

Nomination for Hampshire's Council of the Year Awards 2021

ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Serving the People of Odiham & North Warnborough

Odiham Parish Council is a medium sized local Council serving approximately 5,700 residents living in the three main settlements; Odiham, North Warnborough and RAF Odiham. Ten Councillors cover the three wards who are supported by a small team of Council Officers, 2.1 full-time equivalent.

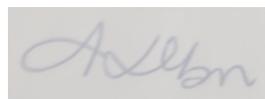
The challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic have been seen worldwide and all local Councils will have faced many unforeseen challenges over the last eighteen months. But, not only has Odiham Parish Council survived this storm, it has demonstrated strength, determination and innovation to move the Council forward and respond to local needs.

We believe Odiham Parish Council is a worthy recipient of the Hampshire's Council of the Year Award because:

- We listen.
- We care.
- We are ready to react.
- We are forward thinking.
- And because of this, our community wants to work with us!



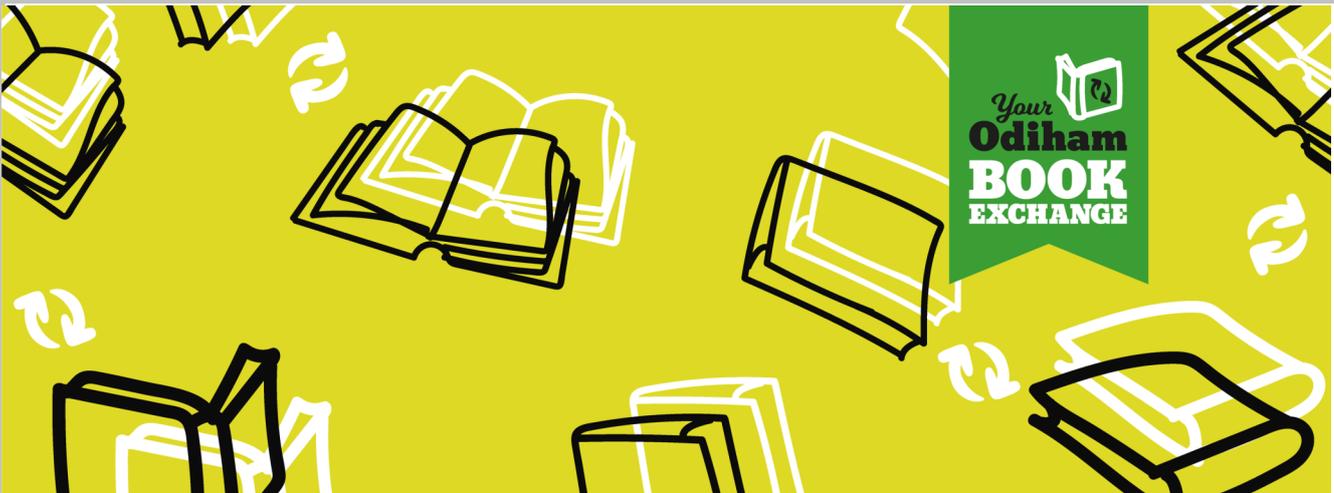
Cllr Dr Angela McFarlane
Odiham Parish Council Chair



Andrea Mann
Parish Clerk



We listen



After receiving news that Hampshire County Council would close Odiham Library in December 2020, we 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 researching the different types of community led libraries, the Working Group agreed to develop the Book Exchange and OPC received a transitional grant from Hampshire County Council to help fund the set-up, launch and contribute towards running costs for the first year. The Odiham Book Exchange was officially opened on 21st July and we are now supporting the volunteers to set up a Community Interest Company which will take over the Book Exchange early 2022.

www.farnhamherald.com  [@farnhamherald](https://twitter.com/farnhamherald)  www.facebook.com/farnhamherald



Julie Sykes, left, cuts the ribbon watched by Angela McFarlane

Top children's author opens village's new community library

AWARD-WINNING children's author Julie Sykes – whose 100 books include the *Unicorn Academy* series – cut the ribbon to open the Odiham Book Exchange on July 21.

This volunteer-run community library occupies the same building as the Hampshire County Council-run Odiham Library which closed last year.

Members can borrow up to six books at a time, including children's books, fiction for teenagers, fiction for adults and talking books. People can download a membership form at www.odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk and email it to bookexchange@odiham.org.uk

Odiham Book Exchange – in The Bridewell, The Bury, Odiham – is open Monday and Thursday from 2pm to 4.30pm and Saturday from 10am to 12.30pm. Odiham Parish Coun-

cil led the project last summer in response to demand and set up a working group with community organisations. Support from the public and the county council made it happen.

Cllr Angela McFarlane, chair of Odiham Parish Council and the book exchange working group, said: "The book exchange service is entirely run by over 30 volunteers who are passionate about providing books to our community. We've been thrilled to have so much support for this venture, and also to have so many donations.

"This is a really proud moment for Odiham as we officially open the doors to our fantastic new book exchange. We are absolutely thrilled to welcome author Julie Sykes to help us celebrate this new chapter for the village."

We care

 We care about everyone in our community.

When the Covid lockdown was announced, we quickly pulled our Spring newsletter from the printers and added important support information for residents, acknowledging those who were isolated and without access to social media or online services.

Councillors stepped forward to set up a voluntary led, local support service and, equipped with a new mobile phone provided by the Council, took it in turns to take calls which resulted in buddy, friending schemes and running a shopping and prescription delivery.

