



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

It's been another busy year on the Parish Council and the last in its current tenure with elections coming up on 4th May 2023.

I am very pleased to have been able to continue to make progress with many of our projects, such as the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, Parish Assets refurbishment and archiving of our historic maps, as well as a continuation of our splendid Footpaths and Bridleways upgrades programme.

We have also managed to both start and complete The Limpsfield Way and Community Cycle Route over the last year.

I would like to thank all the Councillors for their hard work over the last four years, and in particular, thank you to Philip Bailey and Laila Turner who have served the Parish Council for many years, but who will not be re-standing in the upcoming elections.

Their contribution to the local community in general and to the Limpsfield Parish Council is hugely appreciated.

Also, thanks to the co-opted members of our committees, who have given their time, expertise and hard work to keep us moving forward completing a large programme of projects and improvements, with a welcome to our newest recruit, Tony Taylor who has stepped in this year as another co-optee onto the Planning Committee.

Following is an overview of activities for the year ending March 2023, but you can of course find a lot more information in our most recent newsletter and also on our website, www.limpsfield.org.

I am very pleased that we are in good shape financially with a tight control on finances and have funded and implemented some key projects over the last year and will continue the excellent work into the coming year.

John Thompson, Chairman

PLANNING UPDATE

*Planning Committee: Jenny Williams (Chair), Mark Wilson and John Thompson.
Co-opted members, Ted Beresford-Knox and Tony Taylor.*

Key points:

- In 2022/23 the planning committee considered 125 new development applications
- TDC approved 76 of these applications; and refused 8. A small number were withdrawn, not required to submit planning or asked to submit full planning applications. The rest are still not yet determined.
- In 2022/23, the LPC planning committee made 15 objections on the basis of LNP criteria. It is too early to say how many of these were upheld by TDC as half of these applications are pending decision.
- We commented on over 30 other applications to ensure LNP criteria were met and are pleased with the results / conditions of these applications.
- We have noticed a proliferation of annexes for a number of uses and have started to comment that if approved, these should remain ancillary to the main dwelling.
- Hedges and boundaries: With a number of developments in the area, we are now often making comments convey the importance of tree protection and green boundaries in Limpsfield. This is particularly important in the Conservation Area, but also in the residential roads of Granville Road, Bluehouse Lane and Park Road in particular where we are in danger of losing the green street scene.
- We are pleased to see that Green Hedges development has been reduced from 13 flats to 11, with no loss of parking spaces, however this development continues to be challenging with many conditions and updated plans, the last of which being to include balconies to the North and South facing elevations. We have objected to the North facing balconies and await the decision of Tandridge District Council's planning officers. This application has been called in to Committee by Cllr Ian Booth.
- Gaywood Solar Farm application: We have been liaising with our District Councillors and local residents since 2021, regarding the potential for an application to install a solar farm on the borders of Surrey and Kent at Gaywood Farm on Hilders Lane. *See separate entry below.* An application was received and is currently (at time of press) being reviewed by both Tandridge and Sevenoaks District Councils, with the application expected to go to Planning Committee in the next month or two.
- Hillview Farm – we were pleased to see the refusal of an application for residential houses on this site and hope to see it continue to sustain local / rural employment.

A list of Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan planning criteria can be found on the planning page of our website. We would urge residents to always consider these criteria before making planning applications to avoid unnecessary changes or refusals.

We would also advise that all residents in the Limpsfield Village Conservation Area pay particular attention to the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (p53-55) which deal specifically with development and renovation within the Conservation Area.

Gaywood Solar Photovoltaic Farm (TA/2022/963)

We referred to this planning application, which straddles both our Parish and Sevenoaks, in our last newsletter. Whilst we support renewable energy sources, we have strongly objected to this application due to its sensitive location.

Full details of our submission can be seen on TDC's planning portal or by request from the Parish Clerk. We are advised that the application is likely to go to a full TDC Planning Committee meeting in April 2023. It is our intention to present LPC's view in person at this public meeting.

AONB Boundary Review

The Surrey Hills [Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#) (AONB) is in the final stages of the boundary review, which will decide whether additional areas adjacent to the existing AONB boundary should also be designated. The consultation period runs until 13th June.

