

ANNUAL REPORTS – IMPINGTON PARISH COUNCIL 2008 – 2009

Finance Committee

The annual tasks of the committee (preparing the budget for acceptance, reviewing the asset register, carrying out a risk assessment, preparing the accounts for internal and external audits and setting the precept for the following year) have all been completed.

The finances for Arbury Park (now Orchard Park) were ring-fenced at the start of the year in anticipation of the creation of the new Council. The timing was eventually later than we had originally been led to believe. Residents north of the A14 have not contributed to the costs at Orchard Park. Residents there have contributed the right amount towards costs shared on the tax base basis with Histon.

The Financial Strategy has been revised, and a timetable to January 2010 set up. Delegation to the Clerk of power to spend have been agreed at Full Council. This will simplify management of works approved by Council or Committees. A donations policy remains to be done, as does a review of by-laws.

Thanks to the efforts of Eleanor Whitehead, progress has been made in bringing the accounts of the two charities that the council is responsible for up to date. This will support the review of the future of the charities - and the possible closure and move of assets to more appropriate bodies.

For the coming financial year, 2009-10, the council have set a precept at £104,600. The council continues to ring-fenced amounts which will build year on year to finance large projects such as a new community centre. Council also recognised the pressures on tax payers. This precept will mean no increase in the parish component of Council Tax for this year.

In December and June Impington Parish Council consider requests for donations from local village groups or projects that will benefit our residents. As a result, this year we were pleased to make donations to Cambridgeshire County Council Reading Project at Histon Library, HICCA, Histon & Impington Day Centre, Open Gardens, and Kings Meadows Gardens

Cllr Denis W Payne, Finance Committee Chairman

Recreation Ground Management Committee

The last twelve months have been an eventful one for the Recreation Ground with all facilities continuing to be well used. There was an end of an era with the retirement of Ray Wynn who had been committee chair for 28 years, and there has also been a comprehensive intake of new committee members.

The committee identified a number of key objectives to improve the management of the Rec facilities including the formation of a health and safety sub group, the engagement of a seasonal deputy groundsman, quarterly financial reporting and more active club user representation.

Our thanks to the continuing professionalism and commitment of Steve Campin, and Lynda Marsh the newly entitled Recreation Ground Manager.

One of the main areas of capital expenditure was the installation of acoustic panels in the Recreation Ground Community room, and as a result we hope to see an increase in the commercial hire of the facility. The sports facilities are now used by eight clubs at different times of the year, and the number of regular weekly activities continues to increase.

A personal highlight of the last year was the special Festival of Sport, Fitness and Dance for Olympic year held on a glorious Sunday last June and which was attended by well over 1000 people. It was pleasing to see the Rec establishing new links with village schools, and this is being developed this summer with Year 6 pupils using the Rec tennis courts.

The Rec continues to require capital investment in facilities, and one area of priority is the Groundman's house which has been neglected for a quite a number of years. A programme of works has been identified and will start this summer.

The agenda for the Rec Committee is going to be as full as ever, and will include new initiatives for drainage improvements, outdoor sports exercise equipment, CCTV, better car park lighting and a long term programme to upgrade the playground. The need for additional land remains. External grants will be sought whenever available and partnerships developed with external bodies for mutual benefit.

My thanks to the small number of volunteers including those on the Friends of the Rec who provide so much of their time in helping the Rec, and I would mention Vernon Dudley in particular his enthusiasm and commitment are greatly appreciated by the Rec staff and myself.

Cllr Neil Davies, Chairman

Histon & Impington Mobile Warden Scheme

There have been a number of changes this year. Malcolm Ruel, who has been the Chair, since the inception of the scheme, resigned from the Liaison Committee because he is no longer on Histon Parish Council. Roger Parr resigned last October, and Janet Wilkinson also resigned as Secretary after serving the committee since the very beginning. All three will be greatly missed. Meanwhile Hooda Abdullah and Marian Cleaver have joined the Committee as Parish Council representatives. Marian Cleaver has taken over as Chair. We would also like at least one member of both the communities we serve to join us.

Soon after our autumn meeting Phyllis our warden resigned but volunteered to stay on until a replacement was found. All the administration of this scheme is now handled by Age Concern and clearly finding someone to take over has been beset with disappointment and difficulties. However at the last communication we had with Lynne Byrne a warden had been appointed, subject to CRB checks and references. We have not yet been informed whether our new warden has taken up her duties.

