



The Old Coach Road, Pembury, (picture taken by Sarah Pomfrett)

PEMBURY PARISH COUNCIL
THE ANNUAL PARISH REPORT FOR 2016/2017

To be given at the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 23rd March 2017 at 8.00pm
in the Village Hall, High Street, Pembury.

You are cordially invited to attend!

Chairman's Report, March 2017

The Parish Council's programme of initiatives and improvements continued over the last year, and I genuinely hope after reading this report you will appreciate the work carried out on your behalf by the Parish Council. This report summarises all that has taken place and has gone to every household in our Parish of Pembury. It will be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 23rd March at 8pm in the Village Hall where residents can question or raise concerns with the Council that it may not be aware of.

The Parish Council meet on a Monday evening each month at the Parish Council's Offices in the Recreation Ground (dates in the Pembury Village News) and there is an open session near the start of each meeting when any Pembury resident may raise issues or concerns.

The Parish Council is committed to a strict Code of Conduct and Probity, it has a strict convention that it is not 'party political' in any way.

Finance and Accounts

A summary of the Council's budget is at the end of this report and is in more detail than statutory required. To ensure the highest standards there are robust checks and an independent internal and external audit process.

Planning and Highways

The Parish Council is a 'Statutory Consultee' and works hard to resist development which does not benefit Pembury and the residents. We have had our usual amount of applications this year and some have been quite contentious but we strive to maintain a balance. There have been no very large applications this year which have needed public consultation but we are always ready for this. When an application appears to not fit in with the needs of the village or is a real worry to the adjoining neighbours we will request a 'call in' by one of our Borough Councillors so that it can be discussed by the whole of the Planning Committee at the Borough Council. This means it is then looked at in finer detail by Members and Officers and a balance is arrived at; hopefully a decision that is right for all.

The extension to Penn's Yard is now finished and new residents are enjoying life living here in the village; I have to say the disruption to the High Street was minimal. The next possible problem could be No. 3 High Street but we await plans with an open mind as different plans keep being presented then withdrawn, so it will be an interesting time.

On highways matters our most problematic issue is the A264. If even one car breaks down on this stretch, traffic is backed up into the middle of our village and we are hostages. I really would like a concrete solution to this issue and urge our County Cllr to pursue this matter with Kent Highways and try for the future to give us some hope that we could just get to Tunbridge Wells in a reasonable time. Our Clerks are very diligent in reporting potholes and any other problems to ensure smooth running of our roads.

Amenities, Pembury in Bloom, Christmas Lights, and Public Relations

The year started with the completion of the extension to the younger children's playground and your feedback to us has generally been very positive. April saw the installation of the 'Kevin Lynes Memorial Bench' on the Green and the unveiling by Paul Carter, Leader of Kent County Council. It was a bittersweet ceremony with lots of good memories of a wonderful man who worked tirelessly for Pembury. The bench faces his favourite watering hole The Camden Arms, who gave a generous donation towards the bench and laid on a superb buffet to honour Kevin's family and memory.

The Scarecrow Competition is really taking off and I hope this year will be even more successful. The fun and wacky scarecrows are a real inspiration to the judges as last year it proved to be such a difficult choice to pick a winner. The Cubs, Brownies and Rainbows all did brilliantly, so this year it would be great if more organisations took part.

Pride in Pembury Gardening Competition needs all of you to take part and you did this magnificently last year. It was what Pride in Pembury is all about, ensuring our village really looks its best. The displays are a credit to you all, our village is a lovely place to live and your work reflects that. We had a huge bonus from last year's competition as two of the entrants (volunteered by other people) have since become Parish Councillors – and they are both proving to be great assets.

Picnic on the Green was well attended with lots of new people who are now living in the village and who are getting to know our events. The Camden Arms generously sponsored the main act for the event which together with a local band made for a great afternoon and many families brought their picnics, sat back (or danced!) and enjoyed the music.

Fireworks were again fantastic. I am always amazed at the colours and the sheer artistry of the displays. A huge thank you to the Junior Football Club for doing all the refreshments from the Pavilion - soup and hot dogs were very welcome.

Pembury Village News is going from strength to strength and we get really good feedback from our advertisers that their businesses are being contacted. I am sure the Editor would always welcome new articles of interest if you would like to contact the office.

