



Pembury Parish Council

Annual Report

2018-19

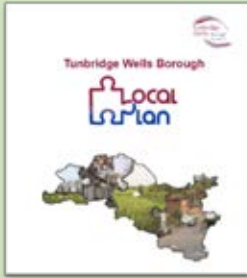


Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 29 April from 8pm
Pembury Village Hall

The Pembury Annual Parish Meeting takes place at 8pm on Monday 29 April in the Village Hall. If you have an issue/ want to question your Parish, Borough or County Councillors, a point to make or just want to know what is going on please come along.

This report and the Parish Meeting format are a bit different this year. We have listened to residents and to make it a bit more relevant and (hopefully) more interesting. Each committee or working group chair will summarise what their service has achieved and answer any questions.



Tunbridge Wells Revised Local Plan

Given the development and housing rules set by Central Government no one can be daft enough to think that nothing will happen or there will be no changes to Pembury, but the Parish Council, with our Borough and County Councillors, has left the TWBC planners under no illusion as to our sustainable needs. Although I set these out in the last edition of PVN, it is worth rehearsing some of the key issues for Pembury:

- Whatever transpires a tight Metropolitan Green Belt line must remain around Pembury to keep it a separate village surrounded by countryside;
- The A21 and its inadequate junctions need to be addressed;
- There are infrastructure issues particularly relating to traffic, sewerage and drainage;
- There are major on and off-street parking problems; and
- There is a shortage of smaller and/or retirement downsizing housing.

We await the Tunbridge Wells response in their draft Local Plan consultation.



Clr Alan Gaukroger

Planning & Highways Committee

Chair Alan Gaukroger & Vice-Chair Annie Partridge

Over the last year the committee has met regularly to formally review the very varied new planning applications arising within our Parish, in order to determine our Council's responses (in our role as statutory consultee) to the Borough Council's Planning Department. Whilst we are most often 'neutral' (sometimes with caveats or concerns), there are a minority of cases where we have objected having identified what we regard as material planning issues. Naturally we hope that the Borough Council will

follow us by rejecting applications that we have objected to, one good example of this was the proposed major development at 'Owls Nest' in Tonbridge Road where the loss of Green Belt was a major factor.

One imminent application is the proposed 'Motor Village' alongside the Tesco site, this major development appears to have implications for local traffic so will require careful scrutiny by our Council and the Borough Council. Beyond that we will need to monitor applications emanating from sites within the Borough's new Local Plan.

The committee also considers any Highway related matters within Pembury that are identified by us or local residents. The volume and speed of local traffic is a perennial issue, as is the lack of parking in central Pembury. Working with the relevant authorities, we try to find solutions.

The public is welcome to attend the committee's meetings, which are usually once a month on a Monday from 7.30 pm at our Council's office. The public can address (but not debate with) our committee, on issues they want to raise such as current planning applications that could affect them and/or highways matters.



Cllr Katy Brooks

Finance & HR Committee

Chair Katy Brooks and Vice Chair Shelley Harris

Opposite you will find two tables showing our Income and Expenditure under the main headings we use for Accounts – a full breakdown is available on the website. Hopefully the Income table is self-explanatory – the Precept is the money we receive from the Borough Council, which increases by a small amount each year and is based on our projected budget.

To give you a better understanding of what the Expenditure actually covers, here's a bit more detail:

The Administration heading pays for the office maintenance and all office supplies and equipment, Staff Costs are for our two office and three Ground Staff. The following five lines are self-explanatory. The next big one is the Recreation and Open Spaces. This pays for maintaining all the open spaces and recreation areas including trees and hedges, maintenance and repair of all tools including the truck and its petrol, maintenance of the Groundsmen's Depot and money paid into a Traveller Insurance Fund in case we need to get them removed from an open space in Pembury....

Grants and donations is our annual contribution to the Scouts and Guides insurance for their scout hut.

The Events and PR pays for the Picnic on the Green, Scarecrow Competition, Pride in Pembury, the Fireworks (although donations received do offset this to a degree) and the Christmas Lights. The War Memorial was the expenditure the Council paid, and this was offset against the War Memorial donations received this year and last year, and the shortfall was covered by the Council. We have been putting money by in reserves for the last few years to save up for a new (not brand new...) truck for the Groundsmen as theirs is on its last legs, and we are in a position to make a purchase soon.

In addition to holding the purse strings, the Finance and HR Committee has other responsibilities. We have spent a lot of time over the last year compiling and approving policies for internal and external governance, and now the bulk of the work is done it will just be a case of reviewing yearly to ensure they are still relevant and up to date. In line with the policies, we have looked at the Terms of Reference for our Working Groups and Committees to ensure that the remit and responsibility of each is logical and comprehensive.

We've also been embedding our new computer system; have recently moved over to BACS payments (to save time writing cheques and money buying stamps) and generally updating and streamlining the office function. This year we've had a big focus on GDPR to ensure compliance (as has everyone!), all boxes are now ticked. On the Human Resources side, a formal appraisal procedure is now in place and welcomed by the staff.

