

News and Views

Issued by Overton Parish Council
Information and Comment on Village Activities

February 2003

PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

From Parish Councillor Brian Langer .

Parish Council Meeting

This will take place on Wednesday 12th February 2003 at 7.30pm in the Community Centre. Public time is immediately at 7:30pm when parishioners may speak about Overton issues, with the main meeting starting not later than 8pm.

The committee meetings will take place on Tuesday 25th February starting at 7:30pm with Amenities, 8pm Planning and 8:30pm Finance & General Purposes.

The St Mary's Hall Management Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday 11th February at 8pm in St Mary's Hall.

The agenda and planning applications for each meeting are displayed on the events notice-board three days before the meeting. Minutes can be found on the notice-board inside the Community Centre.

Snowfall on 8th January

The county council admits that the gritting lorry followed the incorrect route when undertaking "priority 1 route" gritting on both the 8th and the morning of 9th January. As a result the top part of Red Lion Lane, Lion Close and Woodlands were not gritted until the late afternoon of 9th causing severe problems for those in the area.

A "Priority 1 route" gritter is expected to undertake gritting of the following routes after it has left the depot adjacent to the A303: along the C29, Sapley Lane, top of Red Lion Lane, Lion Close, Woodlands, High Street, Winchester Street, London Road, Station Road to the Mill and Church Road/Court Drove to the school before heading for Kingsclere along B3051. Only after the gritting team is satisfied with the condition of those routes will it move on to Priority 2 routes which include Dellands, Greyhound Lane and Waltham Road. Culs de sac will receive a very low priority and the overnight parking of vehicles may inhibit the gritter's success in gritting all the priority 1 and 2 routes. The B3400 between Whitchurch and Basingstoke is gritted by a separate team. The county council has been asked to consider adding Pond Close and Charledown Road to the priority 2 route to assist the many parishioners who use those roads to access Sapley Lane.

To work effectively the grit/salt mix requires traffic to churn it up and it also needs to be remembered that it does not function properly if the temperature drops significantly below freezing point.

Grit Bins

These should have been replenished after the icy weather in January. As it would be counterproductive to padlock the contents parents are asked to ensure their children do not treat them as sandpits; some bins were reported to have had

more grit outside than in when they were needed. Also the county council refused to fill one bin which had been used to dispose of dog mess bags until those items had been removed.

Splashing of Pedestrians

This village has been more fortunate than some places like St Mary Bourne which have experienced severe flooding. However, a plea to drivers from many pedestrians to be considerate when having to negotiate the numerous puddles that form on our roads. Sometimes, when two vehicles meet on a narrow road, it is impossible to avoid a puddle but more consideration would be appreciated. Arriving at school or work soaking wet with no opportunity to change clothes is very unpleasant. The county council is aware that there are many gullies around the village that are clogged up and surface water disposal would improve if they were suction cleaned more often.

Drivers can be prosecuted for careless and inconsiderate driving under the Road Traffic Act which can carry a penalty of 3 - 10 points on a licence depending on the seriousness of the offence. However, it would be necessary to obtain the vehicle's registration details and have witnesses prepared to support the prosecution. A complainant would need to convince the police that a prosecution was worthwhile as the case would require court time.

Overton Rights of Way Booklet

This is being revised by the Parish Council with the intention of having a new edition available by late spring. If you have any comments about the existing text please contact John Smith, the Parish Council's footpath representative ☎ 770305, by 12th February.

New Parish Councillor

Sarah Mills from Red Lion Lane was the only person to put her name forward for co-option following the resignation of Roisin Mirfin. The council was delighted to co-opt Sarah at the January meeting and she will serve until the elections in May.

Ashe Cross-roads Telephone Kiosk

This has been removed by BT despite the Parish Council's plea that it should remain.

Budgets for 2003/4

Parish councillors reported minimal parishioner feedback to the article in January's *News and Views* covering the proposed parish precept. Accordingly the council approved the proposed budget and this has now been submitted to the borough council for integration into Council Tax demands for 2003/4.

During Public Time at January's meeting a parishioner raised her concern about the reported significant increase in

the Police levy that will be included in the 2003/4 Council Tax demand. It was felt that the current extent of policing in Overton did not warrant such an increase.

St Mary's Hall and St Luke's Hall

A draft Business Plan for St Mary's Hall was tabled at January's Parish Council meeting; further information is being sought before approval is given. As of 28th January, the St Luke's Hall trustees had been unable to call an appropriate meeting to determine their future action, for subsequent report to the Parish Council.

