



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

We were unable to hold our AGM due to the COVID-19 Lockdown, but hope that this report will serve as a good overview what the Parish Council has been doing over the last year.

We will include short reports on Council Finances, Planning and Highways and as part of our adopted 2019 Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan we will outline the range of implementation projects completed or underway following your suggestions in the LNP household survey.

Whilst this is a long-term plan, designed to see us through to 2033 and we do not have the manpower or resources to implement everything we would like, straight away, we have made a good start on as many as possible and this newsletter should give you all an update on progress. Thank you to all project leaders and co-optees.

At this time, I'd like to say how proud I am of the community spirit and volunteer efforts over this very difficult time for so many people. Across the Parish we have scores of local volunteers, helping their neighbours with shopping and prescriptions and it's been very heart-warming to see.

Please don't hesitate to contact the Clerk if you need anything or would wish to help us deliver more to our community.

Stay alert.

John Thompson

Parish Council Contact Details: Parish Clerk, Sophie Martin: clerk@limpsfield.org; 07514 011355

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Mark Wilson

It has been a very busy year for the planning committee, which is now Chaired by myself, Mark Wilson, with seasoned councillor Philip Bailey and John Thompson as well as new Councillor, Ashley Fosdike and our official co-optee, Ted Beresford Knox who is extremely valuable in his advice being a retired planning officer and former Head of Planning Services for Crawley Council. The planning committee meets on a monthly basis prior to the main meeting to discuss all current applications and determinations in the Limpsfield Parish area and in the financial year 2019-2020 we reviewed over 100 planning applications for the Limpsfield Parish.

Now that we have our adopted Neighbourhood Plan, we have written and acknowledged criteria in terms of what is and is not acceptable in planning for the Parish.

While planning applications are submitted to Tandridge District Council (TDC), the process for the involvement of Limpsfield Parish Council is as follows:

- TDC invites LPC for comment on planning applications submitted which relate to the Parish. This is now particularly pertinent as in relation to the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan and all planning applications will receive consideration with view to how they meet and comply with the expectations and criteria of the Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- We have a commitment to discuss and comment on, object to or endorse all planning applications in Limpsfield Parish.
- TDC's planning department must refer to the LNP planning criteria when considering all applications in Limpsfield Parish.
- All applications submitted by residents and local businesses must refer to and consider the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan criteria for
- Our discussions and decisions on what course of action to take are measured against these criteria - being Housing Type and Mix (LNP2) and Design, Heritage and Landscape (LNP3). There is also particular consideration taken for all planning applications for properties located within the Conservation Area (LNP4).
- The Neighbourhood Plan committee is working on a Conservation Area Assessment & Management Plan that will further help both residents and planners to understand the responsibilities and planning criteria for this specific area of Limpsfield.

It should be noted that while we have a commitment to provide our comments and objections to all applications, the LPC does not have the final say on planning applications. The final determination is wholly decided by Tandridge District Council.

Parishioners are welcome to contact us regarding their planning applications and also to attend the public session of our monthly Parish Meetings if they wish to discuss any specific issues: clerk@limpsfield.org.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Thomas C Briggs

The Council has continued to improve and refine its planning, budgeting and cash management process to ensure that we have robust budgets in place, that we are transparent, and we are responsible stewards of Council funds. In the past year we have scrutinised our running costs, updated our financial procedures, and improved governance and transparency. Although we have one of the smallest Precepts amongst local Councils, we are well aware of our duty to spend your money wisely.

We have employed the services of a professional auditing company, Mulberry & Co, to undertake our internal audit for 2019/2020. Mulberry & Co specialise in auditing Parish and Local Councils and have been helpful in advising us on best practice for ongoing financial governance into the future.

We have hired a new Clerk who acts as our Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and we have online banking in order to make payments more efficient and to facilitate tracking of expenditure.

Overview of the Fiscal Year ending 31 March 2020 is as follows:

The Council adopted measures that require it to run three separate budgets: 1) the core Operating Budget; 2) the Limpsfield Chart Playground Budget; and 3) the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Budget.

