

# Hook Parish Council

## Annual Report 2008 – 2009



### Chairman's report

For the first time, the Annual Village Meeting on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April will be held in the new Elizabeth Hall. As usual we will start, **at 8pm**, with a number of exhibits provided by the many organisations who work with us, in and around Hook, throughout the year. This year there will be many familiar faces from the Hampshire Constabulary, Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Hart Community Safety and Environmental Health, Neighbourhood Watch and the Hart Neighbourhood Centre.

We are also delighted to welcome, for the first time, representatives from RAF Odiham, Odiham Cottage Hospital and the Hook History Group. The formal part of the meeting will start at 8.45pm with answers to your questions.

Please submit questions in advance either by e-mail to **clerk@hook.gov.uk** or by letter to the Parish Council Office by Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April so that we can carry out the necessary research. Questions that are not submitted by that date or are handed in on the night will be answered if time allows.

We have in the past year completed and paid for the new Elizabeth Hall. It is paid for thanks to all Hook Residents, who have contributed 40% of the cost of the building through your Council Tax. Each household has contributed, on average, £20 per year or approximately 38p a week, as was agreed at the Annual Village Meeting 6 years ago.

We had hoped that we might have been able to cut that amount from the precept this year but we have been advised that the Community Centre is badly in need of refurbishment if it is to last another 30 years. Therefore we propose, subject to your agreement, that we will continue with the 38p per week for another five years to enable us to do a proper job of looking after Hook's other great facility.

I would like to thank our backroom team who work extremely hard to keep the Parish Council fully aware of what is happening throughout Hart and in much of Hampshire as well. Without their patience and willing help we would be hard pressed to do all that we do each year. Very many thanks Anne, Christine and Marian for a job extremely well done. We never know what the coming year will hold but I am sure it will be managed as effectively as the year that has just passed.

**Nigel Carpenter**  
chairman@hook.gov.uk

### Elizabeth Hall Opening



*Parish Council Chairman Nigel Carpenter welcomes HRH Prince Edward on the stage of the new Elizabeth Hall.*

*Photo: Pete Bryan / Alan Bowman*

After four years of planning and eighteen months of building the new Elizabeth Hall was finally finished in 2008. His Royal Highness Prince Edward the Earl of Wessex kindly agreed to open the new hall on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008. In all, nearly 170 residents of Hook were in the Hall to meet the Prince.

The Earl of Wessex was able to meet many of the current users including the nursery, U3A, our regular police officers, the builders of the hall, the Hook Eagle Morris Men and Hook Players. In the hour of his visit he shook hands with approximately 60 people and spoke to many more. He particularly enjoyed his time with the representatives from Hook Junior School. Thankfully the actual opening went very smoothly, the curtains opened, and the children cheered as he had requested.

Particular thanks for a splendid day must go to the Parish Council staff, who had the major chore of making certain that all were there, everything was operating, and that the "sniffer" dog did not find anything nasty. Well done to them all.

I am also glad to report that the hall has been fully paid for and that the Hook Village Halls Charitable Association has agreed to manage and run the facility. We can therefore say, with confidence, that the current and future residents of Hook can enjoy a wonderful facility for many years to come.

**Nigel Carpenter**  
chairman@hook.gov.uk

## Development Strategy Committee

The current economic environment has taken its toll on new building throughout the country, and Hook has been no exception. Currently there are no proposals for substantial new developments in Hook in the pipeline.

Regrettably, this does not mean that future development has gone away. Despite the respite, when money becomes available Hook will come under pressure once more. There can be little doubt of this, particularly as the Government is already in the process of making approval for new building much easier. The latest theme is a “hub and spoke” pattern with communities built on roads leading from the centre of an existing community. Each new community should have its own independent shop, pub, restaurant or village hall. With businesses already established in Hook finding it hard work to break even in the current economic environment, more competition is unlikely to be of benefit.

