



CRANLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

The Chairman, Cllr Brian Ellis explained the core responsibilities of Cranleigh Parish Council which are the Village Hall, Recreation facilities, the Cemetery on Dewlands Lane, Planning, ensuring that the Council's finances are well managed and working in partnership for the benefit of the community wherever possible.

Whilst the Parish Council precept for 2011/12 increased by 3.5% from the previous year, this put only a 0.1% increase on the total Council Tax payment at Band D, with the actual monetary increase being just £1.59 for the year. The Parish Precept element of the Council Tax payment was £45.63 for 2010/11 and it will be £47.22 for 2011/12.

The total charge for Council Tax at Band D for 2011/12 is £1524.03; 3.1% goes to the Parish Council, 10.6% to Waverley Borough Council and 13% to Surrey Police with the remainder going to Surrey County Council.

The Parish Council is committed to working in partnership with the community and those organisations, both statutory and non statutory which contribute to life in Cranleigh. Strong, proactive and productive working partnerships have been established with Waverley Borough Council, Surrey County Council and Surrey Police.

There has been successful collaborative working with the Cranleigh Village Hospital Trust (CVHT) and the Probation Service the latter of which has undertaken a significant amount of work in and around the recreation grounds at Snoxhall Fields and the Cemetery. The partnership with the Probation Service is mutually enriching as it enables young offenders to learn new skills and to gain some respect in the community.

The Parish Council has worked with Cranleigh and District Rotary Club and other local organisations, local schools and churches and the Action for Cranleigh Play Park Association to enable additional and improved facilities for the benefit of our community.

The Parish Council works to financially support the Cranleigh Initiative which works closely with the Chamber of Trade and local businesses to provide events within Cranleigh which will hopefully drive economic vitality and which promotes the Parish Council's vision for Cranleigh to be a vibrant place in which to work, rest and play. The Cranleigh Initiative was formed in 2004 following the Cranleigh Healthcheck which was a community driven look at Cranleigh as a whole and which gave the steer as to what the people of Cranleigh wished to see in their community in the future.

During 2010/11 Cranleigh became the first Power of Wellbeing Council in Surrey. This meant that the Council was no longer restricted by Sections of the Local Government Act 1972 and had the power to take every opportunity to benefit the community.

The Parish Council promotes and offers training to all councillors and staff. The training is often arranged locally and events are often free of charge. This enables those working for the community to network, be better informed and to work more effectively. Over 90% of Cranleigh's councillors have undertaken training in topics related to community governance and over 75% of the Parish Council's staff have taken training to assist them to provide improved services.

During the last financial year, the Council awarded grants to the value of £2,186 within the Parish. Twelve local organisations benefited, including the Cranleigh and District Girl Guides who were awarded £500 for refurbishment in the Guide Hall, the Cranfold Confederation of Schools who received a £100 donation to the Strengthening families programme, St Joseph's Specialist School which received £346 towards bicycles to enable volunteers to get to and travel around the school and Cranleigh and District Rotary Club which received £450 towards a notice board to house a map of the businesses in Cranleigh. The notice board has been situated outside the Parish Council Offices, but there are other similar maps at the rear of the Village Hall and in Stocklund Square. The Parish Council was one of the first parishes in Waverley to produce an Emergency Plan in collaboration with Waverley Borough Council, Surrey County Council and our community. This had a very positive effect during last winter's severe weather and enabled improved lines of communication between authorities, which in turn allowed resources to be concentrated into areas of most need. The plan is a living document and the Council are always

looking for ways of improving it and getting people involved. Volunteers who are interested in the Emergency Plan and who may be willing to get involved in a 'self-help' flood group are currently being sought.

The Council has always been keen to work with our surrounding communities to share resources and expertise, and to encourage, where appropriate, our communities to work together for mutual benefit. The Clerk of Cranleigh and the Clerks of the surrounding Parishes meet every couple of months and use this opportunity to develop working relationships, find solutions to mutual problems and to strengthen our local voice.

The Parish Council is proud of Cranleigh's Christmas celebrations and has worked proactively to try to gain additional support and funding for this event.

Snoxhall Play Park has continued to establish and develop. Whilst the main equipment had been installed prior to this financial year, two spinning cups were installed earlier in 2011 following a generous donation from the Action for Cranleigh Play Park Association.

Cemetery Committee Report

Cllr Brian Cheesman reported that over the last ten years there has been an average of 52 burials in Cranleigh cemetery every year and that this has remained reasonably static. Ashes burials are becoming more popular, which may be a reflection on the economic climate and the comparative costs between a full burial and an ashes burial.

Work has been undertaken over the past year to ease and reduce the cost of maintenance. The large hedge which ran between the ashes section was removed as it had become woody and unmanageable. A new Ileylandii hedge to match that surrounding the Garden of Remembrance and the perimeter of the cemetery is in the process of being established and will reduce ongoing maintenance.

The Children's Section has been improved taking account of the sensitivity of the area. The existing perimeter flowerbed and central flowerbed has been edged with granite sets and there has been a new planting scheme.

The Garden of Remembrance has been redesigned with the removal of some flowerbeds and new planting in the remaining central bed. Large plants have been pruned and reshaped and there will be ongoing turf improvement to reduce the layer of thatch and improve the grass coverage.

