



## 2021 Annual Parish Meeting – Chair's report

Dear all,

Last year in May 2020 we could not hold the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) due to Covid restrictions on gatherings. This year 2021 is no different, although happily now we can begin to see a return to 'normal' life. This year the Parish Council is publishing on the website and in hard copy, reports from the various Council Committees so that residents can see what the Parish Council has been doing over the past 12 months or so.

At this time of year – specifically in May – the Parish Council normally holds an Annual Statutory Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting. The Annual Statutory Meeting is held to elect the Chair of the Parish Council for the next 12 months and to elect Chairs of the various sub-committees, plus any other appointments where it might be necessary that someone represents the Parish Council. The Annual Parish Meeting has a different purpose. The Annual Parish Meeting is not a council meeting, it is a meeting of Parish electors and has to take place between the 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June. Electors can contribute to the agenda and so typically it is a time to celebrate past achievements and activities and debate current issues.

Clearly this May we cannot get together to debate or celebrate activities so I hope you will read the reports from the various Parish Councillors. Do let us know if you have any questions or concerns that are not covered here.

Since the last APM in May 2019, the Bandstand on the Village Green finally arrived, and a great opening ceremony and mini fair was held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2019. On the same day the WW1 Memorial Bench, designed and built by Plumpton College, was unveiled. The All Saints Lych Gate restoration project was finished and a re-dedication was conducted by the Rev Godfrey Broster on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

In response to concerns about speeding through the village the Plumpton Community speed watch group was formed and started monitoring speeds in July 2019. Several sessions were held up until lockdown in March 2020. We hope to start monitoring again soon now the CV19 regulations have eased.

### Councillors

At the end of 2019 Cllr Chris Thomson resigned and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank her for her service to the Parish Council and especially her sterling work on the Village Hall Committee. This meant that for a period we were down to 5 councillors but happily in 2020 more residents came forward to offer their service. In May 2020 Ron Jury joined us and is now active on the Playing Field committee and monitors our Risk Assessments and allotments for the PC. In June 2020 we welcomed Alison Gardiner to the council. Alison serves on Finance and Village Hall committees. Niki Shefras joined in September contributing hugely to the newly formed Planning Liaison Working Party as well as the Transport and Environment committee. In November we were up to full strength again when Jim Brown joined us. Jim is on the Playing Field and Village Hall committees and has already had a significant impact on both with his own digger proving extremely useful! All councillors serve on Planning matters but because of the current threat to over development by speculative applications, plus the Lewes Local Plan Part 1 expiry, we have formed a Working Group to focus on these issues specifically. It is this group which has provided the updates on the Web Site and Parish Magazine which we hope has been useful in keeping residents up to date.



## PLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

---

### Transport and Environment (T&E)

On the Environment side I'd like to thank Paul and Carole Nicholson for their great work for the community by raising awareness of this crucial issue and for their many articles in the Parish Magazine and indeed for their contribution to this collection of reports

As regards Transport – in response to residents concerns on speeding through the village a Community Speed watch team of volunteers has been formed. Community Speedwatch (CSW) is a national initiative where members of local communities join with the support and supervision of their local police to record details of speeding vehicles using approved detection devices. The Plumpton team monitor the speed of vehicles at 6 police-approved points on Station Road. If a motorist is caught speeding the vehicle details are recorded and sent to the Police who will send a warning letter to the driver. Repeat offenders will receive a visit from the local police, irrespective of where they live. We are always on the look-out for more volunteers so if you want to support your local Speedwatch team please contact Anita via [anita.emery@plumptonpc.co.uk](mailto:anita.emery@plumptonpc.co.uk)

To support CSW, the T&E committee has been investigating the installation of Vehicle Activated Speed signs in Station Road. These are signs that tell the driver what speed they are doing, and it has been shown these do have a positive effect on driver behaviour. We hope to be able to progress this project in 2021.

