



# Swanmore Parish Council Annual Report

## Chairman's Report

Your Council has had another busy year and thanks go to the Councillors and our hard working Clerk and Assistant Clerk for their efforts in getting us successfully through another year. Special thanks go to Jon Seal who recently left us after serving on several committees and Chairing both the Community Committee and by rotation, the West Hoe management committee

You can read the details of the activities of the committees on the following pages of this report but in general, apart from maintaining the day-to-day facilities within the parish your Council has focused on a number of key issues:

In May, the Parish Council elections saw only five candidates putting themselves forward for election. Fortunately an intensive advertising programme generated an excellent response and five new Councillors were co-opted onto the Council and they have all taken to Council activities with determination and enthusiasm.

The WCC Local Plan Part 2, is nearing completion and it is hoped that by allowing an additional small housing development of a small number of houses in Lower Chase Road, the Parish Council could be gifted a parcel of land for use as an area for allotments. Naturally we will keep residents aware of developments.

Development in our community will continue to be very high on our list of priorities and proposed developments that are not in keeping with Swanmore will be closely scrutinised.

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A group of Councillors are working on a new Village Design Statement (VDS) a document that when adopted, will need to be considered by developers when making building applications, to ensure that their proposals are in line with the character of Swanmore.

Your Councils 4-year plan is now in its second year and helps to guide the Parish Council with the larger and longer term projects. The main project for the next year will be the investment in the New Road playing field which is covered in the Open Spaces and Amenities Committee report.

We continue to investigate ways to improve efficiency and also work with other Parish Councils' to investigate ways of delivering services either to a higher standard or at a lower cost. With the continued reduction in Government spending hitting local services, the pressure on Parish Councils is likely to increase.

## Planning & Highways Committee

### P&H

This has been another busy year for planning applications and the Planning and Highways (P&H) committee is happy to report that the decisions made by Winchester City Council and the South Downs National Park accord with those proposed by the committee over 90% of the time. That said, the remaining 10% seem to be the most controversial and members of the committee have been lobbying to change the decision on the parish's behalf whenever possible. We have attended planning committee meetings and presented our objections and we have been proactive in our dialogue with planning officers, starting at an earlier stage of the planning application process. Although we are only able to provide our opinions on planning applications, the committee has tried hard to get the best outcome for the village this year.

Other work carried out has been to give the village a voice when decisions are made by Highways with regard to planning applications and the suitability of the roads that would support it. Previously, the P&H committee has had no evidence to oppose decisions made by Winchester concerning the proposed development sites entrance/exits. To give us the evidence we need to make the appropriate challenges, the P&H committee have instructed a company to carry out speed surveys on 'through roads' around the village. Monitoring the amount of traffic, the speed travelled and the amount of cars using the roads in any 24 hour period should provide us with sufficient evidence to make pragmatic challenges.

We have also started discussions with other authorities to ensure that levies received from developments in Swanmore are spent in Swanmore, this is ongoing but we are determined to carry on the work and try and get the best outcomes for the village through investment in infrastructure and facilities.

Some of our more visible work has been to erect the new bus shelter outside the school and the new village entrance sign on New Road, more signs are to come. We hope to be able soon to announce the provision of allotments within the village subject to the final agreement contained in the Winchester City District Local Plan.

## Communities Committee

This year's Community Committee activities have included:

- Work on a new website which we hope will be live very soon and will also be linked to a new Facebook page for the Parish Council and twitter feed.
- The village Christmas tree outside the primary school, which brought a festive touch to the centre of Swanmore last year. For this December we are already planning a "turning the lights on ceremony" which will be combined with a reception to celebrate the work of the village's many volunteer groups.
- IT lessons have been re-started – and our thanks to Mrs Rankine for acting as tutor.
- As today's speaker will discuss, there are plans to install defibrillators in the village – a site survey is underway and locations may possibly include the old BT kiosk in the village centre.
- We now have a "emergency plan" for the village – with thanks to all those who have offered to support this. The Parish Office has more information if you are interested in learning more.
- Preparing information packs about Swanmore to welcome the new residents in the Linden Homes development.
- There are also plans to add flower beds to our new village signs (the first has been installed in New Road). Many thanks to John Ponsford for instigating this scheme. If you would like to help with planting and maintenance of the new flowerbeds please speak to John or contact him via the Parish Council Office.
- The appointment of an Accredited Community Support Officer, in co-operation with Bishop's Waltham, has taken longer than expected but the post has now been advertised and we hope an appointment will be made soon.
- The Community Committee has also taken on responsibility for flag flying and in future will be able to use the flag pole by the war memorial on a more regular basis – our thanks to St Barnabas PCC for permitting this.
- Work has started on information boards for the village centre providing a map and highlighting some of our historic features for visitors – and residents.

## Open Spaces & Amenities Committee

The main focus for the OS&A committee this year has been the proposed improvements to the New Road playing fields. The existing skate park is approaching the end of its life, and there is a demand for toilet facilities and a larger car park (which would also help traffic on New Road during school drop-off/pick-up times). A New Road working party was established early in the year and we are now approaching the point at which we will be inviting bids from potential contractors. It is hoped that at least some of the work will be commenced during the coming financial year, subject to final approval and the availability of funding.

