



## **CRANLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2012**

Your Parish Council has had another busy year, and as legislation associated with the Localism Act 2011 filters through from central Government, and we have greater opportunities to deliver more services locally, it is likely that we will have even more challenging and interesting times ahead in the future.

The Parish Council has 12 councillors and a small staff based out of offices in Village Way. Responsibilities include the Village Hall, Snoxhall Play Park, Snoxhall pavilion, Snoxhall fields and the tennis courts, the Cemetery on Dewlands Lane and two sets of allotments. The Council's portfolio has recently expanded to include the Youth Centre, Youth Café and the Public Conveniences.

The Parish Council meets every third Thursday in the month. Individual committees formed to consider Finance, the Village Hall and Cemetery meet quarterly. Whilst the Parish Council is not a statutory consultee on planning matters, the Parish Council Planning Committee takes seriously its ability to comment, from a local viewpoint, on planning applications within the Parish. The Planning Committee meets every three weeks, usually on a Monday. Local residents are most welcome to attend all meetings of the Council, as they are open to the public.

The Village Hall on the High Street has been used more extensively throughout the last year and as a result income has significantly increased. The Village Hall caretaker, Peter Parsons, retired in November 2011 and the Council were appreciative of his long service. In the future hires will be covered by staff who provide services across all Parish Council sites.

We provide a range of recreation services at Snoxhall Fields. Snoxhall is host to Cranleigh Football Club and Cranleigh Youth Football Club and both clubs had a positive 2011/12 season. Until 2011 cricket had been played at Snoxhall fields for tens of years. The resident cricket team, Cranleigh St. Andrews Cricket Club decided to move to Cranleigh Common from the 2012 season to take advantage of working with Cranleigh Cricket Club. We will miss cricket on that site.

The Council manage two allotment sites in Cranleigh, one off Knowle Lane, the other on Elmbridge Road. To satisfy the demand for allotments, full size plots at the Elmbridge Road site are divided in two as they become available. This compliments the provision of additional allotments in the green space at the end of Elmbridge Road allotments last year and allows the Council to give a greater opportunity for more members of the community to benefit from the ability to 'grow their own' produce.

The Parish Council is responsible for the Cemetery on Dewlands Lane which still actively serves Cranleigh residents.

Whilst we are not a statutory consultee on planning matters, the Parish Council Planning Committee takes seriously its ability to comment, from a local viewpoint, on planning applications

within the Parish. During 2011/12 the Planning Committee considered the Swallows Tiles Development along with a large number of other planning applications. Whilst Dunsfold Park is not in the Parish, the Planning Committee considered a planning application for aviation use at Dunsfold Park during the Olympic Games 2012, and did not object to additional flying during that period as they felt that it did not set a precedent for the future.

The 'Big Society' agenda promoted by Central Government, is supported by the Localism Act which was given Royal Assent in 2011. The Act gives communities increased opportunities to influence their own development in the future. Communities are encouraged to produce a community led development plan (Neighbourhood Plan) that sets out the vision for how a community wishes to evolve. The Plan, which has to link with the Planning Authorities Core Strategy and go through a referendum process within the community, can be adopted by the Local Authority as a Planning Policy in its own right. This allows communities to be empowered and to be in control of their own destiny. The legislation for Neighbourhood Plans is still filtering through from Central Government but the Parish Council has committed to exploring how this can become a reality for Cranleigh.

The Parish Council took responsibility for organising community events in Cranleigh during 2011. The Christmas Light Switch On brought large crowds into the High Street and allowed us to work in close partnership with other organisations. The Events Organiser is working on a programme of events for the coming year.

In early 2011, the Bruce McKenzie Memorial Field off Knowle Lane was exchanged for land on which the new health facility will be sited. During 2011/12 work was undertaken to satisfy the conditions of exchange. The Field will be formally opened in July 2012 as part of the Cranleigh Games organised by Cranleigh and District Rotary Club.

In summer 2012, the Parish Council will take over responsibility for the Public Conveniences in Cranleigh from Waverley Borough Council, who have no statutory requirement to provide these facilities and who were looking to reduce their liability in this respect.

The lease for the Youth Centre building at Snoxhall Fields terminated in 2012 and the Trustees did not wish to continue, so the building reverted to the Parish Council. The Council were grateful for all of the work the Trustees had done to help the young people in Cranleigh.

Organisational structure changes within Surrey County Council's Youth Services around the same time resulted in the Parish Council stepping in to take responsibility for the Youth Café, a flagship initiative started in partnership with Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council a few years ago.

The Parish Council is funded from a variety of sources but mainly from the Parish Precept, which is received from Waverley Borough Council. In 2011/12 the precept was £246,331. This increased by 3.6% to £255,004 in 2012/13, which equates to a rise from £47.22 to £48.94 per year for a Band D taxpayer. The main reasons for the increase was a reduction in the Compensatory Grant paid from Waverley Borough Council to communities like Cranleigh that provide their own recreation facilities, and the increase in service provision (Public Conveniences in Cranleigh, the Youth Centre, Youth Café and the organisation of community events). Other income comes from fees and charges levied on Parish Council assets, reserves, interest on our investments, the Compensatory Grant and other grants (mainly for specific projects). The Parish Precept covers day to day expenses, enables the Parish Council to set aside money for replacing registered assets through scheduled allocation of funds on a yearly basis, and provides towards new projects.

The main areas of expenditure are recreation and administration and the main bulk of the expenditure relates to staff costs. Revenue costs will increase commensurate with the expansion of our portfolio of assets. None of the Parish Council facilities run at a profit, however, in 2011/12 the Village Hall reduced its overall running costs from £18,841 to £7,178 through increased bookings and by reassessing how the hires at the Village Hall are staffed. Overall costs for

running recreation slightly increased as would be expected as the new field was taken on and additional services are provided. The cemetery running costs were slightly down on last year which was elevated to include the improvements to the Children's Section and the Garden of Remembrance.

Capital expenditure on elections and equipment in 2011/12 amounted to £17,000. In 2012/13 an amount of £36,000 has been set aside to replace existing equipment when it reaches the end of its life cycle as part of a 'rolling programme'. A significant sum has been set aside to build up a fund for the Village Hall roof which is showing signs of deterioration and which is being closely monitored. £15,000 has been earmarked to go towards providing a Multi Use Games Area at Snoxhall. The Council intends to work with Waverley Borough Council and local sports clubs to seek grant funding to supplement the Council's investment.

The Chairman noted that Cranleigh received £4,620 for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011 from the Henry Smith's Charity. The Trustees of the Cranleigh Henry Smith's Charity are drawn from Councillors and the local community. The Trustees agreed that £4,700 be transferred to the Cranleigh Community Fund to help those in need within the community.

July 5<sup>th</sup> 2012



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