

PRESS RELEASE – 31<sup>st</sup> JULY 2007

JOINING FORCES – THE PARISHES OF CRANLEIGH, ALFOLD, BRAMLEY, DUNSFOLD, EWHURST, HASCOMBE AND WONERSH WORK TOGETHER.

Since January this year the parishes of Cranleigh, Alfold, Bramley, Dunsfold, Ewhurst, Hascombe and Wonersh have been working together in a 'cluster group', exploring the possibility of joint working in order to share skills and resources and to promote a more efficient and smart way of working.

This venture is in response to recommendations from the National Association of Local Councils which promotes the benefits to the community of collaborative working. The current Government look favourably on devolving powers down from principal authorities to Parish Councils '*delivering local services locally*' and those who are already working within clustering groups will be well placed to take advantage of any opportunities that may arise.

Parish and town councils are the first tier of democratic government in England. They vary hugely in size, resources, interests, and outlook, but they share one thing in common – they want to make their towns and villages better places to live.

Each community within our cluster group is unique, as is each Parish Council, however, inevitably, the seven neighbouring parishes of Cranleigh, Alfold, Bramley, Dunsfold, Ewhurst, Hascombe and Wonersh often face common problems and issues. By joining forces, when appropriate, the benefits can include a greater influence on matters which cause common concern, a more efficient use of resources and a solid networking group of Clerks who can share the benefits of their training to the good of and to promote their community.

Currently the group are working together to understand how the Clean Neighbourhoods Act may be implemented within their communities and are working with the Director of Environment and Leisure at Waverley Borough Council on this. There has been some success in liaising with Surrey County Council Highways in order to progress remedial work on the local highways and the group has been able to share information regarding the formation of Community Speed Watch groups. There has been the opportunity to share the information and expertise amassed by the individual Clerks and the opportunity to make significant savings when publishing statutory notices. The group has worked together with the local youth leader in order to promote activities for young people and there may be the opportunity for Cranleigh, who are quite unique in this area in having their own ground staff, to provide contracting services for the other parishes in the cluster in the future.

The Parish Councils involved have welcomed this proactive move and hope that its success continues

Pauline Whitehead  
30<sup>th</sup> July 2007.