

ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Serving the People of Odiham & North Warnborough

First of all, a huge thank you to all the residents who have rallied to the aid of their neighbours during the Covid restrictions and to everyone for abiding by the safety measures which have brought infections in Hart down significantly in recent months. And how could any of us have managed without the amazing efforts of our key workers, especially in local businesses, healthcare professionals and volunteers? The efforts to roll out the vaccination programme have been extraordinary. Our sincere condolences to all who have lost a friend or family member during this difficult time.

Parish Council business has progressed as best as we can – not least due to the determination of our Clerk, Mrs Andrea Mann. We welcomed a new Deputy Clerk, Mrs Sara Jones who joins Mrs Catherine Ryle, our Admin Officer. The team is now just over 2 full time equivalent staff.

We were particularly sorry to lose the face to face Annual Parish Assembly but urge all who can to attend the Zoom meeting on the 13th April. We are always keen to hear from residents and were pleased to welcome those who have joined us in regular meetings across the year. All the regular committee meetings have taken place via Zoom since March. Details are published at least 3 working days in advance on the website and on the OPC notice boards on the High St and the Priors Corner roundabout. Councillors are also available via email and the addresses are on the website. This has been given a refresh to bring it in line with accessibility legislation and so should be easier to use with text readers etc. The OPC website now includes visitor information alongside OPC business. We have also launched the 'Your Odiham' initiative to further promote the village and support local businesses.

One matter that inspired a lot of engagement was the closure of the HCC Library in Odiham. Despite the response from users and protests from OPC, our District and County Councillors, the decision was taken to close the library from 31st December 2020. Determined to maintain a facility to provide access to books for all, the OPC is leading the project to set up a Community Book Exchange. The response from volunteers has been wonderful and the book exchange should open in the old library as soon as Covid restrictions allow.

Cllr Dr Angela McFarlane, Chair

Odiham Parish Council

The Bridewell

The Bury

Odiham

RG29 1NB

Tel: 01276 702716

clerk@odiham.org.uk

(New Site!)

<https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/>



The Bridewell

Following the closure of the library, HCC is now looking to offload the whole Bridewell building. The freehold has been offered to the OPC for the benefit of the community. This is a great opportunity to have another community owned and led building in the heart of the village. However, it is not without cost. Should the OPC take on the building there will be a call on the Precept budget (the element of Council Tax that comes to the Parish Council) unless and until other income generating activities can be developed. In 2020 the Precept remained the same but it had to increase for 2021, by approximately £1 a month per household, to cover services which have been handed on from County and District level and to service a backlog in maintenance. The full details of the budget can be found on the website under the agenda for the January 2021 Full Council Meeting. If OPC took on the running and maintenance of the Bridewell this would impact the budget. In order to gauge how residents feel about this and other matters under the OPC jurisdiction we will be launching a survey in April/May.

Please do take this opportunity to make your thoughts known.

Cllr Dr Angela McFarlane, Chair



2021/22 Parish Precept

By now households will have received their 2021/22 Council Tax bill showing OPC's share. Like all local authorities we were faced with difficult decisions this year during the budget setting process, balancing the need for sufficient income to maintain council amenities, many of which are listed buildings, whilst acknowledging the challenging economic environment resulting from COVID-19. Following a year with no increase, this year's 14.6% uplift represents a rise of £10.40 per year per average Band D property and increases OPC's overall precept by £26,141. These extra funds will cover additional service provision passed down from the principal authorities, such as bin emptying, litter picking and coordinating the new Book Exchange. We have also created an additional part-time Deputy Clerk role, bringing total staff hours to the equivalent of just over two people. This will help to protect business continuity when delivering council services and to progress strategic projects.

This year we have also allocated £7,000 towards projects "supporting the High Street" and £9,500 towards community events which we believe are an important part of local life.

Cllr Rowena Coleman, Finance Committee Chair



After receiving news that Hampshire County Council would close Odiham Library in December 2020, OPC responded to feedback from the local community to lead a Working Group to transition Odiham Library to a new community led library.

