

ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL



Annual Report

April 2024



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I. INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report summarises the Council's activities and achievements covering the civic year May 2023 to April 2024.

The Report is a summary of the full presentation to the Annual Parish Assembly on 30th April. It will be published online and copies available on request.

2. THE COUNCIL

All seats were filled at election in May 2023 and councillors will hold positions until May 2027, unless unexpected circumstances dictate otherwise. During the year, two councillors resigned and the seats were filled through co-option. There were no requests for by-elections.

There were no changes to the staff structure or postholders.

3. GOVERNANCE

As a result of at least two thirds of councillors being elected in May 2023 and due to the Clerk holding the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA), OPC was able to formally declare The General Power of Competence at the May 2023 annual council meeting. This simplifies decision making and grants additional powers for OPC's activities.

The governance and committee structure was reviewed in May 2023 with no changes. OPC continues to hold 3 weekly Planning & Development Committee meetings on Zoom and submits agreed responses to Hart DC using the Clerk's delegated authority. Decisions are later ratified by the next available full Council meeting. Community Committee and traffic and transport related matters are currently considered by full Council.

A schedule of OPC's policies and procedures was reviewed by Council throughout the year. Reviews included the statutory annual review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, a Business Plan, new communications strategy and routine reviews of other policies and procedures.

4. FINANCE

Income & Expenditure Account

01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024

(Last) Year Ended 31 Mar 2023		(Current) Year Ended 31 Mar 2024
	Income	
212,306.41	1000 - General Account	238,449.54
44,154.09	2000 - Amenity Areas	48,498.57
10.00	7000 - Earmarked Reserves	50.00
16,348.03	3000 - Community	8,520.62
10,000.00	8000 - Projects	10,048.00
	5000 - Traffic and Transport	4,766.84
	4000 - Planning	10,000.00
£282,818.53		£320,333.57
	Expense	
122,698.59	1000 - General Account	129,508.82
92,689.96	2000 - Amenity Areas	95,457.85
8,171.71	5000 - Traffic and Transport	14,138.32
30,684.93	3000 - Community	33,718.83
4,497.28	7000 - Earmarked Reserves	33,211.43
19,198.25	8000 - Projects	13,353.20
	4000 - Planning	13,460.00
£277,940.72		£332,848.45
150,218.74	General Fund	
282,818.53	Balance at 01 Apr 2023	136,700.66
433,037.27	ADD Total Income	320,333.57
277,940.72		457,034.23
155,096.55	DEDUCT Total Expenditure	332,848.45
18,395.89		124,185.78
£136,700.66	DEDUCT Reserves Balance	-9,681.31
	Balance at 31 Mar 2024	£133,867.09

Reserves:

Capital Reserve Balance £3622.50

Earmarked Reserve Balance £66113.95

Summary of 23/24 and 24/25 income, budget and precept

	Income Budget	Expenditure Budget	Precept	Tax Base	Price per band D
2023/24	56,656.00	268,727.00	212,071.00	2353.06	90.13
2024/25	54,321.00	279,580.00	224,259.00	2387.78	93.92
+/-	-2,335.00	+10,853.00	+12,188.00	+34.72	+3.78
% +/-	-4.13	+4.03	+5.74		+4.2

5. PERFORMANCE AGAINST STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

I. Providing high quality community facilities

Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
The Bridewell	To continue transforming The Bridewell into a thriving community hub.	<p>Progressing in line with Business Plan 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan 2 adopted and actions in progress. • Works to repair the north facing wall secured listed building consent, works completed and funded by a HCC grant. • Listed building consent has been secured for a kitchenette and meeting area on the first floor to support a co-working hub. • An informal co-working space was made available to the public for hot desking and small meetings. • Bookings for The Library Room are coming forward.
	Submitting a pre-application planning application based on existing concept plans.	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Council agreed to submit a pre-application for the future vision and agreed in principle to meet with an architectural company to see whether they are suitable to support OPC in the future vision project.</p>
	Researching external funding.	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Funding application submitted for improving the co-working space – decision imminent.</p>
The Firs	To improve accessibility and amenity value.	<p>No progress.</p> <p>A small budget has been allocated in the 24/25 budget.</p>
Benches	To continuing improving bench provision and interpretation boards in the Parish.	<p>Achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rolling programme of bench repairs is almost complete. • 5 new picnic benches were installed. • Further 24/25 budget has been allocated for further improvements.

Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
War memorial	To improve the condition and protect the heritage.	In progress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small working group has been set up to decide a works specification. • Further 24/25 budget has been allocated which builds adequate reserves to fund the works.
Future provision	Keeping all assets under review to ensure they are useful to the community and maintained in a safe condition.	All repairs carried out in accordance with independent inspections. Ongoing process by the Amenities Areas Committee.
Play Equipment	To maintain a rolling programme of maintenance and future replacement.	Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllrs McFarlane, Seabrook and Verdon carried out a survey of each site to identify which pieces should be taken out of action if budgets don't allow repair or replacement. • Further work planned for 24/25.

2. Supporting the Parish as a pleasant, safe and enjoyable place to live and work

Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
Promoting community cohesion	To have regard to the valuable role community groups play on uniting the community through grants, promotion and partnership working.	Community Grants awarded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £750 to Friends of Mayhill for equipment for their new secret garden. • £270 to Odiham raft race to help with running costs. • £300 to The Sunflower Café to help with chair-based exercise activities. • £750 to Hook and Odiham Lions towards the cost of Prostate cancer screening. • £640 to North Warnborough Village Hall towards the cost of replacing windows and flooring in the kitchen area. • £100 to Victim Support to fund safety equipment to residents of Odiham. • £650 to Baker Hall for materials to clean, prepare and paint the roof.

Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
Promoting community cohesion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £640 to The Vine Church for astroturf in the outside space. • £640 to Odiham Pre School Leapfrogs to help replace carpets in the rooms.
		Event grants awarded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £2,500 for Extravaganza. • £1,000 for Bands in The Bury. • £1,000 for Odiham Food Fayre. • £1,000 for Spooktacula.
		Co-ordinated events directly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King Charles III Coronation street party and picnic. • Remembrance. • Christmas trees and tree lighting event. • Thank you reception for community organisations.
		Community support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported the community's bid to save The Bell public house.
	To acknowledge and respect RAF Odiham as a much-valued contributor to the Parish. To assume a leading role in civic events.	Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with RAF Odiham and 1827 (Odiham) Squadron Air Training Corps on Remembrance, King Charles III Coronation events and planning for the 80th anniversary of D-Day. • Gifted the G Rothery bequest grant to 1827 (Odiham) Squadron Air Training Corps. • RAF Odiham is represented by serving personnel as councillors. • The following accreditations were achieved: <div data-bbox="979 1565 1353 1704" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1082 1715 1248 2024" data-label="Image"> </div>

Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
Traffic and transport	Speed reduction – Community Speedwatch, supporting 20mph zones and village gateways.	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 Speedwatch sessions held. • Purchased new speed recording equipment for Speedwatch. • Ongoing promotion to recruit new volunteers. • Purchased new SID and agreed new process for rotating 2 SIDs and reporting data. • New gateways on Alton Road. • Funding secured from Crownfields development for further gateway.
	Supporting walking routes – supporting Hampshire Rights of Way in keeping local walking routes free from obstruction.	<p>Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support for the Conservation Volunteers work group led by Cllr Bell. • 9 work days took place. • Ongoing promotion to recruit new volunteers including flyer delivered to every residential property in Parish. • Grants won totalling £4,766.84. • New tools purchased. • Bridge and boardwalk improvements took place.
	Infrastructure improvements - lobbying relevant responsible authorities for improvements to hot spot areas - a cycle/footpath to M3 footbridge, pedestrian crossing points on Dunley's Hill and Hook Road, improvements to the RAF/B3349 junction and safe pedestrian route on King Street.	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 review of the Neighbourhood Plan. • Councillors and the Parish Office dealt with several emails relating to requests for a pedestrian crossing point on Dunley's Hill and a safe pedestrian route on Kings Street. Both matters were referred to HCC for consideration. • OPC resolved to support RAF Odiham in the need for improvements to the RAF Odiham/B3349 and discussions are underway. OPC will continue to support.
	Bus shelters – to liaise with Hampshire County Council to lobby for shelters in the right places.	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New bus shelter on B3349 next to the former Crown public house has been requested and approved by HCC.
	Parking – to lobby for a Parish wide review of public parking provision.	<p>Parish wide review not achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered when considering every planning application.

Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
Supporting the Village Centre	Actively supporting the High Street and its businesses - projects which support increasing visitor footfall and signage from the High Street to community facilities in The Bury.	Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In regular contact with businesses through WhatsApp group. • Liaised and included High St businesses for community events. • Business Forum meeting scheduled.
	Maintaining the Public Toilets including increased provision of accessible toilets.	Achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing management of King Street public toilets, several repairs and improvements were carried out and the toilets were made available to support events. • A grant from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund funded an upgrade to The Bridewell accessible toilet including a new RADAR key which now provides an accessible facility in the village centre during Bridewell opening hours.