The CIL budget is “ring-fenced” as we are required by law to account for CIL funding and expenditure separately and spending is limited to certain categories of expenditure. In FY 19/20, we had £10,886 available for CIL expenditure but had yet to identify specific items for funding. The Council subsequently approved and made £4503 in CIL expenditure for the Footpath Upgrade Project (Phase I) and replacement of the VAS sign on Detillens Lane.

The Council also decided to “ring-fence” the funds set aside in the Limpsfield Chart Playground account to be used for upkeep and decommissioning of the Chart playground (in case the lease with National Trust is not renewed) and for Chart related expenses. After reviewing the history of the Chart Playground, the Council determined that the funding contained in the account was originally intended for the playground and other Chart needs. The Council obtained a cost estimate for playground de-commissioning and set aside a Reserve for unanticipated repairs and maintenance, which totals £10,000. In FY 19/20, there were no expenses paid from the Chart budget, leaving a balance available for Council-approved Chart spending of approximately £7,335.

This was the first year for many on the Council and implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan was just getting started. Therefore, the new Council Committees did not have an opportunity to complete detailed planning required for the 19/20 budget. Consequently, our core Operating Budget was based on anticipated administrative costs of £26,140 (including a prudent 10% contingency) and Revenue (Precept income, VAT refund, carryover) of £34,772. This allowed for approximately £8,631 in available spending on a “pay-as-you-go basis” as projects were identified and developed during the year.

During FY 19/20, our actual income into the Operating Budget totaled £35,664 and our Operating Expenditure totaled £21,195 (excluding VAT, which is refunded in the subsequent FY). The Operating Budget end of year balance of £14,469 is more than the budgeted £8631 due to a number of factors: 1) use of CIL funds for certain expenditure, 2) deferred spending into FY 20/21 for approved projects, and 3) rigorous cost control.

Our Reserve has been agreed at 50% of the annual Precept (2019/20 - £16,235, 2020/21 - £16,658) and this is subject to annual review.

FY 2020/21 Budget

We have increased the Precept very slightly to £33,315 (2.6%) to account for increased running costs and with view to the implementation of some of our Neighborhood Plan key projects (see full statement on our website).

We identified, prioritized, and budgeted Limpsfield Neighborhood Plan projects for 2019/20 and have agreed a total budget for projects and ongoing expenses for 2021. For FY 20/21 we have assumed no income or expenditure from the Limpsfield Chart Playground account budget. The Operating Budget and CIL budgets assume total funds available of approximately £41,300 for anticipated spending of approximately £38,153. Spending included approximately £20,000 for LNP implementation projects, £16,000 in staff and general administration costs and £1750 in miscellaneous spending, such as small community grants. Our cost estimate includes a prudent contingency as well as a small contribution to the Reserve.

We anticipate some CIL revenue for 2020/21 due to qualifying building developments and have allocated existing CIL funds for footpaths improvement (stiles and kissing gates) as well the potential installation of a VAS speed control sign on Bluehouse Lane. CIL revenue is difficult to predict given the numerous variables impacting local building development, and hence, receipt of CIL funds from developers.

We are looking for external funding (National Lottery, community grants and awards) for some NP projects, e.g. playground at the Limpsfield Royal British Legion.

Our final (draft) accounts will be published shortly for public inspection prior to completion of the external audit.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk if you have any questions relating to our accounts or other Council matters. clerk@limpsfield.org.

Please find bank reconciliations and accounts summary on our website.

Our exercise of public rights notice is also on the website, commencing on Monday 15 June 2020 and ending on Friday 24 July 2020.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COMMITTEE

Cllr Ann Osborn

Registering Assets of Community Value

You may be aware of the Localism Act 2011, which provides for a scheme called, 'assets of community value'. This requires District and Parish Councils to maintain a list of 'community assets', which has also become known as the 'community right to bid'.

Assets of Community Value can be a building or other land for which the main use has recently been or is presently used to further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community and could do so in the future.