On the topic of road safety, we have commissioned a Feasibility Study from East Sussex Highways to look at how we can improve safety around the Station Road/Southdowns junction at school drop off and pick up times. We look forward to seeing what they come up with. Thanks go to our District Cllr, Rob Banks for helping us get this initiative started after his meetings with the ESCC Highways safety officer.

Whilst the Parish Council is of course willing to help there are web site reporting tools available now which, if you know about them, can save time if you see anything you think should be dealt with by the appropriate authority. For example -

- If you want to report a pot-hole or obstruction on the highway, or footpaths for that matter, or indeed anything that you think is a threat to road safety then please try the East Sussex Highways 'Report a Problem' site here:- [Report a Problem \(eastsussexhighways.com\)](http://eastsussexhighways.com)
- For abandoned vehicles or anti-social driving:- [Operation Crackdown](#)
- For property, street and environmental issues, including fly tipping, dog fouling, planning breaches and more:- [Report a problem - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils \(lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk\)](http://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

Finally I would ask all to please monitor the Parish Council Web Site on a regular basis. A lot of work goes into keeping residents up-to-date on many topics and you will find a lot of information and documentation on there. That said we are always happy to get ideas on how to improve our communications so if you have some ideas or maybe some expertise in this area please do let us know.

Cllr Nick Beaumont – Chair



## PLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

---

### **Council Finances**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic 2020/21 was a difficult year with the lengthy closures of the Village Hall and Playing Field and the consequential loss of income. These shortfalls being funded from Reserves. In setting the Budget for 2021/22 in December 2020 Council kept increases to a minimum 2% and funded the predicted shortfalls again from Reserves. However, this would most likely be the last year that funding day to day operations from Reserves could occur.

In March 2021, our Clerk, Anita Emery, was able to secure Local Restriction Support Grants from Lewes District Council designed to compensate for some of the lost income and Council is pleased to be able to report therefore that PPC remains in sound financial shape. Full details of its Accounts are reviewed and published every month.

PPC is under good financial control with internal and external audits being performed. The latest audit carried out by Mulberry & Co on 18th November 2020 stated that "Our testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements in the internal controls such that public money would be at risk. The clerk is very experienced, and it is clear that the council takes governance, policies and procedures very seriously." They concluded "It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Plumpton Parish Council are well established and followed."

On the subject of our Clerk, Council is pleased to report that she obtained her Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). This is a formal qualification around all the aspects of a clerk's work and provides the Parish and the PPC with greater reassurance its finances are under sound control.

We have agreed to donate to a number of initiatives for local groups and sports clubs that directly benefit Parishioners, both directly and through the S137 and other grants, including:

St Peters and St James Hospice

Station Partnership to maintain the flower trugs

Monday Group for the maintenance of local stiles

The Village Society to get some events started and plan for Jubilee celebrations

Looking forward, as development within our Neighbourhood Plan has commenced, we will start receiving Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) monies, so we can start planning for some bigger investment items as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Paul Burford.

### **Pavilion and Playing Fields,**

The main sports clubs (Archery, Cricket, Junior Football and Stoolball) have been subject to the strictures of the Covid19 lockdowns and have ultimately been able to take only as much advantage of facilities as their sport's governing bodies have allowed. Hopefully a return to full use will materialise before the end of the summer.

In the last year there have been several sizeable projects undertaken at King George Playing Fields and Pavilion.

The playing fields underwent a significant renovation programme, aimed at improving grass quality and playing conditions for the sports clubs and public. Grass cover this spring has subsequently shown good results. There is now an ongoing programme for turf maintenance which should ensure continued improvements.

In the pavilion, a full fire-alarm system has been installed. The men's toilet facilities there have been fully renewed, with plans for upgrading the showers too. A new security system has been installed, along with upgraded locks.



## PLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

---

In the playpark the wooden sleeper banking and steps around the slide and tunnel (will/should) have been completely renewed. Work to upgrade the entry gate and all the fencing will continue.