Compost pens have been erected in order to make the cemetery more sustainable and reduce the considerable amount of green waste that is currently sent to landfill. Grant funding for the project had been sought over a long period of time, but unfortunately there was none available. A total of three pens have been installed, and the resulting compost will be used in the cemetery, the High Street flower beds and possibly at Snoxhall Fields. The first compost will be ready in 2013.

The rules and regulations of the cemetery have been updated and stricter enforcement will be introduced to the number of items on ashes graves.

A five year rolling programme of memorial testing will be started later this year. It is hoped to record the tests to improve our long term record keeping.

The Council is very grateful to the Probation Services and Snoxhall staff for the work that has been undertaken on the projects at the cemetery and to the Sexton who provides a first class service.

Finance Committee Report

Brian Arendell, the former Chairman of Finance, reported that the Parish Council is funded from the Parish precept, the Compensatory Grant which goes towards recreation facilities and income from our assets. Expenditure is on revenue items which are the day to day expenditure and capital expenditure which is on new assets and projects.

In 2010/11 the Parish precept from Waverley Borough Council was £240,364; the Compensatory grant was £42,840 and fees and charges amounted to £60,977. The Council also received a grant from the Action for Cranleigh Play Park Association which covered the cost of two spinning cups at the Play Park. The amount of grant funding was significantly reduced from the previous financial year when large sums of money had been secured for the Play Park project at Snoxhall Fields.

The Parish Council had been advised to increase their reserves and therefore the increase from £11,743 in 2009/10 to £50,822 in 2010/11 has satisfied this concern. The depressed economy had impacted significantly on the Parish Council's investments during 2009/10 and therefore it was encouraging to see that they had increased slightly during 2010/11.

Whilst the total amount of revenue expenditure over 2010/11 had increased to the previous year, there was a reduction in the amount spent on the Village Hall and an increase in the recreation spend. This had been expected with the expansion of the facilities in that area. It is projected that revenue expenditure will increase in the next

financial year as the Parish Council takes on additional services and gives greater support to the Cranleigh Initiative.

Capital expenditure during 2010/11 has significantly reduced on the previous year as the bulk of the equipment in the Play Park had been installed and upgrading work to Snoxhall pavilion had been carried out. Capital projects took place at the cemetery (Garden of Remembrance and Children's Section) and at the Village Hall (Redecoration).

Snoxhall Play Park project has been the most significant project undertaken by the Parish Council in recent years and was originally estimated at a cost of £125,000. However approximately £95,000 has been received in grant funding and by using 'in house' expertise to its full capacity the actual cost to local Council tax payers has been significantly reduced.

Planning Committee Report

Cllr Mary Forszewski reported that the Planning Committee is a consultee on Planning and is invited by Waverley Borough Council to put forward local views on planning applications. During 2010/11 the Planning Committee had met every three weeks to give their considered opinions on around two hundred planning applications, including Non Material Amendments and Amendments. In addition, the Planning Committee commented on 18 tree works, 2 traffic matters, 4 consultations and a number of significant applications. There were two applications regarding the Elmbridge Village redevelopment, an application which has not yet been decided on the former Swallows Tiles site but which included including presentations from the owners of the site and a large application for Alderbrook Park. In addition the Committee considered plans for the new medical centre in Cranleigh and the amendment to the new hospital site in Knowle lane. Whilst Dunsfold Park does not lie within Cranleigh Parish the Committee ensure that it gives a view on any application that may have an effect on the people of Cranleigh. Recently the Committee gave their views on a Certificate of Lawfulness to ensure that the legal professionals looking at the document understood the impact this could have on our local residents.

Village Hall Committee Report

Jean Dodd, the former Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, reported that there were continued bookings from regular hirers which included the Arts and Craft Society, Kon Tiki Fair, Blood Donors, West Hill Line Dancers, Godalming Cats, Rag Dolls and Lion Tamers as well as a number of one off bookings for organisations such as MNDA, the Rotary Club and St John Ambulance. In addition the Hall is hired for private parties and, just before Christmas, a wedding reception.

Whilst bookings have decreased over the past few years considerable effort has been made to attract new hirers with positive results and Cranleigh Youth Theatre is now a regular hirer for both rehearsals and productions. We are also looking forward to welcoming the Bridge Club and U3A to the Village Hall later this year. This will have a significant effect on the number of hours that the Village Hall is used, possibly by as much as a 50% increase each month.

In order to accommodate these organisations we have had to adopt a more flexible approach to opening hours and are now open on Mondays and will be open for part of August. The Committee also approved a revision of the fee structure in order to make booking part days more attractive.

There is a rolling program for maintenance and redecoration for the Village Hall and money is set aside for this each year. During 2010/11 the corridor behind the stage and the dressing rooms was painted and this August the entrance hall, toilets and stairs to the balcony will be redecorated. There has also been an improvement made to the stage lighting.

Funds have been allocated to replace the floor in the kitchen and to carry out a 5 year full electrical inspection during 2011/12.

The Village Hall Committee updated the Terms and Conditions of hire last year to bring them in line with latest legislation and the Village Hall was awarded a National Food Hygiene Rating of 5 (very good) following a recent inspection by Waverley Borough Council.

An independent survey of the roof in 2009 advised that the area over the main hall and stage may need re-roofing in 3- 5 years time. Although money is reserved for this each year, the total cost is likely to be substantial and it is hoped that this can be supplemented by grant funding.