The process of registering them helps to protect these assets for the community for future generations and gives the community/Limpsfield Parish Council the option to buy any assets should they come up for sale.

The Parish Council drew up of our most valuable assets to apply for, to ensure their security for the Limpsfield community for future generations. We have already worked with The Bull Inn to secure their status as an asset of community value (in 2018) and have designated The Carpenters Arms, Memorial Stores and The Brook Field (between Granville Road and The Glebe Field) as further assets.

We have now submitted applications for The Carpenters Arms and Memorial Stores and will be following this up with The Brook Field shortly.

Limpsfield Village Conservation Area Appraisal

The historic core of Limpsfield Village was designated a conservation area in 1972. Since that time, there has been no formal appraisal of the area.

Policy LNP4 of the LNP plan provided broad guidelines for new development within the Conservation Area and the supporting text signalled the Parish Council's commitment to the preparation of an Appraisal and Management Plan.

A Conservation Area Appraisal is an objective analysis of the elements which together define the area's special architectural or historic interest. These elements will be largely physical, both man-made and natural, but can also include more ephemeral considerations, such as spaces, views, uses, and sounds. The objective of the appraisal and management plan is to provide a clear guideline (for both residents and the council) on which to manage the ongoing maintenance of and development within the conservation area.

Working with local planning expert and committee co-optee, Ted Beresford-Knox, we developed a tender document and invited three expert organisations to bid to carry out the Appraisal during 2020.

We will be ready to announce the winning bid shortly. The project outline will be discussed by Tandridge District Council in June, with a view to undertaking the project over the coming months.

Traffic speed, pedestrian safety, congestion and parking

We have been working closely with Tandridge District Council, Surrey County Council and Highways England to identify and monitor areas of concern in the Limpsfield Parish.

Over the last year we have:

- Funded and insured a replacement VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign) at the A25 end of Detillens Lane
- Supported Bluehouse Lane residents to set up a Speedwatch team and are currently working with the residents, SCC and Highways regarding the installation of a VAS on Bluehouse Lane.
- Consulted with TDC on the planning application for parking on the Dorothy's Cottage site by St Peter's Church hall
- Worked with SCC to enable the repositioning of the existing 'Unsuitable for HGVs' at the top of Titsey Hill and on the A25 traffic lights at the top of Limpsfield High Street
- Been in ongoing consultation with regards to any potential to upgrade or change the crossing outside of Limpsfield Infants School
- Been involved and suggested areas of concern for the annual SCC Parking Review (which looks at areas such as a need for double yellow lines and other parking restrictions). This comes into force over the summer.
- Consulted with SCC on the new contract for parking control and where we most need parking enforcement in the Limpsfield parish area.

We will be working with TDC, SCC and Highways and ask any residents to please keep in touch and email us with any concerns or suggestions.

Broadband delivery

For the past 8 years, Surrey County Council (SCC) has been working in partnership with Openreach and have deployed Superfast broadband speeds (24 Mbps or more) to approximately 83,000 premises in Surrey that have been excluded from commercial rollout plans.

Most of these homes and businesses have been given access to superfast speeds via FTTC technology. Only more recently has FTTP technology been deployed as the preferred solution as a result in improvements in technology and reductions in cost.

Approximately 1,000 additional homes are anticipated to benefit from FTTP as part of Superfast Surrey by the end of 2020.

However, there are still a great many homes that do not have access to superfast broadband and who have limited or no mobile (4G) coverage. One local community enterprise, AirFast, is a not-for-profit service set up by the local community (Crockham Hill Community Interest Company), for the local community. They already have almost 400 users in the area stretching from Crockham Hill to Penshurst and have extended the service through the Limpsfield area.

AirFast is a wireless service completely independent of BT and your phone line. It requires a small receiver, generally mounted high on your house – e.g. a chimney. See our website for more information or go to Airfast's website: www.airfast.net

On our website you will also find a number of solutions that can be considered for the majority of residents, together with the Government's ***gigabit broadband voucher scheme***.

These vouchers are available for community groups in Defra designated rural areas that are not gigabit capable and currently have broadband speed of less than 100 Mbps.