Environment and Environmental Issues incorporating Allotments and Burials

As I write this the new Memorial Wall has just been finished in the Burial Ground and a new bench will be placed in front of it. The wall is for plaques in memory of a loved one, and the bench is being kindly donated by the Pembury Society which is very generous of them. Our Groundsmen's work in the Burial Ground (behind St. Peter's Upper Church) was recognised by the judges of Tunbridge Wells in Bloom and they were awarded a Silver award, so fingers crossed for this year as our Groundsmen take great pride in their work there. The Environmental Group, as were the whole Council, were totally indebted to Pembury Cubs who spent an entire morning planting up at Woodsgate Corner with bulbs which were generously donated by Notcutts. Thank you so much to all and it should look really lovely this spring.

The huge Oak tree in the Old Church grounds had to be felled due to its dangerous state; it's always sad when a piece of the landscape goes but due to the diligence of our wonderful Environment volunteer group led by Hugh Boorman, our village is looking better all the time. Thank you to the group - we do appreciate you .

The biggest bugbear this committee gets is still the amount of dog fouling within the village, time and time again we ask you to help us to help you keep our village clean.

Major work has been undertaken at the War Memorial with the steps replaced and made safer, all the old shrubs removed, and grass laid that gives the Memorial the respect due to it. It looks totally different now and I have to commend the Working Group for their vision for ensuring it looks respectful and reflective to honour the lost men of Pembury.

Poppy Appeal

This year the Parish Council took on the role temporarily of organising the Poppy Day collection with Tesco whose staff were a great help in this as well. It was a very successful re-launch for this charity and a huge thank you to everyone who stood with their trays of poppies for this worthwhile charity; this coming year we must have more volunteers to aid our office staff as it all has to be factored into their main work - so please volunteer, it would mean so much to the British Legion.

As you all know by now our lovely Clerk is retiring at the end of March; the AGM will be her last public engagement after 27 years of service to our village. Class acts are hard to follow but we will do our best in her replacement so that we have the same continuity of care. I would like to pay tribute to my fellow Councillors on the Parish Council, who all give freely of their time and knowledge, who help events go on seamlessly and are of great support to me personally and I value them greatly. Without the dedication of our Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and our Groundsmen in all their respective roles the business of our village would not run so well and they are to be commended for their hard work.

Most of all, I thank you – the residents of Pembury – for your continued support and friendship.

June Crowhurst

Chair, Pembury Parish Council

It is my duty to submit the following particulars in respect of the Parish Finances for the year ending 31 March 2016:

Precept demanded from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

For 2015/2016	£166,000.00
Income from other sources	£ 40,090.29
Balance brought forward 1 April 2015	£ 72,401.32
TOTAL	£278,491.61
Expenditure	£221,026.51
Balance carried forward	£ 57,465.10
	£278,491.61

BREAKDOWN OF INCOME

Precept	£166,000.00
VAT Refunds	£ 8,083.40
Allotments	£ 1,593.00
Burials	£ 13,002.00
Club Rents	£ 3,538.00
Interest on Accounts	£ 49.54
Newsletter Adverts	£ 7,461.00
Publications	£ 14.00
Musical Picnic	£ 438.76
Quiz Entry	£ 100.00
Fireworks	£ 2,760.59
Grants/Donations	£ 2,634.96
Utility Refunds	£ 405.04
Photocopying	£ 10.00
	£206,090.29

BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE

VAT	£ 13,049.36
General Admin	£ 14,411.40
Wages	£ 71,596.81
Tax/NHI	£ 18,967.22
Pensions	£ 19,501.76
Chair's Allowance	£ 520.00
Petty Cash	£ 400.00
Property Repairs	£ 3,781.64
Machine Repairs	£ 3,517.91
Groundsmen Supplies	£ 2,836.33
Utilities	£ 12,232.67
Allots, Burials, Environment	£ 2,593.00
Amenities, Christmas Lights	£ 14,155.59
Pembury in Bloom, Public Relations	
PVN Editorial	£ 5,425.00
Capital Expenditure	£ 29,875.00
Mobile Phones	£ 725.09
Public Works Loan Board	£ 4,118.96
Section 137	£ 1,285.05
Enviro Volunteer Group	£ 765.00
Memorial Garden	£ 472.90
Replacement Defibrillator Pads	£ 53.25
Burial Plot/Ad Reimburse	£ 309.00
Bank Charges	£ 24.00
Highway Lighting	£ 409.57
	£ 221,026.51

The precept for the year 2016/17 was £176,000

The precept for the year 2017/18 will be £189,265

I would, with respect, request that the Chair of the Parish Council submits this Financial Report for the year ending 31 March 2015 for adoption.

Barbara Russell, Clerk to the Council