

Streatfeild had to resign from the parish council at the end of 2008. Mr Stockton thanked him for his hard work during his period of office. He welcomed the co-option to the council Mrs Kathryn Coyle who will be a real asset to the team. Mr Stockton went on to explain that NFDC policies & plans have most direct effect on the village though cognisance must be taken of the New Forest National Park Plan which went through its initial consultation phase last year & work is still continuing on this document by the working group prior to final approval. We must be aware of any measures which could affect Sandleheath residents eg development & highways proposals. The Sandleheath Village Plan continues to be our reference document & alongside similar documents from other towns & villages feeds into both district & county council plans. The Village Design statement was not endorsed by NFDC but is now currently being redrafted in respect of certain elements but not to change the overall emphasis but greater explanation. This work is being undertaken by Mr Fenn.

Planning & Housing

The overall number of planning applications considered in the year has been low & this is in line with the current national economic situation & this trend is expected to continue through 2009.

In respect of affordable housing with the assistance of Gordon Richardson, of Community Action Hampshire, it was agreed to hold a new housing needs survey in late 2008, bearing mind the previous survey was held in 2003. Of the 230 questionnaires distributed 82 were processed (a 36% response). It showed that 13 respondents were in need of separate accommodation (4 of these being required in the next 2 years). Some 66% of those replying were in favour of a small affordable housing development with 34% against, an increase over the small majority recorded in 2003. Currently we are seeking clarification before acceptance of the survey report is put to a council meeting. No new site options have been identified for affordable housing within the village boundary.

Highways

The parish council have been very successful in their liaison with Hampshire Highways in addressing specific concerns regarding potholes & drainage. Developing problems at the entrance to Old Brickyard Rd & the industrial estate have recently been identified & reported. The street name signs for Old Brickyard Rd & the directional sign on main road pointing to the industrial estate have finally been replaced as have the white line marking & edge markers in Alderholt Rd. Thanks to Mr Fenn & the Clerk in their liaison with the Hampshire Highways Superintendent (Bob Brown) more work has been done on drain clearance. Periodic flooding in Scats Lane & the need for a replacement system at the top of Alderholt Rd are still of concern.

Speeding is still a significant area of concern for villagers & following the deployment of SIDs & proof that nearly 50% of vehicles were exceeding the speed limit we have pushed for early implementation of the 30mph along Main Road & Rockbourne Rd. This effort has been successful & as from the 5th May the Main Rd through the village & the first part of Rockbourne Rd up to approx. Brickhill Bungalow will become 30mph.

The council have also followed up certain concerns regarding overcrowding on the school bus to Burgate School. The survey undertaken by HCC/NFDC

last May showed that 90% of HGVs using the village were actually delivering or collecting from local business.

Crime & Disorder

The crime figures are extremely low again & pleasingly no cases of vandalism or anti-social behaviour have been reported to the parish council. Our local PC Tony Hatcher sadly retired during the latter part of last year. E-mail membership of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme is steadily growing but there are still a large proportion who have not, as yet, registered for inclusion.

The Common

The rolling programme of work to tidy up the Common to coincide with the annual bonfire has continued with work near Coronation Terrace. This has been further enhanced over the past 3 weeks by the use of community service workers who have reinstated the ditch near the cross roads in addition to tidying up on the upper Common. Further use of such personnel will be considered for the future. Thanks are also due to Kevin Downer & Nigel Poulton for improving the vehicle entrance to the Common gate. The council has continued its policy of general & track cutting during 2008. Following the retirement of the person who cuts the tracks there are no plans to continue this practice during 2009.

Footpaths

After much pressure from the parish council NFDC agreed to fund improvements to Bishops Lane footpath & we were successful in seeing the promised drainage & resurfacing work 70% completed, which has significantly improved this well used right-of-way. It is estimated that a further £6000 worth of work is required to finally complete the job. A significant improvement in the Marl Lane footpath at the industrial estate end has been achieved following an intervention from the Clerk. Further monies must be set aside by the council in its budget if we are to maintain the footpaths.

Recreation

Mr Daykin is continuing with a project to identify precisely what type of play area will meet local needs. A paper has been presented to council which defines a 4 phase approach.

Community

The council has considered a number of contributions in respect of a village gateway sign which could be constructed using, if possible, Sandleheath bricks. This scheme for a gateway has been put on hold whilst the village 30 scheme was being pursued. This can now be taken forward.

Internet Based Communications

Members of the council are currently involved in a project to improve the content & quality of the council's website which has been built up over a number of years. The aim is that it will lead to the availability of more up to date local information.

Support for Sandleheath Sea Scouts Group

The council were delighted to submit a letter of support for the sea scouts in their attempt to secure funding for a wildlife/nature area & separate camp fire area next to the Scout Centre.

Annual Village Bonfire

Again the parish council fully supported the annual village bonfire by approving the use of the Common & providing a financial contribution

towards the cost of the refreshments. The event proved successful and was well attended.

Finance/Business Issues

As of 6 April 09 the current account balance was £222.91, deposit account £2103.55 & Treasurer Trust account £306.01. The precept was increased by 8% to support increased expenditure on services. The increase follows 3 years when no precept increase was submitted. The parish council also approved a pay increase of 2.75% for the Clerk as from the 1st April 09 covering the period 1st April 08 to 31st March 09. This is in line with a recent arbitration award & a recommendation of the NALC. The council also approved an increase of 3.75% of salary to be deposited in the Treasurer Trust account. The actual amount to be added to the Treasurer Trust account will be £63.57.

Acknowledgements

The Chairman thanked members of the council for their support, especially Robin Fenn who has stood in for the Chairman on numerous occasions, the Clerk for his skill & counsel & members of the community for their continued support.

5. Matters Arising from Chairman's report

Several points were expressed by members of the public especially in respect of the speeding traffic aspect. District councillor Miranda Whitehead explained the situation from the NFDC's point of view. A resident who lived in Scats Lane made it extremely clear that he was not happy with the apparently speeding traffic in Scats Lane. It was generally felt that some form of traffic calming (possibly similar to that on the B3078 in Godshill) should be introduced in the Alderholt Road. The Acting Chairman said that the council members in attendance would take these points on board to be considered by full parish council.

In respect of footpaths a resident said that the footpath on the hill near Sandle Manor School was overgrown. The Acting Chairman said that this would be referred to the Hampshire Highways Superintendent during the next village walkround.

6. Any other business

A vote of thanks was unanimously agreed for Mr Stockton for all his excellent work during the five years he has been Chairman of the Parish Council.

There being no further business the Acting Chairman thanked residents for their attendance & closed the meeting at 9-10pm..