The Working Group consisted of representatives from local schools and community groups who felt passionate about wanting to keep books accessible to the community of Odiham and North Warnborough. After research into the different types of community led libraries, the Working Group agreed to develop the Book Exchange and OPC applied to Hampshire County Council for the Library Transition Grant to help fund the set-up, launch and contribute towards running costs for the first year. The grant application was successful and OPC continued to lead the Working Group to develop Odiham Book Exchange.

When will Odiham Book Exchange be open...

The opening date will be communicated soon once COVID guidelines allow. It is planned that Odiham Book Exchange will initially open on Monday and Thursday afternoons and Saturday mornings.

How to join....

The Odiham Book Exchange will be accessible to all in the community and details on how to join will be published soon.

How to volunteer....

Odiham Book Exchange is a community project supported by volunteers and if you would like to help please email bookexchange@odiham.org.uk to register your interest. As well as volunteers to staff the Book Exchange, there will be many behind the scenes roles too, some of which you can do from home.

How will it work....

Bring a book you no longer need that is in good condition and exchange it for another book. There will be no return dates to stick to, just come back when you are ready to exchange a book for another book.

Book Donations.....

The Book Exchange will be dependent on the goodwill of the community for good quality donated and exchanged books to keep the displays and choice fresh and up to date. If you have books in a good condition that you no longer need please keep hold of them until the Book Exchange is able to accept your donations. We will let you know the date as soon as possible.



Planning & Development Committee

Despite lockdowns during the past year, the planning committee has continued to meet every three weeks via Zoom. We have considered approximately 140 planning applications during this time and sent our comments to Hart District Council as a statutory consultee.

All decisions and comments from the OPC are informed by the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP), adopted following a local referendum. The policies in the NHP form part of local planning law and we are pleased to report they are being used to inform decisions to grant or deny planning applications made by Hart. The full NHP and the annual report of the monitoring group that scrutinizes its application can be found on the OPC website.

During this past year there have been applications submitted for 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan development sites:

Land at Burford, Western Lane, Odiham

Permission has been granted for 16 houses (8 x 2-bedroom, 6 x 3-bedroom and 2 x 4-bedroom). Despite our objections, permission was granted for 2 x 2-storeyed properties in the sites where bungalows had been designated. This is disappointing.

Land at Crumplins Yard

This site is very nearly completed, with all houses being finished and only landscaping and roadways to be completed. After permission was granted for the development the developer submitted a non material minor amendment to Hart District Council which enabled them to build an extra room in the roof space and turn some two bedroomed properties into three bedrooms. This year the developer applied to change Condition 5 of the planning permission relating to the footpath but this was refused.

Land at Dunleys Hill

A developer has once again presented another possible proposal to the Planning Committee which included a larger number of houses but also plans for the public open space. No application has yet been submitted.

Land at Hook Road

An application for erection of 17 dwellings (4 x two bed, 7 x three bed, 4 x four bed and 2 x five bed), access, landscaping, boundary treatments and associated infrastructure was submitted in October 2020 and has yet to be determined. The Planning committee submitted a strong objection to this application as did the Basingstoke Canal Society and many residents.

Land next to Crownfields

This application was refused for the following reasons:

Contrary to Policy H2 and Policy NBE5 of the Hart Local Plan and Policy 4 Policy 2vii (e) of the Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan and the aims of the NPPF.

There has been no change to the progress of the other sites at **Longwood, Western Lane and Albion Farm, North Warnborough.**

Planning & Development Committee

Other applications of interest:

Chosley Farm Solar Park

An application has been submitted for a large solar farm just to the south of the parish. Information about this application can be found on the Hart website

<https://publicaccess.hart.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=QM3Z89HZGFT00>.

This is a site of over 94.5 hectares of fields stretching from the Alton Road next to RAF Odiham westwards to Biden Road leading from North Warnborough to Upton Grey. Although the Parish Council is in favour of renewable energy the planning committee objected to this application due to its huge impact on the landscape and views across the open rolling countryside. Other Parish Councils affected have also objected - Greywell, South Warnborough and Upton Grey.

Danetree House, High street

Permission has now been granted for the repairs and alterations to this important house on the High Street and work has begun.