Vouchers worth up to £3,500 for each SME and up to £1,500 per residential premises are available towards the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections. Single connections are not eligible for additional funding.

For terms and conditions and more information, please see <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/rural/>

If you are interested in checking your current mobile or fixed line speeds at a home or business visit the Ofcom site here: <https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/>.

Shop Watch Scheme

We have consulted with various shop owners regarding potentially viable security measures. At this stage there is no demand for specific security that we could implement, but we will be liaising further with the local shops, with Oxted Parish Council and Tandridge District Council to see how we can support local businesses in any way they feel we can be of use.

Improvements to existing footpaths

In collaboration with the East Surrey Ramblers and Surrey County Council we have undertaken a lot of improvements to our network of footpaths in the area. Unfortunately, the coronavirus has hampered some of our intended projects and progress, but we've still made great strides in the right direction! We have:

- Walked the entire network to ascertain which footpaths needed work, and which stiles and gates needed replacing or changing
- Replaced 16 missing finger posts, including the post close to St Peter's Church
- Replaced or added waymark discs where signage was unclear
- Laid aggregate on the footpath from Granville Road to the River Eden and beyond - (more is planned for The Glebe Field and Stanhopes path to Hookwood)
- Replaced two stiles with kissing gates at Caxton Lane
- Cleared overgrown vegetation from many paths

We have a continuing programme of footpath improvements planned later in 2020.

Provision of Cycle Ways

Following the previous work put into developing a local cycle way, the project has been further researched by members of the LNP committee, together with Friends of Limpsfield Common and committee co-optee, Robert O'Donovan. At this point, the previous plan to create a cycle way from the Chart to the Village and beyond does not seem feasible due to the complexity of changing use of the existing network of paths that incorporate cycle, pedestrian and bridleways that can clearly not be used at the same time.

We have started mapping out an 'easy access' Limpsfield Way to cover the whole area that outlines a selection of walks to connect the parish. This will link up the main shopping areas and watering holes and be available online and in paper form.

We will still be working relevant authorities including SCC, looking at how Surrey as a whole is moving forward with its cycling policy and we will continue to look for solutions for safe cycle paths.

Greater community use of the St Peter's Hall and the surrounding area

- St Peter's Hall belongs to the Church. Its hall committee is committed to ensuring maximum use for the hall as a local business, providing necessary meeting space for local businesses, societies and clubs.
- The committee, now chaired by Dominic Campbell also includes one of our councillors, Mark Wilson, who is chair of the Planning Committee and on the Neighbourhood Plan Committee.
- The Parish Council has submitted a planning application for a new community noticeboard by the church hall, to be funded jointly by the Church and the Parish Council.

- We have also supported the Church in developing community activities at the Pavilion, which now houses Jon Rayner's Limpsfield Fitness (proving to be very popular) and have submitted our views to Tandridge Council on the planning application for the development of Dorothy's Cottage site, which will include additional parking. We have suggested this project might include the provision of Electric Vehicle Charging points. *NB: The planning application for this site has initially been rejected by TDC.*

Improvements to bus services

Our chairman, John Thompson and local resident John Tolley are looking at local bus services and consulting with Tandridge Council and Southdown to see what can be done to improve on transport options. We will update further on this as soon as we can.

Improving Communication

Having promised at the last AGM to improve communication between the council and parishioners, we launched our new website back in November 2019 and have made concerted efforts to keep you informed of Parish Council News and activity via our blog and social media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram feeds, as well as utilising other available local media, including the Parish News.

- Twitter @limpsfieldpc
- Facebook @limpsfieldparishcouncil
- Instagram @limpsfieldparishcouncil

If you are not on social media, you can sign up for email updates by subscribing on our website's home page. We hope you have noticed a positive improvement in our communications and welcome any other suggestions.

HIGHWAYS

Cllr Bob Harvey

Limpsfield Parish Council continues to work closely with our county Councillor, Cameron McIntosh and Surrey Highways. However, with the understandable restrictions caused by the Coronavirus, highway maintenance work has been somewhat curtailed recently, but we understand the road gangs are still out there working and taking advantage of the quieter road conditions.