At the last meeting there were 12 clients who were being cared for. The scheme is funded by grants from the Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambs D.C. and The Histon and Impington Parish Councils. Our account has a good balance at the moment.

Cllr Marian Cleaver, Mobile Warden Scheme Chair

Planning Committee

All members of the Council are on the Planning Committee. The meetings are open to the public. If a planning application affects you, we encourage you to make your views known to the planning authority, South Cambs District Council. In addition please inform the Parish Council: you are most welcome to present your views to us when we are considering the application.

Until 1st April this year, the planning committee has covered the entire Impington Parish including what is now known as Orchard Park. On 1st April responsibility for this area passed to the new Orchard Park Community Council. Up till then this area had been responsible for more than 60% of the effort of the committee. The trend by government and other tiers to consult increasingly more widely with Parish Councils means that there is already a significant extra workload to replace that relinquished to Orchard Park Community Council.

On Orchard Park there were many applications for most of the parcels of development land. This large scale developments were complex and the committee had to involve itself in detailed layout of the parcels, covering access, parking, design and street scene, safety and other aspects. Little of the impact of this work will have been noticeable to the residents of the remaining part of the Parish. One noticeable exception was the determination over the design of the new hotel and in particular its signage, colouring and lighting. The Company has a corporate colour scheme of purple walls and wanted very large and bright signs. Fortunately we were able to prevail and we can all see across the fields and from the main route into Cambridge a cream coloured building with relatively small signs.

The work for the main village of Impington covered:

- Small developments
- Individual Houses
- Extensions and additions to existing properties not with the permitted development rights of the properties.
- Responding to consultations on matters of planning policy issued by South Cambs District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the City of Cambridge Council.
- Responding to proposals by the Planning Inspectorate (such as the recent “Shortfall” proposals)
- Responding and being involved in the process of responding to the proposals for Northstowe

As an area we are under a government requirement to build a considerable number of new houses (46,000 by 2016 in the Cambridge sub area) of which three quarters are required for new residents of the area (mainly from other parts of the UK). IPC recognises the need for housing, especially affordable housing, but strongly believe that the new development needs to take cognisance of existing development, the facilities and the infrastructure to support the new and existing residents, the need for employment opportunities in the vicinity of the houses to reduce transport needs (and people's “waste” time travelling) and above all the need to maintain and grow a community for all the people. We argue that a short term fix of the housing need should not be used to create long term problems for the future.

The Planning Committee has found it necessary to meet for a full evening almost twice a month in the last year, as well as needing the preparation of supporting papers prepared outside the meetings. In effect, Planning committee takes more than half the time made available to the Parish Council by the volunteer Councillors.

Councillor Brian Ing, Chairman Planning Committee

Histon & Impington Youth Committee (advisory body)

During the last year, the committee have continued to meet monthly and support our youth workers both in Impington and Orchard Park. We successfully negotiated for space to run youth clubs and other activities within IVC after the summer break. August saw the return of Andrea Cramp after her maternity leave and her vision for youth work initiated several good projects whereby young people could gain good experience and valuable life skills. There were also some team building trips organised for the summer. Andrea's return also meant that Sophie could concentrate on building up youth work on Orchard Park. This was supplemented with use of the Connections Bus.

Despite our success in getting space at IVC, the attendance at youth clubs run there has declined over the winter and spring, with senior youth club being replaced by specific courses in First Aid and Babysitting. Feedback tells us that the young people do not like going 'back to school' in the evening and the lack of a space that they can call their own is reducing the effectiveness of the youth work. Our biggest cause for concern is that there is still no dedicated space for youth work either in Impington & Histon or in the newly developed Orchard Park. To this end the youth committee are supporting the discussion and calls for a Village Centre type facility that will provide such dedicated space for our young people.

The youth committee have been concerned with increased reports of anti social behaviour by young people within the two villages and are liaising with our PCSO's when appropriate. We will also continue to make contact with the PCSO stationed within IVC.

Work has not yet started on the skate bowl at Orchard Park, though some discussions have been held on the design. It is hoped to have this in place for the autumn.

Our presence at the Feast Market last year was not as successful as we had hoped (young people do not like getting up early!) and so we will not have a specific stand there year.

Plans for next year include working more closely with staff and students at IVC to provide better communications to and from our young people, working initially with the student council.

We are grateful to the two parish councils for their continued support, both in recognising the need to provide for our young people and their financial support.