Cllr Peter Morgan

### **Village Hall Update 2020/2021**

Although it has been a difficult year, improvements to the Village Hall continue.

The bar fridges have been replaced and following a security breach, a video doorbell has been installed and an alarm system has been installed on all the doors. An online booking system for the Village Hall has also been developed and is now in operation on the Parish Council website.

During the first lock-down we undertook a deep clean of the whole building and installed 2 wall mounted hand sanitiser stations. We are grateful to Jane Donovan, the Village Hall Manager, for all her work in implementing Covid safe policies for hall users. The gradual reopening of the hall in line with government guidelines is now underway and we look forward to improved access/usage for 2021/2022.

Work has recently started to clear and replant some of the borders around the hall to improve the external appearance. The Village Hall Committee is also looking at possible projects for the management of the pond and the wild area that surrounds it.

Cllr Nick Satchell

### **Allotments**

Part of the allotments has had a recent overhaul with thanks to Cllr Jim Brown and Cllr Ron Jury. The work involved using a JCB digger to churn the areas with the intention of rotavating afterwards. However, two main challenges were encountered:-

1. When trying to rotavate the area near the stream, carpet and linoleum were found beneath the surface soil. This then required further turning over with the digger and removing the items.
2. The area to the right of the allotment area is so hard that further turning over with the digger is required before rotavating.

New crates have been installed for composting.

This has created some extra plots and those on the waiting list shall be contacted once the work has been completed. If you would like to be placed onto the waiting list please contact the Clerk.





## PLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

---

### **Plumpton Stoolball Club**

Plumpton Stoolball were able to play a few friendly games in August 2020 under strict lockdown conditions. We are hoping for more games this season but are awaiting instructions from Stoolball England.

We play in the Mid Division League of the Sussex Stoolball Association. Matches are mostly on Tuesday or Thursday evenings.

Please contact Jo Taylor if you are interested in playing. [Jo.taylor2012@btinternet.com](mailto:Jo.taylor2012@btinternet.com)

### **Plumpton Village Society – Annual Report (April 2021)**

#### Summary

Plumpton Village Society was formed in April 2020 and boy, what a first year this has been. When a group of interested Villagers got together in February at The Plough pub, nobody had any idea of the advancing Covid 19 Pandemic. As the Country went into lockdown on 23 March, a constitution was created and the Committee looked forward with hope, that a traditional Village Strawberry Fair could be held in the Summer. Sadly, it was not sensible to hold a full Village Fair given remaining restrictions.

The Committee has learnt a lot in its first year including the need for the Covid risk assessments to ensure events were held in a safe way. The concept of volunteer helpers who have been asked to help for only an hour was successful and with the Villagers support in numbers attending the 2020 events, the Committee feel they are in a good place to run the 2022 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Events for the Village.

We welcome any suggestions for events and if we have the capability to run events these will be added to the programme. A new website [www.villagesociety.plumptonpc.co.uk](http://www.villagesociety.plumptonpc.co.uk) (which we can develop over time) has been set up. Our thanks go to the Parish Council and Louise Sheeran for their help and support. We now also have a dedicated email address of [plumptonvillagesociety@gmail.com](mailto:plumptonvillagesociety@gmail.com) for messages.

#### The Village Society Aims

Within the constitution, all residents and those who work in the Parishes of Plumpton and East Chiltington automatically became members of the Society. Only the Committee members have financial responsibility for the Society and a Village Society bank account has been set up. We wanted to include East Chiltington as there has traditionally been strong links between these two villages, including the three churches and this continues today with family and friends involved in both. The stated aims are:

- To organise a Village Fair for the benefit of the communities of Plumpton and East Chiltington Parishes in the County of East Sussex,
- To organise other community activities for the benefit of the villages, as deemed suitable by the Committee,
- To be nonprofit making and to distribute funds raised to local worthy causes for the benefit of the local community as a whole.