In addition to this, routine maintenance and minor improvements have continued as usual across the council's open spaces. Swanmore Conservation Group continue to provide a valuable service to the council and the village and we're very grateful for all that they do. It's frustrating that the council continues to have to spend significant amounts on repairing vandalism to play equipment and other assets. The OS&A committee is also responsible for the day-to-day running of Broad Lane Recreation Ground, which the Parish Council holds as Trustee. During the past year we've been examining the option for the play trail, which is showing its age, and we're hoping to have a new play trail fitted within the next few months (at time of writing). We're also branching out into advertising the Broad Lane Pavilion for hire – it's currently only used for football and cricket teams but it would be a good venue for small birthday parties and other social gatherings.

## West Hoe Cemetery Management Committee

The new West Hoe Committee have been faced with some significant challenges over the last 9 months including change of Clerk and unbudgeted expenses, the latter largely as a result of the heavy rainfall we have experienced for many months now. With the support of Bishops Waltham and Swanmore Parish Councils we have managed to ensure that the cemetery continues to be well run and remains an excellent, safe, peaceful and tidy environment to visit and a suitably calm place of rest for our loved ones.

To ensure that we will be able to continue to meet the needs of our parishioners going forward we completed a Strategic Review of West Hoe which has enabled us to plan for significant works over the next few years to maintain the environment which was originally envisaged. In parallel we commissioned reviews of the site by arboriculturalists as over time shrubs and trees have become entwined and interloper trees have self seeded amongst the originally planted trees. To continue to deliver the service demanded by parishioners, undertakers and councillors we have also reviewed our service delivery capability.

So what does this mean in real terms?

- We have completely re-tarmaced the car park and extended the tarmac surface to the entrance and beyond the lych gate. This was a significant cost and was unplanned. We examined the whole site and realised that there were some features which needed attention for health and safety reasons and the car park with its deteriorating surface was major amongst these.
- We removed the conifer hedge, which was agreed by an earlier committee, and now plan to replace it with a beech hedge and several suitable trees
- Our contractors have worked with consultants to identify which shrubs and self seeded saplings need to be removed and work started on this job at the end of last year and will continue into spring. A significant number of such trees have been identified many of which have become entangled with the trees planted under the original site design plan.
- We have also commissioned a local student to create some eye-catching new entrance signs and hope to install these at the entrance to the cemetery shortly
- Meantime our normal maintenance work has carried on and work has been commissioned to repair various headstones and memorials which are in need of urgent repair. Due to heavy rainfall three times the normal number of graves have needed to be topped up and re-turfed by our contractor.
- Back in the office we are embarking on the computerisation of the cemetery accounts system and purchasing a suitable bespoke software package for cemetery management. We believe these two investments will provide quick payback in terms of service to our 'customers'.
- We are very grateful to Yvonne who has undertaken the locum Clerk role at Swanmore since September with great enthusiasm.

**Swanmore Parish Council  
Financial Report 2015/16**

<b>Report</b>	<b>Budget 2014/15</b>	<b>Estimated Actual</b>	<b>Budget 2016/17</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Precept including Council Tax Support Grant	£172,860.00	£172,860.00	£184,070.00
Bank Interest	£100.00	£200.00	£100.00
West Hoe Cemetery	£2,580.00	£2,580.00	£0.00
Miscellaneous & CIL	£0.00	£2,831.00	£0.00
Open Spaces and Amenities	£0.00	£1,429.00	£93,973.00
Grants	£0.00	£500.00	£0.00
Swanmore Recreation Ground	£0.00	£1,960.00	£1,500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£175,540.00</b>	<b>£182,360.00</b>	<b>£279,643.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
General Administration	£75,165.00	£63,586.00	£77,267.00
Section 137 grants	£1,500.00	£450.00	£1,515.00
Community	£4,500.00	£2,900.00	£24,836.00
Loan Repayments	£6,322.00	£3,111.24	£6,322.00
Lighting and Highways	£10,781.00	£12,381.00	£32,880.00
Open Spaces and Amenities	£43,912.00	£40,000.00	£164,988.00
Swanmore Recreation Ground	£27,360.00	£34,360.00	£26,875.00
Donations	£4,000.00	£4,180.00	£4,040.00
West Hoe Cemetery	£2,000.00	£4,400.00	£3,500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£175,540.00</b>	<b>£165,368.24</b>	<b>£342,223.00</b>

## Members

Xavier Kingsland – Chairman  
Penny Clive  
Sue Lowe  
David Newberry  
Chris Newhouse  
Giles Pateman  
Andy Rankine  
Jonathan Seal  
Peter Wilkins  
Jon Woodman– Vice Chairman

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### Committee Meetings

Held in the Parish Council Office, Hollythorns House, New Road

Meetings begin at 7.00pm unless otherwise indicated on the agenda.  
When there are no planning applications to consider the meeting may be cancelled.