Cllr Pam Verdon, Planning & Development Committee Chair

How can you be involved?

There are several ways of keeping informed on development plans in your area and commenting on each application:

- Hart District Council is the planning authority and the correct place to post your support, objection or neutral comment on a specific application. You can also register online to receive email notifications on applications in your area <https://publicaccess.hart.gov.uk/online-applications/>
- OPC is a statutory consultee on local applications and The Planning & Development Committee consider all local applications at their 3 weekly meetings. Agendas are published online, normally on the Wednesday before each meeting at <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/council/planning/planning-development-committee>. There is a public participation agenda item at each meeting and you are welcome to join the meeting to make a statement on a specific application (no longer than 3 minutes) or just listen in.
- Occasionally we receive applications for larger strategic development which come under Hampshire County Council's responsibility.
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/strategic-planning>

Conservation Area Appraisal Update

Work has been taking place this year to update this important document which informs planning decisions. A draft has been produced by the consultants and is being studied by councillors to ensure that everything has been included.

Public consultation will take place later in the year when Covid restrictions allow. If you live in either Odiham and North Warnborough Conservation areas and wish to be contacted directly about this new document please register your details with the Clerk. Data protection rules will apply to safeguard your details.

Highways and Byways

We regularly receive enquiries and concerns from residents regarding local roads, pavements, footpaths and car parking. The transportation network is owned and managed by different authorities. We are always happy to help residents but only have the same reporting mechanisms as members of the public.

- **Hampshire Highways** is the Highways Authority. The highway includes the carriageway, footway and verges. You can report issues online for: roads, footpaths, pot hole repairs, most street-lighting, salt bins or verges at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems>
- **Rights of Way** are managed by Hampshire County Council who respond to enquiries made at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/reportaproblem>
- **Hart District Council** manages car parking within Hart (both on-street parking and car parks), street cleaning, residents' parking permits, road closure and traffic management licences, road/place name signs and reports of abandoned vehicle. You can contact the team directly on infrastructure@hart.gov.uk
- www.fixmystreet.com is a one-stop shop for reporting all highways related issues and will send reports directly to the right authority.

Parish Lengthsman Scheme

The term 'Lengthsman' dates back to the 1800s, referring to workers who were responsible for keeping a particular length of road neat and tidy. HCC's Parish Lengthsman scheme has been in place since 2010 and OPC is fortunate to be a member. This provides OPC with £1,000 equivalent hours to spend on highways and grounds maintenance work which supplements the HCC works schedule.

The Amenity Areas Committee agrees an annual schedule. Last year this provided funding for works on footpath 7 (from The Street to Robert Mays School), a footpath from Salmon's Road to Buffins Corner, cutting back branches from land adjacent to Colt Hill, hedge maintenance by the War Memorial and cleaning street signs in North Warnborough.

Local Conservation

In addition to OPC's direct service delivery, part of your precept goes towards paying for a share of the maintenance costs for Odiham Common and Broad Oak Common. We receive regular updates from the Ranger responsible for these area.

OPC also pays a contribution to the management of the Basingstoke Canal. This is part of an historic agreement where all local authorities which the Canal runs through pay an annual contribution to its upkeep.

Traffic & Transport Committee

The Traffic & Transport Committee meets quarterly to discuss specific areas of concern and to make policy decisions on significant matters where OPC can either lobby for action from other authorities or lead on smaller, local projects. These are some of the issues currently under discussion:

