



LOXWOOD Parish Council ~ Newsletter ~

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish Council meets in the Church Room on the first Monday of each month. Chris Dunton, our County Councillor, Brian Hooton our District Councillor and PC Phil Hanlon, as well as several members of the public, have attended our recent meetings.

Two local residents, Sacha Pawley and Elizabeth Dugdale, have been co-opted to membership of the Parish Council. We now have our full complement of 9 Councillors. Vacancies do occur from time to time as people move away from the Village, and any local residents who may be interested in standing for the Council in the future should contact the Clerk to find out more about the work of the Parish Council.

The Council and local residents continue to be concerned about the state of local roads. At the start of the year Parish Councillors inspected every public highway in the Parish and compiled a list of necessary repairs. A recent problem has been the restriction on the main road at the Onslow Arms, for work to the canal crossing. As a consequence, large numbers of vehicles have been using Drungewick Lane as a diversion, and the verges in this very narrow rural

road have suffered considerable damage. All these points were discussed with a senior officer from West Sussex County Highways, who came to meet members of the Parish Council at the end of January.

You may in fact have noticed that the Parish Council has finally managed to get County Highways to delete directions to Guildford via the B2133 through the village, from a number of signs in the region.

The Council also ensured that we were at "the top of the list" for emergency pot hole repairs early on this year and continues to monitor the state of local roads. We will, as ever, press for long term improvements and for prompt remedial action wherever and whenever necessary.

Speeding traffic and road safety are still major worries. We have been in contact with Inspector Jim Bartlett of the Sussex Police, who is keen to use Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) at sites across the district where speeding concerns have been raised. As and when necessary, police officers could be deployed to conduct police enforcement. They are seeking to purchase a small number of SIDs and to encourage parish groups to sup-

port the scheme and purchase SIDs. The Council intends to put up a new notice board in the Village to improve communication with residents. Some people have told us that they did not realise the Parish Council had a notice board on the wall of the Post Office, or that agendas for meetings and other notices were displayed in the 3 bus shelters in the Parish. We intend to locate the new board where as many people will see it as possible. We also hope that part of the cost might be covered under the District Council's grants scheme.

The Parish Council also discussed the low-level but irritating incidence of anti-social behaviour in the Village, especially around North Hall and at the Surgery in Farm Close. PC Hanlon again stressed the importance of reporting all such incidents to the police so that they can build up a picture of problems throughout the district, and identify local "hotspots" where they might need

to concentrate their resources.

A special Parish Council meeting was held in North Hall just before Christmas to consider a planning application to build 20 new houses on the Hall House Farm site in Guildford Road, in the middle of the Village. The meeting was attended by a good number of local residents and there was overwhelming support for the Parish Council's opposition to the application on several grounds, including the density and character of the new houses, the increase in local traffic, and the inadequacy of the local infrastructure to support development on this scale. The Clerk was instructed to notify the District Council's Planning Officers of the objections and to advise our District and County Councillors accordingly.

Agendas and minutes for Parish Council meetings are available from the Clerk or on the Village Website. Go to www.loxwood.org and follow the links

CHANGE OF PRINTER

As you will have noticed, the format of the Loxwood Parish Council Newsletter has changed since the last issue. This is a permanent change and coincides

with the decision to switch publishers, partly because of lack of control concerning the layout and delivery, but also to reduce postage costs.

PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET 2008/9

The Council has drafted its budget for 2008/9 based on what the Council might reasonably expect to achieve in the year. So provision for traffic calming and control measures have been taken out of the budget, as both the Police and County Highways have told us that there is no realistic prospect of installing flashing speed signs in the Village. The reported accident record is not serious enough to warrant such measures and it was agreed to ask residents to make a

point of reporting accidents, serious or otherwise, to the Police. If the Parish Council does decide to go ahead with a Speedwatch scheme, using a speed indicator device (SID), the cost can be met from existing reserves.

Provision has also been made for a cost of living increase to the Clerk's salary and to other routine running costs, for paying a members' allowance and for alternative arrangements for producing

the Newsletter.

The Council is in the process of acquiring a small area of amenity land in Station Road and has budgeted funds for initial clearance of this overgrown site, and keeping it clean and tidy thereafter.

Repairs to the children's playground at North Hall should have been carried out by the time you receive this, and additional funds have been set aside in the budget for further work in 2008/9.

The balance in hand includes reserves of £13,500 earmarked for grant aid for work to North Hall. The Hall Management Committee is considering whether to carry out a survey of the building to identify necessary remedial work, and it seems likely that this will identify a large number of much-needed (and probably

costly) repairs. See later article on North Hall.

Through careful budgeting, the Parish Council has managed to keep its precept – the funds the Parish Council receives from the total council tax levied in the Parish - unchanged at £28,000. For the average band D taxpayer this is equivalent to £37.69 for the whole year – less than 73p a week. In terms of the total council tax demand, this is a tiny proportion compared with the amounts levied by the County and District Councils and the Police Authority.



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2008

All local residents are invited to attend the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Loxwood, which will be held at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 15th April 2008 in the North Hall, Guildford Road, Loxwood. Light refreshments will be available from 7 pm and after the meeting.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Alison Sanderson, will preside. It is intended that the whole event will close no later than 9 pm.

