monies were obtained to meet the costs of various projects, which would otherwise have been funded from the Council's own balances. These are shown as so-called *one-offs*.

Looking to the year ahead:

The Council Tax Reduction Grant received from the Government via Horsham District Council is being reduced from £6,572.00 to £1,315.00.

As mentioned above, the Council didn't take forward the Community Warden Scheme and as such, has resolved to return the amount in its entirety taken from Council Tax Payers last year to fund the scheme, honouring a pledge made at the time.

Thus the amount that the Parish Council will be collecting from Council Tax Payers in this new financial year will be £258,408, a reduction of £22,308 or 7.97%.

In terms of what it will mean in Council Tax bills, a typical Band D property will see a reduction from £76.63 to £67.72, a decrease of 11.62%. Unfortunately whilst we will be putting your money back in one of your pockets, West Sussex County and Horsham District Councils and Sussex Police will be taking from the other due to increases in their respective precepts.

The Council looks to save money where it can, recently changing to both cheaper photocopier and phone suppliers, holding slightly less meetings and making more use of e-mail rather than post.

The Council is only in a position to undertake significant projects where the majority if not all funds can be secured from grants and other sources.

The measures outlined above show that the Council is prudently managing its finances to ensure that it is able to continue to afford to provide local services on your behalf, for the very best value possible.

I am of course very happy to take any questions.

G C Burt
05/04/2017

Section 2 – Accounting statements 2015/16 for

Enter name of smaller authority here:

BILLINGSHURST PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance				
	31 March 2015 £	31 March 2016 £					
1. Balances brought forward	326083	349678	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records. Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.				
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	217914	248589	Total amount of precept or (for IDBs) rates and levies received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.				
3. (+) Total other receipts	191886	98698	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.				
4. (-) Staff costs	137631	141736	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.				
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	20257	20257	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the smaller authority's borrowings (if any).				
6. (-) All other payments	228317	161723	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).				
7. (=) Balances carried forward	349678	373249	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)				
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	252197	369911	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March. – To agree with bank reconciliation.				
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1480890	1464787	The original Asset and Investment Register value of all fixed assets, plus other long term assets owned by the smaller authority as at 31 March.				
10. Total borrowings	182892	172442	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).				
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		Yes	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Council acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.
Yes	No						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2016 the accounting statements in this annual return present fairly the financial position of this smaller authority and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer

[Signature]

Date 25/4/2016

I confirm that these accounting statements were approved by this smaller authority on this date:

04 05 2016

and recorded as minute reference:

127/16 (6)

Signed by Chair of the meeting approving these accounting statements.

[Signature]

Date 4/5/16