Councillor Hooda Abdullah, representative to the Advisory Body

Environment Committee

The Copse

The past year has once again seen a few fallen trees, some due to exposure to high winds following the major works made last year to make way for the Guided Busway. As part of the ongoing management program for this area, the focus this year has been dead hedge laying - to protect the young hedge and on tree felling - to protect users and enhance biodiversity. Seven trees identified as being diseased have been felled. Other activities which support the management program have been regularly undertaken by the Enviro.Volunteers and supported by the Probation Service's Community Service Teams. These activities have included litter picking, laying chippings on the paths, tree planting, pruning & maintenance of the hedge, bramble clearance from footpath/cycle way, Sycamore & Ivy clearance and dead hedge laying.

Clay Close Lane

This area continues to be well used by a wide cross section of the community, although recently it has been the target of litterbugs. PCSO Tony Martin is monitoring activities here after school closing and at lunchtimes. This year two horse chestnuts which had been suffering from the leaf mining moth disease were felled. These will be replaced in the Autumn with Oak trees, but in a more suitable position within the site. Progress has been made in producing a management plan for the POS including future enhancements. SCDC's Rob Mungovan provided us with useful advice which resulted in grant funding for the creation of wildflower areas. This was implemented by the Enviro.Volunteers and will be continued in phases along the ditch, thus enhancing biodiversity and starting to create a nature corridor.

The Coppice

This year has seen the completion of recommended tree works, namely coppicing the old Hazel at the entrance. However, pruning works agreed with County Highways to trees overhanging Cambridge Road have yet to be done. Regular Enviro.Volunteer activities have been carried out here including regular litter picking, removal of green waste, ivy clearance and construction of hazel hurdles to protect the young hedge.

South Road Play Area

Regular inspections are carried out by the assistant groundsman and reported to the clerk. This area continues to be well used by local residents although the new NIAB fence has been vandalised. However RoSPA found no deficiencies during their annual inspection of the play equipment. A management program for this site needs to be drawn up.

Doctors Close

Regular inspections are carried out by the assistant groundsman and reported to the clerk. This area is kept in a tidy state but remains underused at present. Hopefully this will improve following the trialling of a more frequent grass cutting regime. A management program for this site needs to be drawn up; this should include future enhancements to encourage use and plans to improve general biodiversity.

Additional items.

- **Co-Optees** - The committee are grateful to Allison Conder and Trevor Silk for their valuable input to the committee. In addition Allison Conder, as IPC's Tree Warden, continues to communicate regularly with SCDC on tree works applications, whilst Trevor Silk continues to assist with the grass cutting contractors and co-ordinates the daffodil planting. More recently Ken Doyle, resident and member of HICCA (Histon & Impington Climate Change Action), has also been co-opted to the Committee and is providing a useful link for us with the work of HICCA on sustainability and other environmental issues
- **Enviro.Volunteers** - The Committee continues to support and encourage them in their various activities to maintain and enhance our public open spaces. Their efforts including small tree felling, pruning and hedge trimming have contributed greatly towards an overall 40% underspend.
- **Police** - The committee continue to liaise with the police to reduce Anti Social Behaviour and incidences of Graffiti in the village. To assist with that work the Probation Team have built barriers in certain areas within Homefield Park
- Probation Service – Co-ordinated by the Enviro.Volunteers and under the supervision of Don Darlington the teams have undertaken several projects in The Copse, Clay Close Lane, Homefield Park and The Coppice.
- **SCDC** - Obtaining Tree Protection, Records and Training continues to be challenging
- **CCC Highways** - Although communications are good, little maintenance has been done in Impington and promise of further works is proving extremely difficult.

Furthermore promises made a year ago for a soakaway near the village sign in New Road, clearing debris from foot/cyclepaths in the vicinity of The Dole and pruning overhanging branches along Cambridge Road are yet to materialise. However clearing of vegetation from some lighting columns has been undertaken.

- **Homefield & Hereward Residents Group** - Much work has been done to try to secure funding for improvements to the boundaries. This will help to protect what little woodland surrounds the community centre area and to encourage responsible cycle use.
- **Guided Bus** - Items continue to be monitored including revised Tree & Landscape works, fencing & access onto the maintenance track and the relocation of the Crossing Keeper's Hut.
- **Tree planting** - Several Hornbeams were planted in November to create a focal point at village entrance and included one to commemorate Trevor Silk's 27 years service on Impington Parish Council. Further native species trees were planted in The Copse.

Councillor Pene Nudds, Chairman Environment Committee

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