The Planning Committee submitted the following areas for inclusion within the revised boundary: West Heath, Limpsfield Common, Scearn Bank, Caxton, Swaynesland and Tenchleys - with the opinion that the whole of this area (LNP Character LCA04 - Wooded Greensand Hills) should be in the Surrey Hills AONB. The AECOM Limpsfield Heritage and Character Assessment Report, September 2016 (produced for the Neighbourhood Plan) was also submitted to support the submissions.

We are happy to say that most of the areas we proposed have been included in the consultation and await the conclusion of this project.

Listed Buildings and Local Listed Assets

A reminder that we generally defer to the Surrey Historic Buildings Officer for planning applications that relate to listed buildings. This includes not only listed buildings on the English Heritage register, but structures on the TDC Local Listings List.

Assets on local lists are not protected in the same way as listed buildings, but can be afforded protection through the planning system as 'non-designated heritage assets'.

We submitted 17 local structures for consideration, most of which we believe have been included in the updated list.

The Local Listings / Buildings of Character project is about to reach its conclusion and we await the publication of the final list on the Tandridge website.

When published, you will find the list here: <https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Planning-and-building/Conservation-and-trees/Local-heritage-list-project>

LIMPSFIELD VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PLAN (LVCAAMP)

We are delighted that following two years of work, the Limpsfield Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (LVCAAMP) was formally adopted by Tandridge District Council on 23rd June 2022.

The LVCAAMP is now a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and the boundary change and name change have also been agreed. Tandridge District Council has amended its dedicated page on the website, and this now also contains the SPD: www.tandridge.gov.uk/limpsfield.

We have started to create a management plan for the Limpsfield Village Conservation Area (LVCA), to include an enhancement scheme for the historic village centre.

Improvements to date have included the replacement of bins in the conservation area with more appropriate black bins and the addition of the ancient replica milestone opposite St Peter's Church. We have begun initial investigations into the renovation of the ironstone cobbles and paving within the Village Conservation Area.

We have started work on a useful pamphlet for residents and businesses within the "LVCA", which will advise on responsibilities, restrictions, dos and don'ts.

We hope this will serve to clarify any issues or questions you may have as property owners/tenants within the area.

We will also be drafting a pamphlet on Listed and Locally Listed buildings.

Laneway by The Bull Inn

This year, we also contributed to the footpath/laneway resurface by the side of The Bull Inn. This is officially a footpath, but also an "unclaimed road", so Surrey County Council is not responsible for its upkeep.

As part of our Conservation Area Enhancement programme and to protect the historic ironstone that borders this laneway, we contributed £1,000 towards the resurfacing, which was largely financed by The Bull and residents.

We would like to acknowledge the time and effort of the CAAMP working group and of Christopher Reynolds, Surrey County Council's Historic Buildings Officer, who has done a fantastic job on research and preparation of the draft appraisal and Management Plan.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

Neighbourhood Plan Committee: Ann Osborn (Chair), Laila Turner, John Thompson, Mark Wilson and Thomas Briggs. Co-opted members, Ted Beresford-Knox, Robert O'Donovan

We continue to make progress with the projects outlined in the Local Neighbourhood Plan.

Continued Footpath Improvement

- We are continuing our programme to improve local footpaths and bridleways, so that they are safer for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists.
- Councillors walk the parish's many paths fully on an annual basis, but regularly walk the frequently used sections to review and reassess any work that needs doing.
- We work closely with the East Surrey Walkers, National Trust, Titsey Foundation, other local landowners and the Friends of Limpsfield Common.
- Our policy is to take the least restrictive option when replacing stiles and we use self-closing gates where possible. However, landowners require kissing gates where the safety of livestock is the main consideration.
- In FY22/23, key footpaths projects have included:
 - Replacement / repair of several footpaths and finger posts
 - Replacement of the tricky stile with a kissing gate on the footpath (FP75) by Oxted School through the fields to the footbridge over the M25
 - Installation of a pedestrian gate at the top of Padbrook on the footpath into Priest Hill, following concerns by residents about the use of motor scooters and pushbikes on the footpath
 - Reduction of the gradient of the pathway from Granville Road to the Brook Field. This path is now much more user friendly and we have had very positive feedback, including from a wheelchair user who found it very easy to navigate
 - Cleared and "widened" The Pebble Hill Path, clearing much of the surrounding vegetation to allow the lighting to be more effective
 - Replaced the stile on footpath 71 that goes from Grub Street across to the A25
- Please contact us if you come across any inaccessible paths, tricky stiles or gates that need improving.