Freedom of Information Act & the Parish Council

The Parish Council agreed that it would sign up to the above with some qualifications. Public access would be via the Clerk in the parish office at a charge of £5.00 per request. Information relating to the Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests would be clearly stated as being available only through the Monitoring Officer of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council as recommended by the borough's former Chief Executive.

Where Are You?

There have been cases recently where the emergency services have been delayed because of the difficulty in reading house numbers in the dark. Have you ever tried to read house names or numbers from the road in the dark? Make your whereabouts clear by use of reflective numbers or names as well as clear numbering at the end of the garden path, not just on the front door. It might be you the emergency services are trying to find the next time they are called out; when every second counts make it as easy as you can for them to help you.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Over 60's Drivers

I suggest that the Road Safety team in our County (*News & Views* –January) could use their time and money to better effect than monitoring 60+ age group drivers. This smacks of Ageism!

You only have to stand at the traffic lights in Overton for, say, 10 minutes, to see some of the worst cases of flouting road safety – driving over the speed limit, turning into Winchester St with one hand on the wheel and the other glued to a mobile phone -and all under the 60+ age group. I am all for road safety, proper vehicle care and passenger awareness, but please look beyond – or below- the 60+ driver. The HCC initiative is totally misdirected in this instance.

I am- you've guessed- an over 60 driver.
Desmond Warren, Crawts Rd.

Overton Boys Football Club

Overton Boys F.C. would like to thank the village for its generosity. We are truly astounded as Santa's tour this year raised £940, a record. Our nominated local charity this year is Hart Wildlife Rescue, who will receive half this total. We would like to wish the people of Overton a happy and prosperous new year. Thank you for the wonderful support. We hope the cowardly lout who threw an object at Santa at the top of Harveys Field, which caused him to visit

Basingstoke casualty department, gets his or her reward some time this year. Thank you once again.

Geoff Atkin, Overton Boys Chairperson

Wheelchair Thanks

On behalf of the Overton Methodist Church I would like to thank all those who offered us a wheelchair. We accepted the first one which was offered. Many thanks

David Denning.

Overton Playgroup Receives £904.

This years donations from people who came to see our Christmas lights have already been given to the Overton playgroup. We would like to say a very big thank you to all those people who ventured out in awfully wet conditions to see the lights and to make their donations. We hope you enjoyed the Christmas lights and their themes.

We are already planning for 2003! The donations that we received came to a staggering £804.91, furthermore, the Basingstoke Gazette awarded our efforts with "best festive house in the borough" with a prize of £100. We know that the playgroup will make good use of the money.

Pat & Geoff Green, Charledown Close.

Police Presence

After reading in *News & Views* December 2002, I was amazed to see that an office was required for PC Green to work, when in the village. There is a police house with an office attached, which is now up for sale. Will someone please tell me what sense it makes renting an office when there is one standing empty. We hear that police are leaving the area because they cannot afford to buy, but there is an empty house a policeman could live in. I have been in the village for 46 years and until the last 3-4 years this house has always been lived in.

Mrs D Price, Dellands.

Planning Application

I would like to thank the Parish Council for having no objection to my application to erect a tent at Tidnock Farm. Unfortunately the Borough did not grant planning permission and the tent has been dismantled. This is a shame as it was a lot of fun for the children to interact with the horses and each other and learn new skills.

S Jamieson, Burley Lane.

Ladies Watch Found

On Saturday 30th December in the Community Centre. Please ☎ 770703 if you have lost a watch and think this may be yours.

Mrs Edgcumbe.

TIDDLERS PARENT & TODDLER GROUP

From Carol Clifford.

You don't have to be stuck at home with small children when a warm welcome awaits at Tiddlers Parent and Toddler group. With plenty of space for the children to run around in, loads of different toys and activities, a drink and a snack – plus your chance for a coffee and a chat – Tiddlers is a great way to spend a Wednesday morning. We meet every week in term time, 10am. to 12noon at Laverstoke village hall. Please come along!

OVERTON BIODIVERSITY PLAN

From Kath Doyle, Chair.

The November edition of *News & Views* mentioned that such a plan was to be considered. Since then a group of interested parishioners has come together and held two meetings. The decision has been made to go ahead with this worthwhile plan and that broadly it will require the following strategies:

1. Identifying local plant and animal habitats (Overton has a variety of these including riverside, woodland, open spaces and hedgerows).
2. Gathering information about these habitats and, where necessary, drawing up plans to protect nationally or locally important species. (We already know that the River Test is of national importance and provides a significant home to wildlife).
3. Devising ways of making this information available to everyone within the parish and the wider community (Perhaps develop a series of marked Nature Trails).

