

**PARISH REPORTS 2016**

City Councillor Stephen Godfrey

City Council activity within Wonston Parish has remained high during the last year. Several significant planning proposals have been dealt with, including the withdrawal of the appeal against refusal to allow the wind turbine farm at Bullington Cross. Plans to build 15 affordable homes at Wonston Close, for local people, have been generally welcomed but we are still trying to refine the scheme in light of feedback from neighbours. The City Council will work closely with residents and the Parish Council to ensure that what is built on Old Station Yard is as appropriate as the new developers have indicated.

Many local residents have pledged practical support for the Wonston Flood Action Group should another flooding event occur. The new flood plan relies heavily on the good preparatory work, including drain and culvert clearance funded by the City Council, and rapid implementation to be effective.

The City Councillors are pressing hard to improve local facilities. The inclusion of almost the whole parish in the next phase of the faster broadband rollout is a good stepping stone. Further improvements to broadband, public transport and support for businesses and jobseekers in rural areas are now in our sights.

Following the Boundary Commission Review, the number of City Councillors is reducing. The elections on 5th May will elect all new councillors for larger Wards, with the villages of Sparsholt, Crawley and Littleton joining our current Ward. Each voter will have 3 votes to cast. Cllrs Barry Lipscomb and Malcolm Wright are both standing down, after representing the Ward for 14 and 13 years respectively.

The Gratton Trust

When was the last time you visited the Gratton play area?

I hope not too long ago and that you appreciate the improvements that have been made over the last couple of years:

* Improved children’s play area
* Outdoor fitness equipment
* Large integral car park and landscaping

Still to come is a wheelchair, pushchair, pram and bike friendly path round the whole area, coupled with clearance of the river bank and the installation of some boardwalk.

Public thanks to the trustees for all their fantastic work maintaining the area and raising funds for further improvements.

Thanks also to the community who regularly donate in various ways, to businesses who have kindly sponsored various events, and to the Parish Council for their support.

We have another busy year ahead to fund the footpath – it is more expensive than you might expect! The Festival, on June 25th, is our biggest fundraiser and if you are available to help please let me or any trustee know.

The Trust finances are sound and all regular maintenance issues and general upkeep are covered.

As with many local volunteer groups we are short of trustees and would welcome a couple of new members willing to give a little time and energy to help.

Very many thanks, John Polak

Victoria Hall

The hall continues to be very well used by a wide range of individuals and organisations. There are now 15 groups who have regular bookings throughout the year offering activities as varied as the Fitness League, Pilates and yoga, to art classes, stamp collecting, poultry fancying and a community choir, involving ages from toddlers and Beaver Scouts, through to the Sunshine Club and including the Royal British Legion and Parish Council.

Outstanding events of the past year have involved a championship egg show in March – now widely known across the South of England and on this occasion won by the Salisbury Poultry Club – a lunch for 80 prepared by the women’s section of the RBL for their County organisation (previously held at considerable expense in the Guildhall, Winchester), a Christmas Market and entertainment in December that brought in helpful funds and numerous family parties and celebrations.

A major project of re-decoration took place throughout the year in which the outside woodwork was painted and all the interior walls and ceiling in the main hall. This cost some £6000 and we are most grateful to the Parish Council for their contribution of £1000.

The operation of the hall is dependent on the voluntary efforts of the committee officers and members, plus other supporters, who contribute time and expertise – well worth it to ensure the continuity of a clearly valued community facility.

Sue Lane, trustee and secretary

Sutton Scotney Fire Station

Perhaps the most significant event from last year was the Risk Review project. This was to reconsider how fire cover is to be provided for Hampshire taking into account the reduction in incident numbers, the risk profile of each fire station, the reduction in funding and new technologies. There were proposals affecting every fire station in the county. These proposals were open to public consultation during the last quarter of 2015 and the final proposals went before the Hampshire Fire Authority in February where they were approved.

What does this mean for Sutton Scotney fire station? The current fire engine at Sutton Scotney will be replaced with a brand new first response vehicle. This vehicle, new to Hampshire, will be smaller than a conventional fire engine but will still attend the same type of incidents. It will carry new equipment making fire fighting more efficient and safer. The vehicle will be crewed by a maximum of 4 people.

The total number of incidents attended has remained fairly constant although vehicle fires have increased while automatic fire alarms have decreased.

Crews from South Central Ambulance continue to use the fire station as a standby point and welfare station.

There are vacancies for on call retained firefighters at Sutton Scotney particularly during the daytime. If you want to help keep your community safe and join the team then please register on the website <http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/work-with-us/about-our-careers/on-call-retained-firefighter-vacancies/>

You can follow us on twitter @suttonscotney35 for real-time incident information, community fire safety messages and other relevant stories.

Watch Manager Ian Soutar