



SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT YEAR 2018/19



A message from the Chairman Cllr Graham Watkins

As we approach the end of the Council's financial year, I have pleasure in providing a summary of the matters addressed over the past twelve months.

Southwater continues to expand with the Wates/Miller and Berkeley's developments ongoing. A boundary change has now been agreed whereby the southern development is now included within the Southwater Parished area. This is particularly important going forward as many of these new residents use not only the schools, doctors, dentists but many of the other services available in the Southwater area. Welcome to all new residents to our community we hope that you will enjoy living here.

We are delighted to see that the new northern slip road onto the A24 at Hop Oast Roundabout, has decreased the backup of traffic at this busy junction.

Section 106 contributions have now started to flow in and the local schools will soon see the benefit with both the Junior and Infant Academies benefiting from new portable buildings funded through developer contributions. Our thanks to all involved in making this project happen including School Governing Bodies, District and County Councils.

We are working on a review of the Leisure Centre as monies become available from the developers and we will be upgrading the centre accordingly to bring it into the 21st Century (see more inside).

We are pleased to announce, that having evaluated various options in relation to the future of Southwater Leisure Centre, including outsourcing to Places & People. The Council, in order to reduce over a two-year period the cost to the public purse, agreed to pursue the option of a Community Interest Company (CIC). This is still in the early stages and legal discussions are ongoing, the intention is to reduce further the burden on local tax payers.

The budget for Year 2018/19 was extremely challenging as have been discussions relating to the Budget for 2019/2020. Various assumptions made when setting the Budget in January 2018 have not been met with large variances in terms of both income and expenditure (highlighted in our Spring 2019 Newsletter). The Council's Accounts and Budget details are available on the Council's website (www.southwater-pc.gov.uk).

Special Points of Interest

- Public Realm
- Section 106 Agreements/
Community
Infrastructure
Agreements
- Neighbourhood Plan Update
- Coming Soon



Staff costs are also being evaluated to see where savings through outsourcing can be made along with other cost saving measures including bulk purchasing.

The Parish Council recently signed the lease of Easteds Barn. This facility will be leased and managed to Little Barn Owls, who have an outstanding reputation as a Nursery, with many parents already taking advantage of having such a Nursery in the Parish.

The Southwater Christmas event was this year organised by a large group of volunteers, with both myself and the Vice Chairman of Council taking on the main responsibilities of the day. Our thanks to all involved.



It is hoped that going forward the newly formed Southwater Community Partnership will take this year's (2019/20) event forward. The Parish Council and the Lintot Square shops will continue to provide the Christmas Lighting which is so admired around the District.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors and the hard-working Parish Council staff team for their support and efforts over the last 12 months. I would like to pay tribute to ex-CLlr Laurie Apted who had to retire due to ill health and welcome CLlrs Mike Lewis and Nikki Knott. All Councillors are subject to Elections on 2nd May 2019.

Community Wardens

We are delighted to inform you, that despite initial problems in taking forward this project, interviews have recently been held and offers have been made to two applicants by the District Council.

Upon the successful appointment of the Wardens, there will be a period of training to be undertaken after which they will be based in Beeson House, Southwater.

The Wardens, will work a variety of shifts and their duties have been agreed between the various parties.

Southwater Community Partnership

A Memorandum of Understanding has been entered into with this new Community group and a list of agreed objectives put in place. Further discussions are ongoing in relation to the Constitution of the Organisation which has still to be agreed between the Community Partnership and the Parish Council. Meetings have taken place and if you are interested in becoming more involved in the Community we would ask that you contact Derek Moore on 01403 730885 who is acting Chairman of the group at this time.

Southwater Neighbourhood Plan

We are delighted to confirm that the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan has been approved by the Parish Council for Regulation 16 consultation by the District Council. There will however, be a slight delay due to the Elections which are about to take place. Thereafter, the Plan will go to Examination with a Planning Inspector appointed. All being well the Plan is then taken forward and a Referendum held within the Parish. If approved by you the Electorate, then the Community will achieve not the 15% of the community Infrastructure levy on housing developments currently available but 25%.