We are adopting a slightly different format this year. For a start, we intend to restrict the formal business to a minimum. This will consist of the Chairman's report on Parish Council activities over the year, the Clerk's financial report, followed by an opportunity for local residents to ask questions about Parish

matters.

Then, instead of inviting local organisations to make a *formal* report on their activities over the past year, we are suggesting that they might publicise their activities with displays in the Hall. There will be opportunities both before and after the formal business for residents to chat with local groups, and with Parish Councillors.

This is your chance to find out what the Parish Council has been doing, and to tell them about anything that concerns you as a resident of Loxwood.

The Chairmen of the County and District Councils will also be invited to attend, and they will no doubt be interested to hear of any local matters which

might concern them.

We look forward to welcoming you to the meeting.

LOXWOOD PARISH COUNCIL - 70 YEARS OLD

Local democracy has long held a firm place in Loxwood, and the Parish Council still continues to play an important role in fighting for the local concerns of its electorate.

Their first meeting was held in North Hall on Thursday 21st April 1938, following the decision to create a new separate Parish due to the increase in size of the village. Prior to that, Loxwood had been part of the Wisborough Green Parish.

Undoubtedly times have changed over the intervening 70 years, but certain themes and concerns are as important to Loxwood residents today as they were then. For example the minutes of that first meeting record that amongst other matters, the Council considered the following:

- “The provision of a separate policeman in Loxwood” – rejected by the Chief Constable!
- Concern over the Ministry of Health’s slow implementation of the District Council’s Water Scheme.
- A question regarding an obstructed Right of Way at Pigbush Lane.
- An unsafe bridge on common land near the School.
- The Clerk was instructed to “ascertain the exact position with regard to the proposed electricity supply for Loxwood” and to enquire “as to the legal position with regard to the Loxwood Recreation Ground”. Both

of which were to be reported on at the next meeting.

Later minutes indicate continued efforts on the part of the Council to speed up the Water Scheme and to get the District Council to prepare a Sewerage Scheme.

The old minutes make fascinating reading, particularly during the war years, when alongside the usual concerns the impact of the war was felt.

- In December 1939 for example, the minutes refer specifically to problems with staffing arrangements at County slowing down requests from Loxwood, due to the “existing war conditions”.
- In October 1940 the Parish Council sought compensation for damage to the surface of the Recreation Ground as a “result of damage by enemy action by reason of bombs”.
- In January 1941, Mr CM Taylor, the Clerk had be replaced temporarily as he was called up for Military Service.

The minutes provide a wealth of interesting information, although obviously far too much to detail here. They not only provide an accurate account of what was said and done by the Council on behalf of the residents of Loxwood, but also they provide us with a fascinating insight into the concerns of the day.



LOXWOOD HISTORY

In future issues of the Newsletter we would like to include a few short articles about the history of Loxwood (which appears on historic maps from the 17th Century). If any residents have any infor-

mation which they think would be of interest to others, such as old photographs, interesting documents or personal stories please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Clerk.

FLOODING

We are aware that some members of the Parish have been affected by flood-related problems as a result of the recent bouts of heavy rain. It seems likely that there may be other people who have suffered similar problems but who have not contacted the Council. Please inform the Parish Clerk as it is vital that we know where problem areas exist, so that the long term situation can be rectified.

Emergency Floodline: 0845 988 1188;
Email: southern.hampshireandwight@environment-agency.gov.uk



HEDGE TRIMMING

Do you have a hedge next to a pavement or public path? If so, it is essential that the hedge is cut well back so as to provide easy access for pedestrians. An overly large hedge that sticks out into the path could mean that in order to get past, pedestrians need to walk in the road, which could cause a severe accident. Or there is the possibility that a passer by may be scratched or poked in

the eye.

If a hedge obstructs the highway or footpath, County Highways can insist that it is cut back. If it is not, they may do the work themselves and charge the householder. It is therefore easier to both parties if you keep the hedge back. As March is towards the end of the pruning season, you may need to check for bird's nests before you begin.

LOXWOOD SOCIETY

Following the publication of the Hall Hurst Farm planning proposals in mid-December, a public meeting was hurriedly organised at North Hall. Around 75 people attended, indicating the interest in the potential development of this important site in the village. A lively debate took place about the pros and cons and residents were urged to send their own particular views to Chichester Dis-

trict Council. Those attending the meeting voted unanimously to object to the development. Accordingly the Loxwood Society sent a letter to CDC .

The Society is working with the Stop Dunsfold New Town Campaign and will monitor future progress.

PLAYGROUND RENOVATION

Good news for parents with young children - the playground situated to the side of North Hall should have been renovated during February. This will have included restoration of the play equipment to comply with current health and safety standards, and complete replacement of the existing deteriorated wood chip, with new bark. In view of continuing uncertainty over the future of the Hall itself (possible rebuild, extensions, refurbishment), the Council decided that it

made sense at this time simply to carry out routine repairs rather than large scale improvements.

