

## Chairman's Report on Braishfield Parish Council – May 2024

### Introduction

Firstly, it has been a year of change of councillors.

We welcomed back Cllr Sally Yalden who is also the Borough Councillor for Ampfield and Braishfield, and Cllr Alan Dowden who continues to represent Valley Park and Hampshire County Council.

Peter White decided that it was time for him to say a fond farewell and we thank him for his dedication to the Council over many years.

George McMenemy and Julie Benson were co-opted and are learning the processes of being on the council by attending seminars and courses.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the councillors for all their work.

Special thanks to Jane Ray as Clerk who continues to be a real asset to the Council having acquired a wealth of knowledge which supports us all in our decision making.

### The Council and the Village

We have many volunteers who support and have contributed to the success of working groups and social occasions - in particular Alex Macleod who ensures the benches and tables are kept in good order in the Recreation Ground, Ian and Wendy Jeffery who keep the Telephone library in order, Carole and Steve Renvoize who look after the wreaths and plant flowers during the year at the War Memorial, not forgetting Steve Renvoize checking on the Defib at the Village Hall.

### Communications

The Council website is the main communication point where all the latest information can be found. This not only includes meeting agendas and minutes but links to news, emergency numbers, policies and the Village Design Statement (VDS).

We work together with the Braishfield Village Association to share information in the Braishfield Village News and the Network, and at times on Facebook.

### Remembrance commemorations

The Armistice Day commemorations were led by the Parish Council.

For Remembrance Sunday, we joined with All Saints' Church and the United Reformed Church for the Service of Remembrance at the War Memorial with the event being organised by All Saints' Church and the Council. We were pleased to have the Scouts, Guides and Brownies represented and Gemma the bugler from Chandlers Ford BB Brass Band.

### **Carols on the Rec**

In December, we organised Carols on the Rec with All Saints' church and the support of the Village Hall and The Pantry. We were pleased to have over 250 people attending with the Chandlers Ford BB Brass Band playing and Hot Diggerty Dogs serving a variety of hot food. The sum of £339 was donated to Action for Children.

### **Flags**

We are very grateful to Tim Howkins and Mike Knowles for raising and lowering the flags as agreed by the Council.

### **Grants/ Contributions**

We were very pleased to receive a grant for £1000 in February towards the Neighbourhood Plan.

We welcome the support from TVBC and we are pleased to have Louisa Rice Community Engagement Officer with us this evening.

The Parish Council awarded grants/ contributions to:

All Saints' Church £1200 - Church clock and tower - approved in the year; paid 2023/24.  
Grant for Burial Ground £844.37.

### **Planning**

The Council continues to have a planning committee under the chairmanship of Cllr Richard Brazier who also continues to lead on the allocation of s106/ CIL money. We continue with site visits and review both current and retrospective applications in line with the Village Design Statement (VDS) and other relevant factors.

We have been pleased to have Planning seminars for our Councillors and Clerk led by Simon Finch and Jason Owen (TVBC) to update our knowledge and share good practice.

Questionnaires to help inform the Neighbourhood Plan were issued and In December Mark Sennitt, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan group, arranged a meeting to update parishioners on the progress he and his team were making in developing the Plan. This meeting was well attended and valued by parishioners.

We are extremely grateful to Mark Sennitt for taking the lead on the Neighbourhood Plan.

In the last year we have reviewed 36 planning applications and three applications have been heard by SAPC (Southern Area Planning Committee). Permission for trees to be felled where they are in the Conservation Area or have a TPO (Tree Preservation Order) are also part of our Planning schedule.

### Liaison with the Police

This resulted in a talk given by Terry Norton, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. This was well attended by parishioners and gave us more information about how the Police Force operate in the countryside.

### Roads, Highways and Footpaths

We continue to have ongoing concerns regarding the state of the roads and we ask that all residents report these problems to HCC. We are establishing what plans are in place for resurfacing and for dealing with potholes.

Some footpath fingerposts have been replaced in the last month and we are requesting others to be repaired. We have recently contacted HCC and are pleased to welcome Corinne Davis – Cooke from Countryside Service. We require two gates on the Monarch's Way and the Malthouse and these will be purchased soon. For the other four, funding has been frozen so we are looking at other means of financing this.

As a result of the data collected during the traffic speed monitoring exercise, it was decided to invest in a movable speed signage system being located at strategic points in the Village. This has been in place since August/ October 2022 and the data is showing that the majority of users are adhering to the speed limit but there is still a significant number speeding.

Our next steps to be considered by the Council are to have a Speed Watch Group. We welcome volunteers.

The Parish Council's large footpath map and flyers continue to encourage walkers and the two groups set up by TVBC continue to regularly walk in Braishfield.

### Lengthsman Scheme

This scheme provides us with access to a handyman who can undertake minor tasks under our direction. This scheme continues to work well.

### Community Resilience

The emergency planning group includes the Parish Council and other volunteers from the wider community. Its focus is to respond to any emergency in the village whether caused by extreme weather or by failures of infrastructure. We have been attending Resilience meetings organised by TVBC which provide excellent up to date information from various sources including SSE.

In July 2023 we visited Broughton as they have a Village Hall and Shop and have recently invested in a generator. We agreed we should pursue this option and sought quotes from contractors which we included in a grant application to SSE. Unfortunately, this application was not received by them and therefore not processed.

We are now reviewing the storage which may be available in the Village Hall for equipment already purchased and will bear in mind a recent Government warning that families need to

stockpile food and water to help build national resilience amid fears of prolonged power cuts, cyber-attacks and floods.

As a Council we have been mindful over many years to have plans in place should the need arise and these plans will be published and shared with HCC, TVBC and Parishioners.

We are very grateful for the work being done by volunteers.

### Recreation Ground

The Recreation Ground is one of the major responsibilities of the Council as sole trustee. We have continued to ensure that the trees, ground, equipment and the car park are kept to a high standard thus satisfying health and safety regulations. We are grateful for the support given for keeping the benches in order and for making use of CIL money for new benches.

We have ensured that the Football lease is in place for future years and Hampshire County Council have increased their contribution for the use of the Rec by Braishfield School.

It was extremely sad to read that the tree planted by Braishfield School for the Queen's Green Canopy has been vandalised. Let us hope that those concerned are reprimanded for this appalling action.

The safety sign for the play area and signs for the Recreation Ground provide a reminder of guidelines and we are taking steps to educate those who use the Rec for their Dogs' recreation and who do not take away what they leave behind.

The car park repairs are ongoing with the Council and Village Hall's aim of resurfacing the car park and replacing the fencing in 2024-25.

### War Memorial

The Council is also sole trustee for the War Memorial and at the present time we have a surveyor regularly monitoring the movement of the memorial.

To sum up, there has been a lot going on in Braishfield and I would again like to express my thanks to everyone who has given of their time and support.

Cllr Jane Bennett  
Chairman, Braishfield Parish Council