Section 106 Development Gain & Community Infrastructure Levy

The Parish Council has been relatively successful in the past in persuading the Planning Authority to put these monies against specific projects identified by you, our Community, in the Survey of 2015.

An example would be monies to provide land to ensure that the Community has sufficient land to enable young people (c.35% plus of our population are under 18) to take advantage of sporting opportunities without the need to leave the area.

New Facilities

Section 106 Development Gain & Community Infrastructure Levy (Continued)

Ways in which we may achieve this are being investigated and include improvements to the Leisure Centre provision and provision of more sporting grounds.

However, the majority of Section 106 gain does not fall to the Parish Council, but to the District Council for waste management etc., and the County Council for both highways, libraries, education (schools), fire etc.

We do ensure that where possible we are involved in the discussions regarding the spending of such monies and have recently assisted the discussions between local authorities and the Infant & Junior Academies in terms of provision of new classrooms.

Coming very soon:-

- New Community Building in Church Lane (Berkeley's Development)
- New concrete Skate-park and BMX area
- New Multi User Games Area (MUGA)
- New Large Play-area (close to the Downlink and the above facilities)

Public Realm

The Parish Council owns vast areas of public realm. This land is managed by the Parish Council who every two and a half years carry out a tree survey.

However, with wetter winters, milder springs and hotter summers tree stocks have flourished in terms of growth causing alarm for many residents whose property lie directly adjacent to such land. Our Tree Policy has now been approved and is available on our website (www.southwater-pc.gov.uk). Works have been carried out as recommended by the Tree Survey during the financial year.

Tree works which were the most urgent have been undertaken by our contractors, around the bird nesting seasons.

We intend to improve, our grass cutting and land-management including, where possible, the upgrading of play-areas, benches, bus shelters etc. You will have noted hopefully some improvements already.

Two further bus shelters will be provided as part of Development gain one being at the Cock Inn (where there was originally a bus shelter) and the other will replace that at the Village Hall. The Parish Council were successful in persuading the Planning Authority that there was a need and this has been included within the Section 106 Agreement with Berkeley's



Health & Wellbeing

We continue to support and discuss opportunities to help and assist groups within our Community in order to tackle Dementia; this is something that can strike any family at any age. There is a thriving Monday group

based at the Leisure Centre, with the Friday Luncheon Club now meeting from 12noon – 3pm each Friday. The Young at Heart group meets in Beeson House each Friday afternoon (based in Youth Club).

Southwater Patient's Participatory Group

I am delighted to represent the Council on the Southwater Surgery's Patient Participatory Group with the District Group of PPG's from other practices also meeting in Southwater.

Age UK

We continue to support Age UK Horsham with an appointed representative from the Parish Council attending meetings and take an active interest in the welfare of our older generation. The office team are often asked for assistance in completing a variety of forms and are happy to engage with anyone requiring assistance or sign-posting to others who may be able to help the person/resident concerned.

Southwater Parish Council Website

We are delighted that having redesigned and simplified the site, removing unnecessary text and navigation and is more mobile friendly. The feedback is that you can get around the site more easily to the information and services you require.

Using the new website will also help us to deliver our services in a more cost effective way, so the next time you need to get in touch, why not do it online? We hope you will find the new site easy to use and that you find what you are looking for. <http://www.southwater-pc.gov.uk/default.aspx>.

Parish Councillor Surgeries

Come and meet your local Parish Councillors, District and County Councillors on the first Saturday of each month commencing at 10am in Beeson House. Tell us about your issues that concern you. A Full list of Councillors can be found on our website <http://www.southwater-pc.gov.uk/Councillors.aspx>.

Old Railway Bridge – Flower Boxes

Our thanks to the local Guiding groups who late last year planted the flower boxes situated on the old railway sidings by the Bridge in Worthing Road, these are just flowering and provide a lovely scene for those visiting the Community via the Downlink.

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Building Community Partnerships



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