3. Action against Climate Change to protect our environment and the planet


Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
Controlling the Council's carbon footprint	To follow the Council's adopted Environment and Climate Change Policy in all decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing consideration for every Council decision. • Cllrs McFarlane and Sanger joined the Hart Climate Action group. • Energy assessments have been carried out for all buildings – reports to be reviewed 24/25.
	To develop an action plan to reduce carbon emissions when carrying out Council activities.	Outstanding.
Raising community awareness	The Greening Campaign.	Phase II launched and ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured funding from HCC. • 2 community events held in partnership with the Hampshire & IoW Wildlife Trust. • Hedgehog highways purchased and distributed at further community event in partnership with Prickle Lodge. • Regular website, Facebook and newsletter articles.

Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
Raising community awareness	The Greening Campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two community bulb planting events held utilising bulbs donated from the Rotary Club of Hook and Odiham. • Cllr McFarlane met with local school headteachers and secured support for partnership projects.
	Supporting tree planting schemes.	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Bell met with the Hampshire Forest Partnership “Shoots along the routes” project co-ordinators and OPC is now promoting the project. • Cllrs McFarlane and Sanger are following up an enquiry to work with neighbouring parishes on tree planting schemes.
	Supporting recycling schemes.	No action due to no relevant opportunities arising.
Biodiversity gain	To follow the Council’s adopted Biodiversity Action Plan.	Achieved and ongoing.
	To manage the Council owned sites to encourage biodiversity gain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounds maintenance regime reviewed with contractor. • New biodiversity areas created and promoted on new webpage and article included in newsletter. • New biodiversity signs installed at specific sites. • Spring bulbs planted at Peace Garden and community orchard. • Bird and bat boxes purchased and will soon be installed.
	To support sustainable development and biodiversity net gain when considering planning applications.	Ongoing.
	To participate in wider Hampshire County Council initiatives as opportunities arise.	Ongoing watching brief.
Supporting responsible and sustainable development	To support developments for renewable energies and campaigning for national joined up policies.	<p>Ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrote to MP’s lobbying for a joined up national policy on solar generation of electricity, including solar farms. • Neighbourhood Plan review includes updating Plan in line with current national policies.

Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
Sustainable transport	Provision of electric vehicle charging points in the Parish to support Hart District Council's provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hart to soon install 2 new EVCP's; one in The Bury car park and one in The Deer Park car park. OPC met with Rural EV Chargers company but did not consider OPC to have any suitable sites to put forward. The scheme will be promoted to other land owners in the Parish.
	Lobbying for improved cycle routes and safe pedestrian routes including the clearing of footpaths	No specific action.

4. Aspiring for excellence in the sector

Priorities	Action	2023/24 update
Providing value for money	Managing budgets to provide value for money whilst allowing improvements and growth to support the future community.	<p>Achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Councillors input into budget setting process. Draft budget is reviewed twice before final approval. Quarterly review of budget by the Finance Committee. 2023-24 income includes £6,340 bank interest, £14,261 S106 contributions, £8,420 event income, £2,500 donations and £30,557 from successful funding applications.
Communication	Demonstrating transparency, community engagement and inclusivity through the development of plans based on community feedback and a new communications strategy which strives to reach everyone in our community.	<p>Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No freedom of information requests. Excellence in community engagement demonstrated by HALC award for excellence in community engagement. New communications strategy developed by working group. Regular promotion of activities through 2 newsletters, website, Facebook and noticeboards.

People	Setting high standards to retain and attract the best people to represent the interests of residents.	<p>Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Councillor positions filled at May elections and 2 subsequent casual vacancies filled quickly through co-option. No Code of Conduct complaints. Clerk won national award.
	Encouraging training for all Councillors to support them in their roles.	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training programme for all councillors. New councillor induction file provided to all councillors in May 2023.
	Appointing qualified and experienced staff to support the Council and supporting their continued professional development.	<p>Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk holds Certificate in Local Councils Administration (CiLCA). Deputy Clerk achieved Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA). New online training platform purchased. Clerk achieved required CPD points to remain as principal member of the SLCC.
Civility and respect	Conducting all activities with civility and respect.	 <p>IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVV, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS</p> <p>This is to certify that Odiham Parish Council has signed up to the Civility & Respect Pledge</p>
Supporting the sector	Respecting and supporting the work of the National Association of Local Councils, Hampshire Association of Local Councils and other sector support organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair and Clerk attended the HALC AGM and conference. Hosted the HALC 2023 Hampshire & IoW Village of the year awards.
	Working towards accreditations and awards which confirm best practice and commitment to continued development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entered HALC Council and NALC Star Council awards. Submission will be made to the NALC Local Council award scheme to meet 3rd May deadline.