Thank you very much to the 400+ households who returned the Housing Survey Form that was delivered with the Annual Report last year. Whilst there are 3,000+ houses in Hook, the response was well above average and provided us with a good statistical response to the questions we asked. The results provide us with a picture of the future housing requirements of the current residents of Hook. One important finding is that there are an ever-increasing number of older (20yrs +) children living at home, whilst trying to afford a home of their own. Possibly the only good to come out of the economic downturn may be to help them achieve their aim.

The coming year will see the launch of Hart District Council’s (HDC) Local Development Framework (LDF), the plan of how HDC intends to meet the Government’s housing requirement over the next 15 years. It will involve us in a large amount of reading to ensure that we understand all the nuances written into the documents and are able to respond appropriately to their proposals.

**Nigel Carpenter**  
chairman@hook.gov.uk

## Allotments

Throughout the Second World War, and after, allotments were very popular both as a way of growing inexpensive food and as a hobby. The change of habits in the 1950s, due to more plentiful supplies of food in the shops and different uses of recreation time, led many allotments to fall into disuse. The allotments in Hook were privately owned and in the early 1960s their owner sold the land to a developer who built Grand Parade on the site.

As a result of the current desire for home-produced food we have been receiving an increasing number of requests for an allotment. However, all the parcels of land in Hook transferred to the Parish Council by developers carry restrictions on their use: they must be available for use by residents as a whole, so cannot be divided up and allocated for the exclusive use of particular households. We have now identified a small piece of land at the northern end of Holt Park, which does not carry such a restriction.

The project is at an early stage but our current thinking is that the Parish Council would fund start-up costs such as fencing, initial preparation of the land and a cost-effective supply of water, as well as obtaining Planning Permission for allotments on the site. The land would then be leased, at a nominal rent, to a new Hook Allotment Holders Association. This would manage the site on a day-to-day basis and run the relationship with allotment holders who would each pay their share of the running costs of the site to their Association.

We already have a number of names on file but believe there may be others who are keen to be involved in setting up and running the Association as part of having an allotment. This site would have space for only around ten allotments so if, as seems probable, a greater number of households are keen to join the Association it would be necessary to draw up a list of criteria for eligibility in conjunction with applicants. If you wish to be involved, please contact the Parish Council Office as soon as possible.

**Antony Hunter**  
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## Planning Committee

This year has been extremely quiet for the planning committee. The requirements to protect the Special Protection Area (SPA) for wildlife at Hazeley Heath have restricted development over most of Hook; the economic downturn has slowed house sales and made developers less willing to proceed; and new rules on Permitted Development Rights mean that many minor extensions no longer require planning permission.

Planning applications are now received electronically, rather than on paper. All applications are available on the web. A link is available via the Parish Council website, on the Useful Links page.

The SPA position is still unresolved, but Hart District Council has issued a strategy to work around the issue. New houses require a designated open space area (a SANG) to allow residents to walk dogs etc. without disturbing ground-nesting birds in the SPA.

There are currently only two such potential areas in Hart: one is at Hitches Lane in Fleet and the other is Bassetts Mead in Hook, which is owned by Hook Parish Council. The Parish Council has not so far agreed to Bassetts Mead being used in this way.

**Jane Bonnin**  
jane.bonnin@hook.gov.uk

## Amenities Committee

The Amenities Committee looks after all the facilities maintained by the Council – pitches, parks, trees, playgrounds – as well as general improvements to the Parish. We are always looking for new projects to improve the quality of life in Hook. If you have any ideas, please get in touch with the Parish Council Office, me, or any Parish Councillor. By their nature, many of the new projects we work on take some time to plan and arrange the finance for, but time and again we have been successful in delivering. The current year is no exception:-

### Bassetts Mead

This is located between the Holt Park Housing Development and the River Whitewater. It is managed on behalf of the Parish Council by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. A detailed plan is in place to protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the floodplain meadows and the chalk stream habitat of the River Whitewater.

As part of this plan, last year saw the first cut of hay and the arrival of a small herd of Luings cattle (pronounced 'Ling'), all of which will encourage the natural spread of native wildflowers. We also saw the return of coppicing in Holt Copse for the first time in fifty years. We aim to do all this whilst maintaining a safe environment for Hook residents to access and enjoy the countryside.

