

Crookham Village Parish Council

Parish News



Issue 13 February 2013

Crookham Village Parish Council Questionnaire 2013

Crookham Village Parish Council ("CVPC") circulated a questionnaire in 2007 which formed the basis for the Parish Plan published in 2010. Accompanying this newsletter is a similar but revised questionnaire, which can also be found on our website for electronic completion. We would ask for your help in completing this and returning it to us by the end of February. We are asking for this so that we can judge whether the views of residents have changed significantly since 2007.

As you may have seen, Hart District Council has produced a final submission of their Local Plan which aims to set out the vision, objectives and strategic policies up until 2029. Later this year, this plan will be examined by an Inspector at the Examination in Public ("EIP") to determine whether the plan is sound and can be accepted. If the Hart Local Plan is found not to be sound, it will not be accepted and this could lead to a free for all with unrestricted planning applications from developers. In preparation for making representations at the EIP, the Parish Council now seeks to re-validate the results of the 2007 questionnaire and is asking specific questions related to the published final submission of the Hart Local Plan.

Housing numbers are a major question for agreement by the Inspector at the EIP. Developers and others are likely to argue for much more housing to be built than is currently proposed by the plan. If this should happen, then pressure for further house building in the Parish would be significantly increased. It is therefore very important that CVPC knows current views of residents of the Parish on matters related to housing need and the building of additional dwellings in the Parish. This can be used as evidence which CVPC can present to the EIP, which is expected to take place in early summer this year.

Thanks to local pressure, Hart removed a proposed development on Grove Farm from the plan and has accepted the argument that further piecemeal developments tacked on to the urban area of West Fleet are not the best option. However, this is likely to be strongly challenged at the EIP. Instead, Hart proposes 500 houses spread over settlements and previously developed land in the rural area of Hart. All the rural settlements, of which the Village ward of the Parish is classed as one, will have to take their share of this number. Only applications processed after April 2012 count towards this total as earlier developments have already been counted in determining the total number of new builds required.

The challenge is to identify sites where sustainable development could be acceptable without adversely affecting the countryside areas and views that define the rural setting and unique identity of Crookham Village. A detailed survey highlighted a demand for 20 new dwellings under the Rural Exception Scheme, where low-cost housing is reserved for people with strong local connections. Recent changes in Planning Guidance now allow such housing to be mixed with normal development to increase its attractiveness to developers and landowners. Realistically, little can be done to ease congestion on Parish roads, so new development in the Village is unlikely to bring significant highway improvements.

Key questions for parishioners (including landowners of potential sites) are: would you accept 20 rural exception houses on sites within Crookham Village; would you accept additional normal housing as well on these sites; and where should this housing be located? In addition to this, CVPC would also appreciate your views on a number of other current topics, for which questions are also included. If significant differences emerge from the new questionnaire compared to the views expressed last time, CVPC may need to re-draft and re-issue its own Parish Plan.

Contacting the Parish Council

Correspondence should be addressed to the clerk at:

Daegmarsfield Farm Church Lane Dogmersfield Hook RG27 8SZ Tel: 01252 810568 clerk@crookhamvillage-pc.org.uk

Contacting individual Parish Councillors and Officers

All email addresses have the format: *firstname.surname@crookhamvillage-pc.org.uk*

Visit the Parish Council web site at www.crookhamvillage-pc.org.uk for latest news, contacts and minutes.

More information on the Zebon Copse Centre, including how to book can be found at www.zeboncopsecentre.org.uk or phone 01252 615003

Community Payback Team Works in the Parish



The Parish Council has again used the services of the Community Payback Team to carry out a number of important projects within the parish over the last year. The team started with the refurbishment of the surface of Footpath 1 below the stile beside The Old Forge in The Street. Next they cleared debris and silt from the waterway that runs under the Brandon Road end of



Daphne Drive on Zebon Copse estate and after that they scraped back the leaf mould that had partially covered the Watery Lane track from the Zebon Copse Centre to the Swing Bridge. Latterly they have cleared the rest of the ditch alongside The Street end of Footpath 1 and plan to return very shortly to complete that task by shoring the side of the ditch to minimise future collapse of the footpath. The Parish Council has provided the necessary materials to enable the works to be completed.



Community Speedwatch Scheme

Over the last few years, the Parish Council has been surveying traffic volumes and speeds at various locations across the parish using the Speed Indicator Device that was purchased several years ago. This data shows that there is a good case to take further action against those who flout the speed limits. However, police resources are insufficient to cover local roads on a regular basis.

Crondall Road Action Group (CRAG), spearheaded by Brian Whyatt, has identified a small group of willing volunteers and CVPC is currently investigating the feasibility of sponsoring a Community Speedwatch scheme in the parish subject to a Police Safety Audit. This would involve a volunteer team being trained by the police as Police Support Volunteers to operate equipment purchased by or through the Parish Council, possibly with financial assistance via a grant enabled by our local County Cllr Jenny Radley, to monitor and record details of vehicles driving at excessive speed on selected parish roads. The data gathered would then be passed to the police for further action.

If in the future you see one of these teams deployed by the roadside along Crondall Road or elsewhere wearing HiViz jackets, you will know that the scheme is functioning. If you subsequently receive a visit from the police, you will also know that your vehicle was identified as being driven too fast.

Further details of this scheme can be found on the Hampshire Police web site.