#### 2020 Events

July 2020: Pop Up market for local businesses and crafters to sell produce as we came out of lockdown 1.



## PLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

---

October 2020: Apple Pressing and the transition from the existing team to the village society.

December 2020: Christmas Walk by Market as we came out of lockdown 2.

### Planned Events

May 2021: Coach trip to Wisley Gardens open to all, but aimed at those who have been shielding/isolating

June 2021: Strawberry Fair a traditional village fair for all clubs and societies to promote their activities.

October 2021: Apple Day to be a market incorporating the annual apple pressing and tabletop sales.

April 2022: A Pop up market for local businesses and crafters and tabletop sales.

June 2022: The Queen's Platinum Jubilee over the 4 day bank holiday weekend.

### Committee Members

Chair: Lee Stevens, Secretary: Rod Owens, Treasurer: Sue Brown,

Committee Members: Kathy Baker, Martin and Beverley Gilbert, Jane Hildyard and Carole Nicholson.

### **Climate Change**

**"Our planet is broken. Humanity is waging a suicidal war on the natural world. Nature always strikes back and is doing so with gathering force and fury."**

So said the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, in December 2020. Whilst the focus of attention has been diverted elsewhere, the threat of climate change has continued its insidious path in an inconspicuous way but actually with grave effect. The impact of rising CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and global warming will be far worse than Covid-19.

The more immediate pandemic crisis has challenged everyone around the world in unprecedented ways, never before faced in our lifetimes and the consequences, of course, will be with us for many years to come, even after the vaccination programme is delivered. What has been noticeable though is how every Government has had to engage and respond and that, just perhaps, shows that the world can come together and rise up to a challenge.

In spite of all the dire warnings about climate change, there are significant reasons to be cheerful about man's ability to find ways of, at very least, materially mitigating the negative impacts. Most countries have declared Climate Emergencies and have set net-zero emission targets, including the US and China – the world's two largest emitters of CO<sup>2</sup>. The United Nations has said that nations of the world must bring ambitious commitments to cut emissions to the international climate conference (COP26) which the UK and Italy are jointly hosting in Glasgow in November 2021.

Recently, we have shared our thoughts through a series of six articles in the Parish Magazine, and at the same time have sought ideas from residents as to how the people of Plumpton and East Chiltington can take action to mitigate against climate change, either as individuals or as a community. Some of the suggestions so far on next.

We hope to be able to discuss a number of these suggestions with the Parish Council in the near future.



## PLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

---

We also hope to be able to be able to meet with interested residents (once lockdown easing has evolved further) to take forward some of the great community ideas.

Carole and Paul Nicholson

### **Rob Banks – District Councillor report back**

The last year has been one like no other, with part of it spent in lockdown. The second part of the year has been dominated by the news that the government is saying the District Council will need to more than double the number of houses it has to find land for.

### **Covid 19**

I supported the work in the village to help those shielding or self – isolating when the first lockdown was declared. I set up a Facebook group to help get more people involved with helping out with shopping and pharmacy runs, as an addition to the existing networks such as the good neighbours scheme. It has been fantastic to see how our local community pulled together during this difficult time. Thank you to everyone who helped, you are all fantastic!

The District Council's "grey waste" refuse and recycling collections continued as normal throughout the pandemic at a time when so many other councils suspended some collections.

Lewes District Council set up a community hub, with thousands of calls answered and being made. 85% of calls focussed on access to food, and then to medications (working with the community pharmacy), and then to discussing concerns / anxieties. Emergency food boxes were delivered, either to foodbanks or direct to vulnerable individuals.

The District Council also supported Wave Leisure, who run the leisure centres across the District, as they had a £500,000 shortfall due to lost income during the pandemic.

The Covid 19 test centre is run by Sodexo, the contractor working for the government. Sarah Osborne and I got in touch with the Director of Public Health at the County Council about practical issues around signage. I also supported the Parish Clerk in getting the racecourse to contact site operators regarding lighting which was shining into nearby homes throughout the night when the site wasn't running. I understand the test centre will continue to operate until September at least.