We've also focused on reviewing contracts and making costs savings where possible this year, in particular on our telephone suppliers and charges, and to safeguard as much money as possible, we have opened a savings account with Nationwide to keep reserves in, so if NatWest were to collapse, we have protected money elsewhere. Hopefully not a likely scenario, but best to be prudent in today's climate...

Finance & HR is a Committee, so members of the public are welcome to attend meetings to hear our workings! The agenda and meetings dates are published on the Parish Council website and displayed on the notice board by the Parish Office.

Council Finances

Actual 2017/18	Income	Projected 2018/19
189,265	Precept	203,889
15,381	Burial Fees	13,075
1,566	Allotments	2,079
2,350	Newsletter Advertising	7,534
4,262	Recreation & Open spaces	6,012
1,000	Grants & Other Donations	513
432	Event Income	3,393
4,040	War Memorial Grants/Donations	3,500
1,656	Other	424
219,952	TOTAL INCOME	240,419

Actual 2017/18	Expenditure	Projected 2018/19
27,450	Administration	29,156
115,075	Staff costs	127,759
6,200	Cemetery Costs	3,186
1,312	Allotment costs	982
5,751	Newsletter	5,380
7,385	Streetlights	5,660
904	Waste & Amenity Vehicle	901
30,517	Recreation & Open Spaces	33,597
1,136	Grants & Donations	1,207
11,555	Events & PR	13,274
-	War Memorial	8,621
12,667	To reserves	10,696
219,952	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	240,419

The Council's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Account & Audit Regulations 2015. They are subject to internal audit, by an independent auditor appointed by the Parish Council, and an external audit. To the left is a summary of the Council's income and expenditure for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Please note that the 2018/19 figures are based on the most up to date actual figures available at the time of publication and a projection to the end of the year. Final figures will be available at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2019.

Amenities Working Group

Chair Christine Snow & Vice Chair Susan Sharp

The Parish Council provides and maintains extensive recreation and amenity areas in Pembury. These include Lower Green Recreation Ground, Woodside Football pitches, the Village Green, Coronation Gardens and other grassed amenity areas. The Amenities Working Group, have continued with the development and improvement of the Recreation Ground, working with various partners such as the Junior Football Club, the Bowls Club and the new Tennis Coach.

We have continued to work hard this year to facilitate various community events including the Firework Display, where it seemed that half the population of Pembury came to enjoy the fireworks,

Picnic on the Green, benefiting from good weather and a large turnout and the Remembrance Sunday service with the unveiling of the new War Memorial plaques. The Parish Council is most grateful for the work undertaken by the many volunteers for assisting with the Remembrance Sunday Service and the knitted poppy decorations.



Cllr Christine Snow



Communications Working Group

Originally the Editorial committee for the Pembury Village News this group has expanded to take responsibility for all Parish Communications. Over the last year much good work has been achieved in establishing a Parish Web Site and Facebook in order to better inform residents and distribute information. At the same time a promotional strategy has been commenced and a modest rebranding of the Council started. The Council is also fully GDPR compliant.



Cllr Louise Mills

The Pembury Village News, edited by the Deputy Clerk, and circulated to every household four times a year also continues to be informative and entertaining. It is entirely funded by adverts. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to all those volunteers who distribute it throughout the village.





Cllr Patrick Gillan

Environment Working Group

Chair Patrick Gillan & Vice Chair Susan Sharp

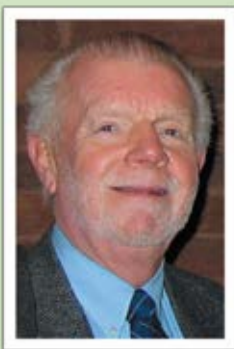
The Working Group oversees the Parish Council's environmental interests particularly in partnership with volunteers such as the excellent working group co-ordinated by Hugh Boorman that undertake the improvements.

A major project for the year was the refurbishment of the village war memorial. Our thanks go, in particular to Richard Snow for his work. We were delighted that it looked so splendid for this special Remembrance year.

Work continues on sprucing up the allotments in partnership with the allotment holders and the Allotment Society. There have been successful tidy up days as well as a progressive programme of cutting back growth on unused and peripheral areas. We have been rewarded by new tenants taking up plots. Anyone who would like to take on an allotment should contact the Parish Clerk.

The burial ground continues to be monitored and improved, recent visitors may have seen that the back of the Memorial Wall has now been tidied up with plants and ground cover kindly supplied by Notcutts. Not all of the burial ground is consecrated, and any Pembury resident can be buried there.

Any comments about the work of our group are always gratefully received.



Cllr David Coleman

Conclusion

Chair David Coleman

It was a very successful year particularly in managing change and I would thank the Clerk, Helen Munro, for all her hard work and professionalism ably assisted by Yvette Allen, the Deputy Clerk. I would also thank our grounds staff, Ryan, Darrell and Jake as well as my colleague councillors for their dedication and hard work.

This will be my last Annual Parish Meeting after thirty-six years as a Councillor as it is time for me to hand over to others and the end of the present Parish Council's term is an ideal opportunity. If you could make a contribution to the Pembury Village Community, why not stand as a Parish Councillor? All you need do is contact the Clerk Helen Munro (01892 823193) for details.