Biodiversity

We work alongside local organisations such as the Friends of Limpsfield Common, National Trust, and Woodland Trust to support any biodiversity activity in our area.

We are developing a biodiversity and sustainability policy for Limpsfield, and will be funding some environmental improvements.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Crime Prevention

- We continue to encourage residents to report all crimes in the area – both urban and rural.
- You can find all your local police contact details, tips, online reporting links and website for more information on local crime and crime prevention on our website. <https://limpsfield.org/crime-prevention-in-limpsfield/>
- We advise all residents to think about creating a road-based WhatsApp Group if you do not already have one set up due to Covid, or to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Whilst we do not coordinate such schemes, we are happy to help parishioners to find the right contacts to do so.

CCTV project

- Oxted Parish council is leading this project. The tender process is in progress and we are awaiting updates. We have committed to supporting this project when it eventuates.

Parking & Traffic Management

- We (with particular input from our designated Highways officer, Bob Harvey) continue to work with Surrey County Council / Highways (via Cllr Cameron McIntosh) on traffic and parking issues in the parish and would like to encourage all residents to let us know of any.
- We have engaged with Surrey County Council (Highways) to discuss how best to reduce traffic congestion in the high street. See our website /spring newsletter.
- We have also submitted suggestions to the 2023 Parking Review team, who are looking at Limpsfield High Street as a whole with a view to measures that can be undertaken to alleviate the pinch points in the village centre that cause the most issues.
- We support local Community Speedwatch groups and would encourage other roads to look to the examples of Bluehouse Lane and Detillens Lane if they are interested in setting up a Community Speed Watch in their road.
- We have once again earmarked funds for additional parking in Limpsfield Village should an area become available. If you know of any land / parking area that could be bought or leased by the Parish Council, please do get in touch.

LIMPSFIELD WAY & LIMPSFIELD COMMUNITY CYCLE ROUTE

We are delighted to have completed the Limpsfield Way circular walk and Limpsfield Community Cycle Route this year, following a year or so of the application process.

Both routes are being extremely well used.

- The project consists of a 4.5-mile circular walk, complete with new natural play area near New Road and beautifully made history boards along the route, as well as a “there and back” cycle route linking Limpsfield Village to Limpsfield Chart.
- Jon Rayner’s group of cyclists (from Limpsfield Fitness) made the inaugural cycle from The Bull Inn in Limpsfield village to The Carpenter’s Arms at Limpsfield Chart, on September 4th along the new path that provides a safe route between the two settlements that all ages and abilities can use.
- As the winter set in and muddy patches appeared, we laid aggregate on some of the worst parts of the routes – along the bridleway from The Limpsfield Chart Golf Club and across the golf course. This has been very successful and has kept the path fully usable for all during some incredibly wet periods. The resurfaced section of bridleway from Grub Street to Hookwood Park is also doing a great job.
- We have also installed new “beware golfers” signs along the route at key points. Please make sure if you’re walking or cycling the route that you do watch out for golfers. Please keep well out of their way and stop until they have taken their shots.
- Thank you to Surrey County Council whose Your Fund Surrey funded the project; East Surrey Walkers, National Trust, Friends of Limpsfield Common, Limpsfield Fitness, John Tolley, Deborah Langton, Richard Spiller, Barry Chandler, The Bull, The Carpenter’s Arms, Andy at Conservation & Access and Michael at Michael Butcher Landscapes for all their help and advice in making this happen and our District Councillors for their support.

Ann Osborn, Neighbourhood Plan Committee Chair

PARISH ASSETS

Limpsfield Chart Orchard

We have continued to maintain this space on an ongoing basis for local residents to sit in peace and enjoy the orchard trees, wildflowers and birdlife.

Bus Shelter Refurbishments

We have continued to maintain our bus shelters and other road-side structures and this year have:

- Renovated and rebuilt the wall at the Broomlands Lane Bus Stop
- Renovated the bench at the Horse Trough shelter at the end of Detillens Lane
- Cleaned, de-stapled and renovated the noticeboard, and weeded the bus stop at the village end of Detillens Lane.
- Replaced the boards on the A25 bus shelter opposite Limpsfield school and renewed / de-stapled the noticeboard panels in the other bus shelters.

We are very happy to see that flyposting is becoming less frequent!

Please note that while we encourage posters and information for genuine local community events and local businesses, you should ask for permission first and posters must be attached with pins and not staples please.