- **Speeding**—OPC owns and manages a speed indicator device (SID) which you may have seen installed on lampposts in the parish. The Traffic & Transport Committee regularly reviews data collected from the SID but wanted to find an enhanced way of using this data, encouraging traffic to slow down. As a result, we are now in the process of setting up a community Speedwatch group where the data will be forwarded to the Police who will, in turn, write to offenders. We are overwhelmed by the number of volunteers who have signed up to help and hope they can soon start to monitor traffic, as soon as Police training resumes after the Covid restrictions. The B3349 approaching the village centre is a particular hot spot area and we are also looking into this separately with HCC and RAF to see whether further traffic calming measures are feasible.
- **Electric Vehicles (EV) Charging Points**— we believe EVs will play an important part in helping to meet the Government's targets for reducing Co2 emissions. Planning rules require charging points for new developments but this doesn't respond to demand in pre-existing retail and business areas such as Odiham High Street.
We were pleased to hear a presentation from the Hart DC Climate Officer on their early plans for a double charging point in Odiham, exact location to be confirmed. Provision of new charging points is dependent on usage and not the size of the population so, if you have an EV and would like to see further units, please register your interest at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/electric-vehicles>
- **Parking in Tunnel Lane**—following several enquiries from residents and liaison with other authorities, we are delighted that Hart DC has agreed to install further signage to deter drivers from double parking, blocking access at the end of the lane and damaging highways verges.
- **Bus Shelters**—a new bus shelter will soon be installed on the northern carriageway on B3349 opposite the former Crown Inn. OPC has been in discussion with HCC on the design and location and funding is possible through developers' contributions. Once installed, OPC will take over the future management.

Cllr David Stewart, Traffic & Transport Committee Chair

Traffic Partnership Group

OPC also co-ordinates a Traffic Partnership Group where representatives from other authorities meet to discuss practical and feasible solutions to local traffic issues. Often significant concerns are escalated to the Traffic Partnership Group from the Traffic & Transport Committee.

A Village Gateway scheme is just one of the matters currently under discussion.

Amenity Areas Committee

This Committee has been busy arranging a new grounds maintenance contract. Unfortunately the Covid restrictions affected the way in which we could work safely last year and we were disappointed when our former contractor declared they are unable to fulfil our contract for this reason. This was particularly disappointing considering the open spaces were a valuable amenity to local residents during lockdowns.

We are delighted to welcome Larkstel Ltd as our new contractor. Larkstel is a local grounds maintenance company with over 20 years experience of working on school, sports club, parish council and commercial sites. Following a full tender process, we were impressed with Larkstel's experience, enthusiasm and knowledge of the local area—even as a former Robert May's pupil!

Please give a friendly welcome to their team if you see them working at a site near you.



Cllr John Raw, Amenity Area Committee Chair



Litter picking is an enjoyable way of appreciating the outdoors whilst helping to Keep Britain Tidy. Sadly the decline of public funding affects this type of service and we are all being asked to get involved through national and local initiatives such as the Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean.

We have a supply of litter pickers in the office available to anyone who would like to borrow one, just give us a call in the office to let us know you are coming! Bags of litter can be left next to one of the parish owned bins.

We kindly ask anyone litter picking to adhere to safety guidelines: do not litter pick next to busy roads, wear gloves, wear a high-viz jacket if you have one and do not pick up any sharp or unidentifiable objects.

Amenity Areas Committee

It's fair to say, working through Covid has presented challenges and disruption for everyone and delays in the supply of construction materials being just one of these challenges. But we are pleased to have been able to move forward some of our projects and maintenance repairs.

- New footpaths were installed from the Recreation Ground car park to the two play areas. This work was carried out in response to pleas from users and the Leapfrogs pre-school and improves access for buggies and wheelchairs.



- Wooden fencing at The Peace Garden and bollards at the Cemetery had both fallen into a state of disrepair and have been replaced.



- Repairs were carried out to many of the local playgrounds which unfortunately included rectifying damage caused by vandalism. Thankfully incidents are rare in Odiham but they do nevertheless take valuable Council resources to put right.

Community Committee

It's been a very different year for the Community Committee - normal events and activities were cancelled and many of the community organisations which benefit from OPC grants were also unable to deliver projects and events. But this hasn't stopped us progressing some of our community projects.

Christmas Trees—after such a disappointing year, we were determined to bring a little Christmas cheer to residents by lighting up the High Street in the normal Odiham manner. Each year, we set aside some funds from your precept to pay for the Christmas trees and tree lights. Thank you to the volunteers who help to decorate the small trees hanging from the High St properties.

The decorations looked beautiful for the Hook & Odiham Lions' Tree of Light and were enjoyed by visitors following InOdiham's ChristmasCrow trail and Advent Window displays.