All this may seem a huge task, but some work has already been done by various groups. Eventually what we do will find its place in the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire and the conservation priorities for Basingstoke & Deane as well as the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This includes all the area north of the railway line.

If you would like to know more about this project we would be delighted to hear from you. It is not necessary to have particular skills – none of us has all of these. Training will be available. The next meeting is on Wednesday 12th March, at 7:30pm in the Community Centre. Contact Kath ☎ 771032 or Ken MacKenzie ☎ 771121.

OVERTON RECREATION CENTRE

From Mike Williams, Vice Chairman.

Congratulations to the following prize winners in the January draw:

£500 W Gilbody £200 Dennis McCann
£100 Mrs Carter, Jason Charlton, Joanne Woodham.

The next draw will take place on Friday 14th February at 6:30pm in the Bridge Street Pavilion.

ORC AGM

This will be held on Monday 3rd March at 8pm in the Bridge Street pavilion. All members welcome.

LIBRARY NEWS

From Chris Vane, Library Supervisor.

Our New Year storytime had snow as its theme. Let's hope that by the time you read this, snow and ice will be a distant memory!

Our story sessions continue on the second Wednesday of each month, and we look forward to seeing old and new friends this year.

For those of you who haven't discovered it already, there's a new service available from the Hampshire libraries - books, videos and CD's may be returned to any branch in the county. The only exception is items which have been obtained for you from outside Hampshire. As these require special paperwork, they MUST be returned by you to the branch which supplied them.

LITTER PICK

From Overton Action Group.

Following the success of last year's litter pick Overton Action Group will be repeating the event on Sunday 9th February. Meet in the community centre car-park at 11am (weather permitting) to clear the local lanes and byways of all those drink cans and crisp packets. Litter pickers will be provided, as well as transport to the outlying areas of the village.

TESTBOURNE NEWS

From Teresa Reynolds, Governor.

Testbourne has proved a popular choice for pupils starting secondary school in September. We have received nearly 170 applications for our 140 places in Year 7. In order to be able to offer places to all those who made Testbourne their first preference, the Governors have agreed to make six rather than five tutor groups. This still means that we have had to refuse applications from some families. We regret having to do this but in doing so have borne in mind our wish to maintain reasonable class sizes.

We were delighted to hear from the LEA that two of our science labs stand a good chance of complete refurbishment in the new financial year. They have been included in a county bid for New Deals for Schools funding. Initial plans have already been drawn up and we hope to have the labs ready for pupils from September.

OVERTON PLAYGROUP

From Carol Clifford

We'd just like to bring you up to date on some of the fund-raising which has taken place over the past few months. Our sponsored toddle around Overton raised a fantastic £630 for Children in Need while a collection and tombola held at our Christmas Sing-a-Long brought in almost £130 for Playgroup funds. We'd also like to say a huge thank-you to Pat and Geoff Green who once again kindly donated the £904 proceeds of their magnificent Xmas light display in Charledown Close. This will make an enormous difference to the children and the first item on our shopping list is a fabulous range of new dressing-up outfits.

Anyone thinking of sending a child to Playgroup is welcome to drop in for a visit or contact Amanda Igo, Playgroup Leader, ☎ 770370. Please note that there is currently a waiting list and that children should be registered as soon as possible.

DEADLINE NEWS & VIEWS

This will be 16th February. Please send your articles to the editor in writing, on a PC floppy disk or by e-mail. The email address is Reynoldsxx@aol.com

OVERTON CHORAL SOCIETY

From Gill Corbett.

Our Christmas concert was very well attended and enjoyed. As well as the community carol singing we were treated to a medley of Christmas music composed by Paul Holmes and performed by a string quintet. The concert raised £304 which we donated to the May Place hostel in Basingstoke. Our next concert will be on Saturday March 29th in St Mary's Church which will include a come-and-sing performance of Stainer's Crucifixion.

GARDEN SOCIETY

From Marion Lambert.