Parish Maps

We are lucky to have a great number of interesting local maps, which document the development of the area but have not had a permanent home for some time.

Many of these were sent to Surrey's History Centre last year and the ones that are A0 and smaller have now been scanned and catalogued.

These smaller maps are now in the Local History Room of the Oxted Library (situated in Limpsfield Parish). We urge residents to go to the library to have a look at them.

The Tithe Map, Book of Apportionments and 1869 OS Map of Limpsfield and the surrounding area will be going to the Surrey History Centre.

Parish Office at The Pound

Sadly, the Mulberry Tree at the Parish Office/The Pound on Wolf's Row fell victim to the winds of last winter, but in September, we planted a new Mulberry tree in memory of HM Queen Elizabeth II with a smart brass commemorative plaque.

We also planted daffodils around this area, which have looked lovely this spring.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ENDEAVOURS & PROJECTS

This year, we have given financial support to the following local projects and organisations:

Citizens Advice Bureau

- Oxted District First Responders - financial support for maintenance of 3 of the 4 Defibrillators – located at Grub Street Cricket Club, Carpenters Arms and St Andrews Way flats.
- Limpsfield in Bloom – financial support towards the purchase of plants. Limpsfield once again won Gold in the annual competition.
- Chart Cricket Club – funding of a Jubilee bench following the completion of the Outfield work that we also supported.
- Grub Street Cricket Pitch benches – provision of three new benches for use of cricket spectators, walkers and other visitors to the area.
- Jubilee Street Party – support for street closure and licensing.
- Coronation Picnic – financial support for entertainment at the Village Picnic on 7th May.
- Chart Fair – administrative support for the Chart Fair, as an official committee of the Limpsfield Parish Council, and associated activities, such as Coffee Mornings.

Jubilee Activity

We would like to thank the Jubilee Street Party working group, headed up by Richard and Nila Spiller for organising the Village Street Party held on 5th June, 2022.

Limpsfield Parish Council handled/funded the submissions for the street party event licence and road closure application as well as promoting the event to the local community.

The event was beyond our expectations and there was an incredible community spirit with hundreds of people attending the street party throughout the day and local businesses making a huge effort to be involved as well.

Coronation Activity

Following the very sad death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, we now look forward to the Coronation of King Charles Saturday 6th May.

We are happy to be supporting the Limpsfield Village Coronation Picnic on Glebe Meadow on Sunday 7th May, organised once again by a working group, headed up by Nila Spiller.

There will also be a Coronation BBQ at St Andrew's Church on the same day.

We will be providing flags for the Limpsfield Village area and Chart where requested.

Light Up Limpsfield

We once again funded and installed a Christmas tree in Limpsfield Village and lots of Christmas Lights, as well as sponsoring a tree in the annual St Peter's Christmas Tree Parade. We aim to do this on an annual basis.

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Finance Committee members: Mark Wilson (Chair), Thomas Briggs, Bernie de Haldevang, Laila Turner and John Thompson. Responsible Financial Officer - Sophie Martin.

Cash and Bank Reconciliation

The year-end bank reconciliation is complete and shows FY 2022-23 beginning with £65,693 in cash and ending with £67,177.

This includes £577 remaining in the LNP Project account used to ring-fence the Your Fund Surrey grant awarded for the Limpsfield Way & Cycle Route Project.

RESERVES / BALANCES	Balance brought forward from FY22	Balance Carried Forward 2023
General Expenditure (includes ringfenced reserve 50% of PRECEPT - £16658)	£33,522	£40,339
CIL Account - CIL payments must be returned to TDC if not spent within 5 years.	£16,624	£12,239
LNP / Project account. LNP A/C designated account for Your Fund Surrey grant/activity.	£0	£578
Chart Playground account for Chart projects (includes ring-fenced reserve of £10,000 - for Chart Playground decommissioning)	£15,546	£14,021
	£65,693	£67,177

Prudent Reserves

- The Parish Council maintains a prudent reserve equal to 50% of the annual precept – currently £16,658.
- In addition, the Council has reserved £10,000 in the Limpsfield Chart Account for Chart Playground repairs and decommissioning if required by the National Trust after expiry of the lease.