### Skate Park

The new Skate Park was officially opened on 8th June with an audience of over 200 teenagers, public and press. It continues to be very popular with users and much of the thanks for this should go to the group of young people who helped with the design.

Not only are the new ramps a lot quieter than the old, but they cater for a much wider range of skills and expertise. The Skate Park was funded by a mixture of developers' contributions from Holt Park and a grant from the Big Lottery Fund.

### Teen Shelter

This is sited close to the new Skate Park and was intended to complement it. Its design and construction followed an initiative from the Base Youth Centre, who were instrumental in obtaining the grants to fund it.

### Future Plans

Projects currently being worked on include the provision of an Outdoor Gym and the refurbishment of the Tennis Courts at Hartletts Park.

**Tony Taylor**

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**Don't forget to come to the  
Annual Village Meeting  
Wednesday 22nd April 2009  
Elizabeth Hall  
from 8pm**



Opening of the new Skate Park in Hartletts Park, June 2008

Photo: Steve Bright

## Money Matters

The Parish Council share of the Council Tax for 2008/9 came to £312,000, representing a charge of £1.82 a week on a Band D property. Full audited accounts will be available for inspection at the Parish Council office and on our website later in the year.

Given the general pressure on incomes and family budgets in the current recession we have set our 2009/10 precept at the lower level of £299,000. This reduced level of spending will be achieved both by making economies and by postponing some new projects until a later year. Naturally, we will not be making any compromises on safety issues and we will not defer maintenance work if to do so would simply result in a higher bill later.

Parish Councils do not receive any money at all, directly or indirectly, from other tiers of local government or from the non-domestic rates charged to businesses.

We will once again put £60,000 into reserves for building work in 2009/10 of which £11,000 is required to settle the final bills on the Elizabeth Hall. The remainder will be put towards essential renovation and maintenance at the Community Centre including improved security at the entrance, replacement doors and windows, and work on the heating. These do need to be tackled sooner rather than later for to delay would simply increase the eventual cost.

Money actually spent in 2008/9 can be analysed as follows:

Running expenses ( salaries, office rent, insurance, office equipment)	£68,000
Youth facilities	£72,000
Street Lighting / security	£32,000
Loan repayment	£12,000
Gardening, park-keeping and pitch maintenance	£55,000
Litter picking and cleansing	£24,000
Grants to community organisations	£34,000
Projects	£7,000
<b>Total revenue expenditure</b>	<b>£304,000</b>
Elizabeth Hall	£302,000
<b>Total revenue and capital expenditure</b>	<b>£606,000</b>
less other income	-£47,000
less developer contributions	£0
transfer from reserves	-£247,000
<b>PRECEPT for 2008/9</b>	<b>£312,000</b>

**Antony Hunter**

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## Parish Personnel – April 2009



<b>Clerk:</b>	Anne Atkins	Parish Council Office,	01256 768687
<b>Deputy Clerk:</b>	Christine Randall	Hook Community Centre,	or
<b>Amenities Administrator:</b>	Marian Bright	Ravenscroft	01256 768573
<b>Chairman &amp; Chairman of Development Strategy Committee</b>	Nigel Carpenter	27 Goose Green	01256 762936
<b>Vice-chairman</b>	Martin Whittaker	Foundry Cottage, London Road	01256 765902
<b>Chairman of Amenities Committee</b>	Tony Taylor	45 Middle Mead	01256 762925
<b>Chairman of Planning Committee</b>	Jane Bonnin	Church Path Cottage, Newnham Road	01256 763287
<b>Members</b>	Matthew Campbell	2 Goose Green	01256 760757
	Tim Colman	17 Bow Field	01256 765434
	Amanda Foot	49 Bow Field	01256 768223
	Antony Hunter	Moles Meadow, Elms Road	01256 762043
	Fergus Kirkham	1 Alderwood Drive	01256 766122
	Paul Lock	14 Myllers Lond	01256 766377
	Gillian Morgan-Brown	14 Garden Close	01256 764214
	Jeanne-Marie Steels	43 Ravenscroft	01256 761467



Hook Parish Council's website is at <http://www.hook.gov.uk>

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