Please do report any highway concerns to the Surrey Highways website at: www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport ...it is easy to use and very effective.

SGN recently completed a gas main upgrade in Bluehouse Lane, but we understand upgrades will continue in and around Limpsfield, which will require additional temporary road closures or restrictions and while this is an inconvenience, it is a necessary evil!

Surrey Highways are in the process of replacing the cats eyes on Titsey Hill and Titsey Road, and they also took the opportunity of re-erecting the 'Limpsfield Village' sign on the Titsey Road, thanks to our county Councillor, Cameron McIntosh.

Work continues on implementing the 'highway' initiatives in the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan, including the cycleway from Limpsfield Chart to Limpsfield, but again progress has been slowed by the lockdown.

Please go to our Website and Facebook Page for the latest updates. There is also a link on the website that takes you to Surrey County Councils roadworks page where you can see exactly what's going on in our area.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

Limpsfield Infants School Trim Trail

We have been working with Limpsfield CE Infants School and the National Trust to help the school to develop a trim trail just outside of the school's playground on Limpsfield Common. The School was the recipient of a Lottery Fund at the end of 2019 that will finance the project, and the Parish Council has leased the necessary land from the National Trust and funded applied for the necessary planning permission.

The Trim Trail is due to be installed in the next few months.

Community Playground for Limpsfield Village

Further to our note in the last newsletter, we have been looking at the possibility of a community playground that serves the north side of the Parish (Limpsfield Common/Village and Oxted border areas) and would be suitable for children ages 3-11 years old.

- We have considered several potential sites which have since been discounted due to issues relating to ownership, inadequate parking or lack of refreshment availability.
- One viable area currently under consideration is at the Royal British Legion Club at Grub Street who would like to encourage more families to use their facilities and help guarantee the future of the club.
- We have been running a survey from our website and via various organisations in Limpsfield, including The Legion, Limpsfield Infants School, Panda Nursery, St Peter's Church and Memorial Stores to ascertain residents' thoughts.
- To date we have received 154 responses, with 89% being in favour of a new playground for Limpsfield Village, and 84% believing The Legion to be a good site and 75% saying they would definitely use the new play area.
- Currently funds such as the National Lottery Community Fund are focusing on Covid-19 related projects, however we will be looking into grants and funding opportunities after the current crisis is over.

Parish Records

Our resident history buff, Cllr Ashley Fosdike has been clearing out the Parish Office (the original office located next to The Pound on Wolfs Row) and sorting / reviving all the historical documents, so we can get them properly archived and safe for future generations.

- Documents include all sorts of interesting finds; from deeds to the Village Green (in the middle of Stanhopes) and The Pound, minutes and agenda dating back to the 1700s, beautiful maps to poor relief payments and Workhouse records.
- We were intending on having these on display in the village at the Limpsfield Village Fete, but due to the coronavirus lockdown, this looks unlikely to take place, so we will look at other opportunities to display our historic finds and update you via the website and social media.
- Most of the important, historical documents will then go to their new, dry and safe home at the Surrey History Centre.
- We will also be revealing some of our historical finds can be read on our website, www.limpsfield.org.

Parish Office

Now that we have cleared out the Parish Office, we intend to put it to good use and will be looking at potential options. Your suggestions will be most welcome.

Parish Assets

We have recently undertaken an audit and review of all the Parish Assets, the register for which can be found on our website's document's folder.

St Peter's Noticeboard

We are working with St Peter's Church to replace the very dilapidated noticeboard at the entrance to the Church Hall carpark.

This will be jointly funded and maintained by The Parish Council and St Peter's Church.

Permission for a new standalone wooden and glass secure noticeboard to be erected on the verge near the bus stop and the notice board has been sought and we aim to complete this project as soon as possible.

For all enquiries on the contents of this report or for any other matter, please contact the Clerk, Sophie Martin on 07514 011355 or email clerk@limpsfield.org.