Total Reserves: £26,658

Earmarked Funds FY22-23

- In addition to our Prudent Reserves, the Council periodically sets aside funds in anticipation of significant expenditure.
- For FY 22-23, we set aside £10,000 for any potential off-street parking opportunities in Limpsfield Village,
- £2,400 was earmarked for the annual maintenance of the Limpsfield Way and Cycle Route, and
- £4,343 was set aside for the Limpsfield Way project contribution, if needed.

Total: £16,743 (unspent)

General Income FY23

- Core (excluding YFS Grant) Parish Council income in 2022/23 was £51,005, comprising Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds, VAT refunds, and the annual Precept of £33,315.
- Please note that our audited accounts income and expenditure includes £44,000 grant from Your Fund Surrey for the Limpsfield Way & Cycle Route project.

Expenditure FY23

- Overall approved (budgeted) expenditure for our Core activities (excluding Limpsfield Way Project) for FY22-23 was £54,104.
 - Total actual expenditure (not including Your Fund Surrey) to 31 March 2023 was £41,034.
 - *We have approximately £2,680 outstanding to pay for 2022/23 budgeted projects.*
 - Therefore, subtracting the payments made and outstanding payments against the budget, we were £10,390 under budget (approx. 19%) for FY23.
- ***This figure does not include expenditure on the Limpsfield Way project as this is maintained in a separate fund. See below.***

Please note all figures are not yet audited. See pie chart showing expenditure on following page.

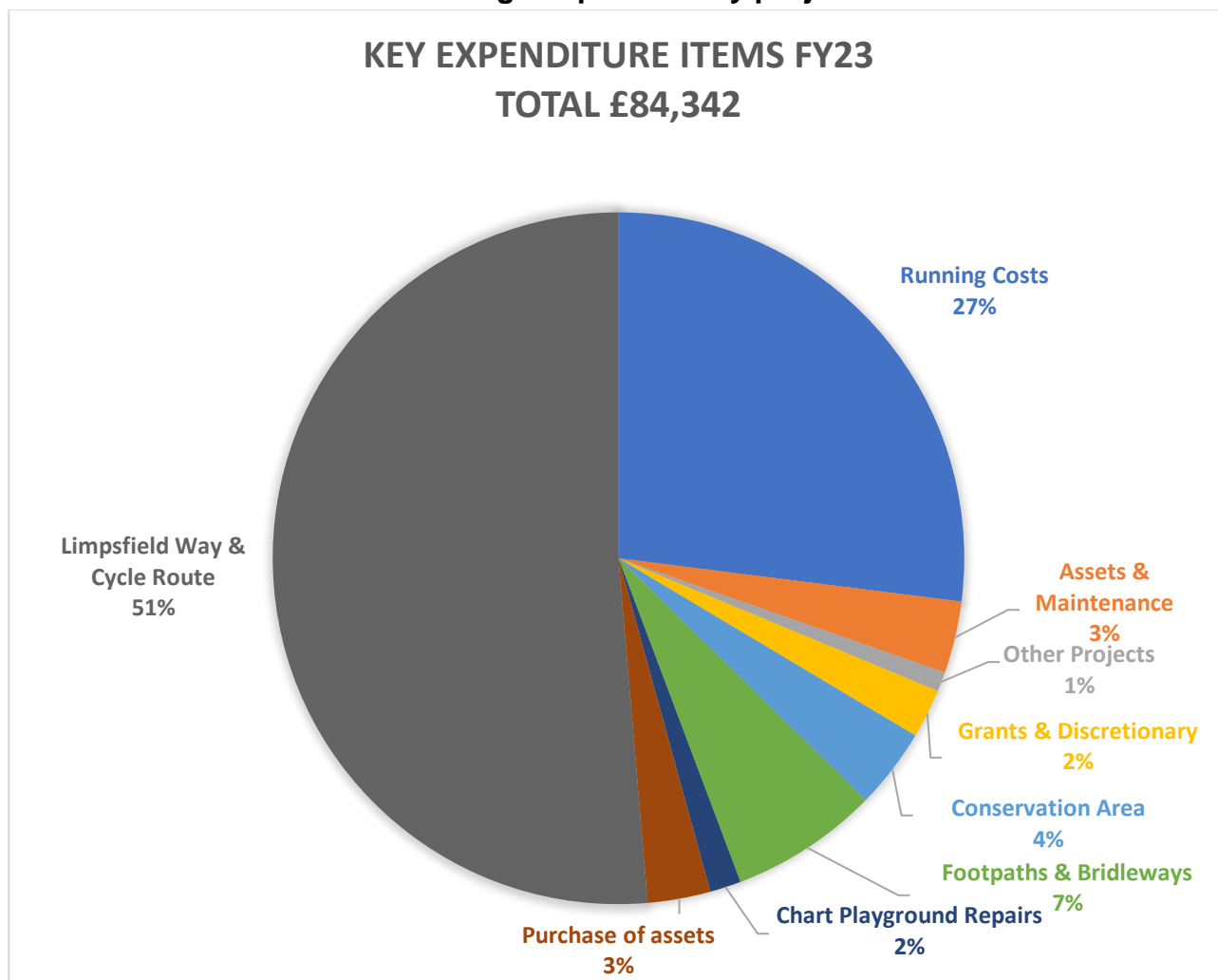
Your Fund Surrey – Limpsfield Way & Cycle Route Project