Trees in the Parish

Amongst its many roles, the Parish Council is very keen to help maintain and enhance the rural environment of the parish. This includes keeping a close eye on the health of trees which make such a significant contribution to the landscape. CVPC has an appointed tree warden, Cllr Crawley who monitors and follows up applications for work on trees in the Parish along with looking into any reports of threats to trees.

One such tree that has recently come to our attention is an historic oak situated in the corner of Zephon Common adjacent to Riverside Cottage. It is thought that this could be possibly up to 300 years old, as such the oldest tree on the common. In order to safeguard the tree, CVPC is working with Tony Clarke, our Local District Councillor, to request a Tree Preservation Order. While this doesn't prevent work being carried out on the tree, any work on or in the vicinity of the tree must be approved by the officer at Hart District Council.



Photo courtesy of V Hayes ©

Pilcot Road Footway

Slow progress continues to be made on the project to install a pedestrian footway along that part of Pilcot Road from Knights Close towards the parish boundary with Dogmersfield. This project, initiated some years ago as a result of a petition from residents, is currently anticipated as being jointly funded by CVPC and from developer contributions. These have been accumulated from local developments over past years and, if they are not spent soon, might well be lost.

Following public consultation, which came out quite strongly in support of the project, there has been significant input from Dogmersfield Parish Council who wish to minimise the urbanising effect on 'its Conservation Area. Since this has been the objective of CVPC throughout, this interference, together with unhelpful comments from the County Councillor for the adjacent division is far from constructive, especially since the proposed scheme lies entirely within our parish. However, it seems that Dogmersfield's views are slowly converging with our own and that, with luck, the scheme might be finalised in 2013. If not, there is a real risk of losing the majority of the funds.

Another distraction has been the installation of a 'rural' footway in Rotherwick, which some people considered might be preferable to the tarmac option provisionally selected for Pilcot Road. However, those who have viewed this new pathway mostly consider the visual impact to be far greater than a tarmac path alongside the existing roadway. Furthermore, it seems possible that the width can be further reduced from the 1.5 metre minimum of the consultation, which would reduce the visual impact still more. Given the availability of driveways along Pilcot Road, there should be adequate pedestrian passing places without having a wide path – a scheme that has worked very well for many years along The Street in Crookham Village.

New Waste Bin at Zebon Copse Centre



The purple-coloured waste bin on the far side of the playing field has been a well-used disposal facility for bagged dog waste and has made a major contribution to keeping the field clear of dog mess. The cooperation of dog owners is much appreciated. However, that bin has proved to be extremely difficult to empty, so a new bin has just been placed beside the cycle rack outside the Centre building and the old purple bin has been removed. CVPC asks that dog owners continue to pick up after their dogs and dispose of the bagged waste either in the new bin or in one of the other bins on the estate. However, we would ask that dog owners do not use the bins which are inside the two play areas.

Leaf Blowing

Once again the Parish Council has employed a contractor to blow leaves from the main tracks through Zebon Copse and along the towpath from Malthouse Bridge to Chequers Wharf. This reduces the build-up of leaf mould over the years and helps keep the paths open for safe walking during the winter months.

CVPC recognises that with last year's wet summer followed by a long wet autumn, many of the local footpaths are waterlogged and difficult to traverse. We are working with local land owners to try to rectify this situation and hope that the weather will improve and allow much needed drainage work to be carried out shortly.



Lea Green Play Area at Netherhouse Moor

The existing play equipment on the Lea Green play area has reached the end of its useful life and CVPC, which owns the play equipment, has been forced to withdraw it from use. The remaining equipment is to be dismantled shortly as part of a scheme to revitalise the entire area. It is planned that over the next couple of years, the play area will be renewed with the introduction of new equipment supplemented by some of the existing equipment following extensive refurbishment.

CVPC is currently working with local residents to identify the sort of replacement equipment that will be needed and, in parallel, is negotiating with Hart District Council to take over the public open space at Lea Green. CVPC has also made provision in its budget for next few years to help fund the provision of a new and improved playground. The current embryonic scheme envisages having new or refurbished equipment for toddlers inside a compound plus other items more suited to older children or adults elsewhere on the field. This scheme is at a very early stage and further consultation will follow. Those with thoughts or suggestions are invited to contact Claire Bourke who is assisting CVPC with this important project. She can be contacted directly by email (leagreenplayground@gmail.com) or via her group, Friends of Lea Green, which can be found on Facebook.



Could you be a Parish Councillor?

Following the departure from the area of Councillor Ney, CVPC again has a vacancy in the Netherhouse ward of the Parish Council. You don't need any particular qualifications to be a Parish Councillor, just a desire to make your community a better place to live and help preserve the quality of life we all enjoy. CVPC is currently working on a scheme to improve the environment for the residents and children in this ward and urgently needs a councillor to work with the local community.

To become a councillor, you must be registered to vote and also live in the Parish or within 4.8 km of the boundary, not necessarily in Netherhouse Moor. If you would like more details of what's involved or to apply, please contact our clerk.

New Education Boards at Zebon Copse Local Nature Reserve

Zebon Copse Local Nature Reserve has undergone a significant make-over this year after a successful "Community and Wildlife" grant application, made jointly between Hampshire Countryside Services and Crookham Village Parish Council. This grant included providing funding to create a new Interpretive Nature Trail around the Copse and install educational information panels about the history and wildlife of Zebon Copse.