Fly tipping incidents have more than trebled across the District during the pandemic. I reported many local fly tips for clearance. The Council has successfully prosecuted people recently for fly-tipping.

### **Buses**

I worked to ensure our (limited) local bus service was re-instated last summer following the lifting of the first lockdown. Following a request from local residents, County Councillor Sarah Osborne and I got a bus stop installed by the Fountain.

### **Rail station**

During lockdown I electronically handed in a petition against the parking charge at the train station, and worked with other residents on this matter. The daily parking charge is now £4.40 – still too high, but an improvement on the £6.60 that would have been



## PLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

---

originally charged. Earlier this year there was a quiet attempt to raise it back up to £6.60 but I worked to stop that. I also got the council to take action when Amazon tried to install a drop box without getting permission.

### **Affordable housing**

The new development at the rear of Oakfield, which was in the Neighbourhood Plan, will include the first new Lewes District Council housing in the village for over 30 years. I have followed up with local police, the District Council, the National Park and Dudman's (the site owners) about the disused sand quarry on Plumpton Lane. I arranged for LDC to pick up bags of rubbish collected by residents who have kindly cleared up the mess left by visitors on nearby roadsides and footpaths.

### **Potholes**

I've reported many potholes across our area for repair and I also reported missing street signs at Beresford Lane and East View Fields.

### **Planning**

The Government is intending to reform planning law. Under the government plans, land would be put into 3 different zones - for growth, renewal or for protection. The fear is that community voices could be stifled and councils will have very little say in whether to approve applications or not in 'growth' and 'renewal' areas. However, that would need a change in the law.

The more immediate issue has been changes in existing government policy which from May 11<sup>th</sup> will more than double the number of houses the council is expected to find land for in its Local Plan, and a change in government rules mean that Local Plans now need updating every 5 years.

As part of a "call for sites", Eton College, the owners of North Barnes Farm, have put forward their land for a potential 3,000 houses – which both I and County Councillor Sarah Osborne oppose.

We will also be opposing the speculative 89 house planning application for Nolands Farm, reasons include I believe the site represents an unacceptable intrusion into the open countryside. It will mean extra pressure on traffic, infrastructure, power and sewerage. It will also have a major cumulative impact on the village especially when taking into account the nearby sites with permission still to be built out.

[robert.banks@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:robert.banks@lewes.gov.uk) 07986 755246

### **PCSO Report**

Hello, my name is PCSO Nick Cox, I am based at Lewes Police station and I will be the point of contact for a selection of rural villages which include, Ditchling, Wivelsfield, Westmeston & Streat, Chailey, East Chiltington, Plumpton & St John.

As a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) I will deal with all sorts of incidents, from dealing with anti-social behaviour and taking statements from victims of crime, to providing reassurance and helping resolve community challenges.

PCSOs play a critical and visible role in helping keep our communities safe, identifying and protecting the most vulnerable, and preventing harm.





## PLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

---

While PCSOs do not have powers of arrest, they do have powers covering a wide range of situations including issuing fixed penalty notices, requiring contact details, seizing drugs and providing crime prevention advice.

We will soon have our new rural engagement van up and running. We are currently looking for accessible locations within the villages where people can come meet us and for us to provide a greater presence within the rural and hard to reach areas of our district. We will advertise the dates / times and locations once they have been confirmed.

**Clerk to Council** – Anita Emery E: [anita.emery@plumptonpc.co.uk](mailto:anita.emery@plumptonpc.co.uk)

**Village Hall Manager** – Jane Donovan E. [jane-plumptonvillagehall@outlook.com](mailto:jane-plumptonvillagehall@outlook.com) For bookings please visit [www.plumptonpc.co.uk/villagehall](http://www.plumptonpc.co.uk/villagehall)