- As a requirement of the grant received from Surrey County Council, this project is managed from a designated, ring-fenced account.
- Balances, income and expenditure in the YFS designated account include the original grant plus VAT spent and subsequently reclaimed.
- Consequently, the reported income and expenditure for the account is higher than the original grant of £44,000.
- After taking out the accounting treatment for VAT activity, the account shows that we have spent £43,308 of the £44,000 YFS grant.

VAT

- In FY 22-23 the Council reclaimed £13,674 in VAT. The majority of this was for expenditure on the Your Fund Surrey funded Limpsfield Way project (which is funded ex VAT), the funds for which are held separately in a designated account.

**FY23 ACTUAL EXPENDITURE on KEY ITEMS to 31/3/23
Including Limpsfield Way project**



Percentages denote percentage of total actual expenditure to 31/3/23

Expenditure item	Actual spend
Running Costs	£22,774
Assets & Maintenance	£2,832
Other Projects	£768
Grants & Discretionary	£1,936
Conservation Area	£3,172
Footpaths & Bridleways	£5,850
Chart Playground Repairs	£1,230
Purchase of assets	£2,473
	Subtotal
	£41,034
Limpsfield Way & Cycle Route	£43,308
	Overall spend
	£84,342

Transparency Code and audits

Limpsfield Parish Council voluntarily complies with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities. In accordance with the Code, the Council's financial details are published on its website and this includes a list of all payments. The Code requires a list of payments over £100. All payments can be found on our website every month in the minutes of each monthly parish council meeting.

External Audit and the Annual Return

In accordance with legislation for local councils with a turnover under £200,000, Limpsfield Parish Council submits its Annual Return each year for a limited assurance external audit. The external auditor is PKF Littlejohn.

Audit dates

Local councils must publish on their website their unaudited Annual Return (or AGAR – Annual Governance and Accountability Return) along with the Notice of Period for the Exercise of Public Rights before July. Once the external audit is complete, the auditor's comments are also published on the website.

Internal Audit

In accordance with Audit Regulations, all parish councils have an internal audit for assurance that the council is conducting its affairs lawfully and handling its public money properly. An independent and competent internal auditor is appointed by the council each year. Our internal auditor is Mulberry & Co. Ltd, who audit many town and parish councils.

The internal auditor's report forms part of the Annual Return, which is published on the council's website, and any issues raised by the internal auditor must be noted by the council for future action before it completes its Annual Governance Statement for the Annual Return. Internal audit is the public's assurance that the council is proceeding lawfully and effectively.

We concluded another successful audit for FY2021-22 with no issues or major recommendations.

Mark Wilson, Finance Committee Chair

THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to our co-optees, official and otherwise, who have helped the neighbourhood plan committee and other councillors with their ongoing projects.

As you know, all the councillors are volunteers and carry out Parish Council work in their spare time, but in order to undertake all the projects and tasks we aim to achieve, we often need extra help for research and implementation of our activities – large and small.

We would love to hear from any parishioners who would be pleased to help out with projects when needed. Please email the Clerk if you're interested.

Thanks again to all those lovely residents who pounded the pavements again to help us distribute our newsletters. We are very grateful.

**All enquiries on any of the above, please contact The Parish Clerk
via email at clerk@limpsfield.org
or via our post box at The Pound, Wolf's Row, Limpsfield, Surrey RH8 0EB.**

**Please look out for updates on our website – www.limpsfield.org
And on social media [@limpsfieldparishcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/limpsfieldparishcouncil)**