We do hope that this will encourage more enjoyable use of the play area by both children and their parents.



HOMESHARE SCHEME OPERATING IN WEST SUSSEX

West Sussex is pioneering a scheme in which older people provide a much-needed home to people who give them help and support in return.

There are many older people living alone in the County whose family and friends are too far away to give them the help, companionship and security they need. At the same time the high cost of housing has made it difficult for people such as care workers, teachers or students to find suitable accommodation.

Called Homeshare, this is a scheme where a householder offers a homesharer free accommodation in exchange for an agreed level of help with daily tasks such as cooking, cleaning or gardening as well as companionship. It allows the homesharer to save money by not paying rent and allows them to live in an area they might not otherwise have been able to afford.

Homeshare puts the householder and

the worker in touch with each other. Before a match is made and homesharing takes place, the Homeshare Co-ordinator interviews and checks both parties. It's only when they are sure that both parties will be suitable for the arrangement that they are introduced to each other. The Co-ordinator also provides ongoing help, support and advice to both parties.

West Sussex is one of only two areas in the country which have been selected for this pilot scheme. The scheme is funded and run by the National Association of Adult Placement Services (NAAPS) in partnership with Adults' Services. It will be evaluated by Oxford Brookes University.

Anyone interested in homesharing or who wishes to gain further information should contact Dawn Blake, the Homeshare Co-ordinator:

Telephone: 07738 641897 or E-Mail: dawn.blake@westsussex.gov.uk

NORTH HALL – QUESTIONNAIRE

You should have found a questionnaire regarding North Hall, enclosed with this issue of the Newsletter. As we have mentioned previously, major decisions have to be made regarding the future of the Village Hall, and the Management Committee has asked that these surveys be circulated to all homes in the village, so that everyone can put forward their view as to the best way to proceed.

The Committee believes that renovating and extending the existing building is the best way forward. If you hold other views now is the time to make them known. What is needed from you is help prioritising what should be included and improved upon to take the facilities into the 21st Century.

As you will appreciate, any such undertaking will involve a lot of hard work, and any offers of help no matter how small, would be gratefully received.

Please take time to fill in the form, and return it in the addressed envelope provided, or drop it in one of the boxes placed in Loxwood Post Office or John Murray and Son, the Butcher.

They are asking for a response from you within a week if possible.



WEY & ARUN CANAL TRUST - UPDATE

We are pleased to tell you that, after many agonising delays, the bridge/tunnel under the B2133 is finally being built. The road is now open for single-lane working, controlled by traffic lights, for light vehicles only (up to 7.5 tons). The closure was to allow the contractor to place piles, up to 12 metres long, which will form the vertical sides of the bridge. In all, the design calls for 142 of these piles. That, fortunately, is all behind us.

The next stage will be that the ground between the piles will be removed about 10ft down, the piles will be cut down and a pile cap put on them with the walling to form the side of the bridge seen from the canal. The pre-stressed beams are then lifted in and covered with the road construction.

The whole business is then repeated on the other side of the road. The plan is to do the eastern portal first.

At the moment the work is rather unspectacular as it is mostly underground; the next big photo opportunities will be, when the first beams forming the horizontal part of the bridge are lifted into place. We are expecting the BBC to visit shortly to film the work in progress.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused and we thank all the local residents for their co-operation and support during this time. For news updates, please see our website www.weyandarun.co.uk and click on the "B2133" icon on the home page.

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

There are 9 **Members of the Parish Council**: Alison Sanderson (Chairman), David Townsend (Vice-Chairman), Elizabeth Dugdale, Mirus Kuszel, Sacha Pawley, Priscilla Phillips, Scott Taylor, Howard Thomas and Charlie Whitmarsh.

The **Parish Clerk** is Peter Evans: 12 Weald Court, Station Road, Billingshurst, RH14 9RS. Tel: 01798 812026, e-mail: loxwoodpc@yahoo.co.uk. If you wish to contact the Parish Council, please address all correspondence, whether letter or e-mail, to the Parish Clerk.

Parish Council minutes and agendas are available from the Clerk, preferably by e-mail, or on the Loxwood village website: www.loxwood.org

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Chichester District Council: East Pallant House, 1 East Pallant, Chichester, PO19 1TY. Tel: 01243 785166. **Website**: www.chichester.gov.uk

West Sussex County Council: County Hall, West Street, Chichester, PO19 1RQ. Tel: 01243 777100. **Website**: www.westsussex.gov.uk

24-hour information line: 0845 758 1232.

Countryside services, footpaths, bridleways: 01243 777620.

Highways repairs and maintenance, pavements, grass cutting: 01243 642105.

Police: emergencies: 999, non-emergencies: 0845 60 70 999.

Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111.

Newsletter articles: any local clubs or societies who would like to publicise their activities, or individuals wishing to submit articles for the Newsletter should contact the Parish Clerk on: 01798 812026, e-mail: loxwoodpc@yahoo.co.uk. We reserve the right to edit material, and we cannot accept political material.

Advertising: any businesses wishing to advertise in the Newsletter should contact the Parish Clerk on:

01798 812026, or

email:

loxwoodpc@yahoo.co.uk