We hope to extend the displays of flags and trees later this year once we have secured planning consent.

Market gazebo fixings — Last year, OPC resolved to support the weekly Friday market and its organisers InOdiham by providing market stall/gazebo fixings which were requested by the market traders. The shackle style fixings were installed in February and will allow the market to operate safely during adverse weather. The fixings are installed in the parking bays and can also be used to secure motorcycles.

Community Grants

OPC offers 3 funding streams with the Community Grants being the main scheme. Over the last year, six community organisations have benefitted:

- £1,000 to Buryfields School towards a running track
- £250 to Leapfrogs pre-school towards enhancing the outdoor play area
- £2,000 to North Warnborough Village Hall towards the costs of replacing gas heaters
- £500 to North Warnborough Community Football Support Association for replacement goals
- £300 to Homestart
- £300 to Victim Support

The next application round ends on 30th June. Full details are available:

<https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/council/council-services/community-grants>

As part of the budget setting process, OPC has also agreed to set aside £8,500 for community events during 2021 including: Armed Forces Day, Bands in The Bury, Flavourfest, Spooktacula, Carols in The Bury and the InOdiham Christmas event.

G Rotherby Grants

14-25 years olds can apply for a grant of up to £300 towards a one-off event or project which will broaden the education of the applicant in a way which might not be available within the UK education system. This could include a trip or expedition, holiday project or scheme, youth exchange, training course, community event, music, drama, arts or sporting activity. Applicants should apply in writing to clerk@odiham.org.uk by 1st September.



Eat local. Shop local. Support local. 

As part of OPC's support for the High Street, we set up a WhatsApp group for the High Street businesses and regularly share business related information and funding opportunities.

During the second lockdown, we wanted to support the High Street businesses by helping to promote their business as the restrictions eased. We worked with a local design consultancy to develop the "Eat Local, Shop Local, Support Local" campaign and co-ordinated a Christmas late night shopping evening. We funded a series of ads which ran in the Herald newspaper in the run up to Christmas which included the very successful InOdiham led initiatives; the Advent Windows and ChristmasCrow trail.

The "Eat Local, Shop Local, Support Local" campaign is part of the "Your Odiham" brand which is aimed at you, about you and for you! We have already expanded this brand to include the Book Exchange and plan to further develop the brand over the next year.

Village Centre Area Action Plan

It is more important than ever for communities to have clear policy plans in place which will help protect and enhance valued resources and provide a clear vision of what local people want. In turn, this will assist in securing income and influencing strategic spending.

As suggested by Hart District Council, OPC has resolved to develop a Village Centre Area Action Plan for the Odiham village centre area. The purpose of the Plan is to set out a vision for the centre of Odiham, capturing what is important to the community (existing and future) which can be used as a guiding policy for a co-ordinated delivery of projects.

We have set up a Steering Group comprising of representatives from local organisations who will be drawing up a questionnaire to seek your views on the Odiham Village Centre area. This questionnaire will be delivered through your door over the next couple of months and will also be available online.

The Plan will enhance OPC's own Strategic Plan and be influenced by the Neighbourhood Plan and Conservation Area Appraisals.

Please look out for the questionnaire if you have ideas you would like to be included.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY— Odiham Fete, Saturday 11th September, 1.30-5pm
Organised by All Saints Church



Notice is hereby given that the

Annual Parish Assembly

will be held via Zoom on

Tuesday 13th April 2021
6.30pm-8.30pm

All residents are invited to attend.

Agenda

- Presentation from a Hants Governor of South Central Ambulance Service
- Council highlights of the year, including the future of the Bridewell
- Thank you to the Odiham & North Warnborough Community
- Questions – residents can ask questions by submitting them to deputyclerk@odiham.org.uk by 9th April

Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID:
894 9094 1294

Passcode:
743037



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2021 Community Awards

Is there someone in our community who deserves personal recognition for their positive contribution to the community?

Please send your nominations (maximum 500 words) to admin.officer@odiham.org.uk by Friday 9th April.