Our Programme for the year is as follows:

13 February	Ile de France (French Gardens)
13 March	Diary of Nancy Thring
10 April	Pelargoniums
3 May	Plant Sale (Community Centre)
8 May	Fuschias & Containers
12 June	Village Open Gardens (Members only)
19 July	Loseley Garden Fair (Coach outing)
August	Sunday (date to be advised) visit to Longstock Water Gardens
11 September	Visit to Artscape (featured on Meridian TV) & Tufton Manor in Whitchurch
9 October	Ornamental Grasses
13 November	Bees & Candles
11 December	Christmas Event

OVERTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

From Paula Baker, Chair, OCA.

We thought readers would appreciate an update on our scaffolding. The work is being organised and funded by Hampshire County Council, and we are very grateful. It appointed a contractor who had scaffolding erected, but there was delay until Listed Building permission was granted. The County was not happy with the contractor and appointed another. One chimney has now been re-pointed, at the time of writing another is just about to be done— so two lots of scaffold may be gone by the time you read this. The third chimney needs to be taken down and rebuilt while the heating is disconnected. We therefore asked this to be left until the Easter break so that all activities can continue in comfort. This means the third lot of scaffolding must stay until then. The cost of the scaffolding is not coming from the “public purse” but is borne by the first contractor. Frustratingly, the work has been slow, but is essential. The Community Centre will be enjoying its Silver Jubilee this year. The building has been run by local volunteers - the Community Association -since 1978. We will be celebrating on July 11th and 12th, so please make a note of the date and come along and join us! If you went to school at the Community Centre we'd really appreciate your recollections of it and perhaps you'd like to take part in the event. Please contact me on ☎ 771219. Thank you.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Readers should note that the comments given are those of the Parish Council; the Borough Council does not necessarily endorse them when arriving at its decisions.

BDBC 54709 Erection of 14.5m high telecommunications column with two antennae and equipment cabin. Noted that applicant had determined that it was not possible to share masts of other telecommunications providers in the area to meet this specific need.

Comments and contributions for *News and Views* are welcomed by the editor, Teresa Reynolds, The Three Horseshoes, 41 Winchester Street, ☎ 770248, e-mail reynoldsxx@aol.com. The editor reserves the right not to print articles without giving a reason.

For problems or comments about Parish Council matters, contact the Parish Council Chairman, Sue Johnson, 19 Lordsfield Gardens, ☎ 770975 email sue@johnsn.freerve.co.uk or Vice-chairman Lucy Sloane Williams, 1 Riverside Close, RG25 3JU, ☎ 770607, email LucySloaneWilliams@btinternet.com or Clerk to the Council Laura Harley, Oak Tree Lodge, Roundwood, Micheldever, Winchester, Hants. SO21 3BA, ☎ 01962 774296, email laura.harley@virgin.net.

OPC wished to formally express concern at the lack of consultation by the applicant with the Parish Council. There remained general concern about long term health implications from the siting of such masts close to areas used by the public.

EXERCISE FOR FITNESS

“Don't want To Go To The Gym? Why not come along and join Caroline Mills for an aerobics and body conditioning class on Friday mornings – time 09:30-10:30am venue: St Luke's Hall, Winchester Street. For further details please call Caroline Mills ☎ 397742.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

From Public Transport Representative Brian Langer.

Trains

Station Parking

There is a possibility that the Parish Council would be successful if it applied for a Parish Transport Grant from the Countryside Agency to provide a mini-bus service for those using the station for commuting. This would be based on an expansion of the current Village Shuttle service and its purpose would be to encourage commuters out of their cars to alleviate parking problems in the station area. This is not a straightforward matter as those who might be willing to give an early morning Shuttle a try could be turned off the idea if those who did not participate continued to get free parking and enjoy the comfort of their own vehicle to and from the station.

There is a lot to be done yet on this project but it is expected that a questionnaire seeking commuters' views will be issued in a windscreen “drop” in the next couple of months for return via Les Dan at the station ticket office.

Buses

Stagecoach Hampshire Bus services 76/86

Apologies from the Operations Manager at Andover for the overcrowding which occurred in mid January when single decker buses had to replace out of commission double deckers on the commuter runs to Basingstoke. Double deckers should have been reinstated by now.

Countywide Travel service 76/86 Sundays only

There have been reports that season tickets issued by Hampshire Bus are being refused when passengers wish to travel on the county council subsidised Sunday service operated by Countywide Travel. This is causing problems for those with Sunday jobs in Basingstoke town centre and for those who wish to make use of their ticket seven days a week. The county council has been asked to clarify matters as it has always been understood that, under the terms of the contract, an operator of a subsidised service has to accept tickets issued by another operator on that route where there was no competition on specific days.