We acknowledged the Covid impact on mental wellbeing and themed our 2020 Autumn newsletter to acknowledge the Government's "Every Mind Matters" pledge by publishing information from community organisations aimed at uniting the community and signposting residents to local support, services and activities.

Over the last twelve months we have redesigned our newsletter and new website for make them more accessible, as well as supporting our local High Street by adding a section to promote their business.



EVERY MIND MATTERS



Eat local. Shop local. Support local. 

The rural setting of Odiham means the High Street is a valued local commodity. We supported the High Street businesses by developing the "Your Odiham" brand to raise local awareness and attract visitors.

We set up a Whatsapp group to keep in touch with the High St businesses and shared news of Covid grants and changes in legislation.

During the second lockdown, we helped to promote High St businesses as Covid 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 also included the very successful InOdiham led initiatives; the Advent Windows and Christmas-Crow trail with around 60 entries, giving everyone something to smile about. *This is the staffs' entry*



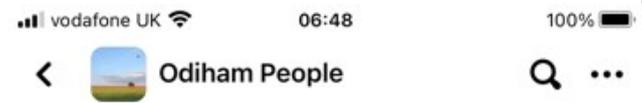
We are ready to react

We immediately embraced the virtual meeting regulations which meant there was no disruption to our meeting calendar and normal business was maintained throughout the year— even with both members of staff struck down with Covid!

We were the first parish council in the Hart District to implement virtual meetings, permitted by the Coronavirus Act 2020. The meeting held on 14th April 2020 ran without a hitch—attended by 9 out of 10

Councillors, the Hampshire County Councillor, two Hart District Councillors and members of the public.

We continue to use virtual meetings where allowed and have responded to the Government’s consultation explaining how we believe they are more inclusive and have provided an excellent route to engage with the community. Over 70 residents joined our Annual Parish Assembly and heard the South East Ambulance’s response to Covid.



Lovely to see there's now picnic benches at Chamberlains park. Spoke to two lovely ladies from Odiham parish council who said they have also put some at the Recreation ground and on the Beacon field. If people use them enough they will be made a permanent feature 👍



👍👍 You and 137 others

Your Odiham

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

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Search "Your Odiham"

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.

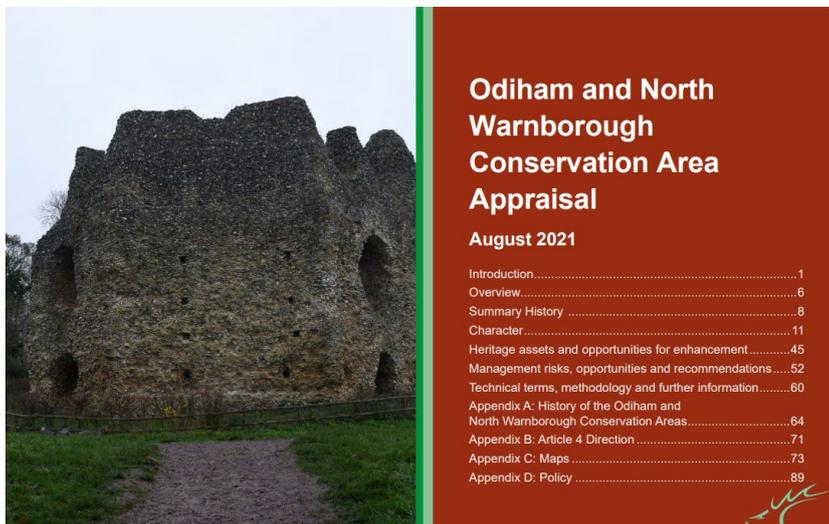
We were successful in obtaining Government funding from the Covid Welcome Back Fund by being ready with costed project proposals. Two grants were used to install temporary picnic areas and for the production of a visitor and walks leaflet, again support our High Street businesses by advertising their individual business.

We are forward thinking

We understand the importance of robust, policy plans to give the Council clear direction for projects and decisions. Over the last eighteen months, we have committed valuable Council resources towards developing three important plans aimed at protecting what's important to local people, enhancing the here and now, encouraging future growth and also to secure funding. The plans will help build strong foundations and, although the benefits will not be immediately evident, residents, businesses, community groups and the District Council have all supported the Council from conception through to public consultation.

Odiham Parish Council's Strategic Plan was adopted July 2020. The Plan is divided into sections which are delegated to Odiham Parish Council's committees for delivery, monitoring and review. A detailed version of the Plan is used by the committees and staff as a useful work schedule.

The Odiham & North Warnborough Conservation Area Appraisal combines two previous appraisals into one and will aide the District Council in its planning decisions.



The Odiham Village Centre Area Action Plan is the latest plan ready for public consultation. The Plan was developed in partnership with representatives from community organisations and the Hart District Council Economic Development Team. It focuses on the High Street area and aims to protect our High St businesses and services by increasing footfall . This also considers improving accessibility and reducing the environmental impact on the environment.



Our community wants to work with us



The establishment of a new Community Speedwatch in 2021 was only possible thanks to the volunteers who answered our plea for help and Hampshire Police for running virtual training during Covid.



Community litter picks took place in partnership with the Lions.

The Odiham Book Exchange, soon to be solely run by volunteers, attracted nearly 40 volunteers! Further volunteers have come forward to act as directors of the new Community Interest Company.



The local fire station crew were even happy to lend us a hand!