



Albury Parish newsletter

Serving Albury, Farley Green, Brook, Little London and Newlands Corner

Annual Report March '08

Chairman's report

It is almost a year now since the new Parish Council was elected and I was appointed Chairman. Not having served on the Parish Council before I don't think I quite realised what I was taking on and I must pass on my thanks to my more experienced colleagues and the Clerk, Joanna Cadman, for guiding me through the red tape and sharing with me their considerable experience of parish matters.

At the beginning of the year we put in place a new committee structure aimed at focusing on the major issues facing our community. This Annual Report includes a contribution by each of the committee chairmen on what has been achieved. Notable successes include the launch of a new Albury web site (www.albury.org.uk), some improvement in the state of our roads, Star Energy's agreement to site their processing plant outside of the AONB, the implementation of a village maintenance programme, funding for

new cricket nets on Albury Heath and the renovation of the 'Village Green' opposite the Post Office. However there remains much to be done and this year we intend to focus on the following:

- The development of a Parish Plan, which outlines how our community would like to develop over the next ten years, including an action plan detailing how these developments can be achieved.
- The publication by SITA of a restoration plan for the landfill.
- A conclusion on traffic calming measures for Albury village.
- Further improvement in the state of our roads, footpaths, open spaces and the general appearance of the parish.
- Continued vigilance with respect to Star Energy's plans and
- Achievement of Quality Council status to underpin the efficiency and effectiveness of the Parish Council.

I am very aware that progress on some of these issues sometimes seems to take an inordinately long time. I'm afraid that wheels often turn slowly in local government but I will do my best to push things along as quickly as possible. To try and keep everyone up to

date with progress and to improve communication generally we intend to produce a regular quarterly newsletter in the style of this Annual Report. Please give us any feedback you have either via the new Albury website or by writing to me or Joanna.

All the members of the Parish Council are looking forward to the challenges of the new year and doing our best to improve the parish environment.

Kind Regards
Nick Wenman
Chairman



Website news

The website www.albury.org.uk is up and running but does still need to have some content added. This is being collated by Hugh Cushing, a relative newcomer to the Parish who has kindly stepped in to help keep the website updated and ensure that it has as much interesting content on it as possible. Email links to all Councillors are being added but the site certainly doesn't only cover Parish Council business — on it you will find everything from details of local walks to an over-view on many local businesses and services.



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Parish clerk

The last annual report from Albury Parish Council was before Local Government elections, which took place at the beginning of May, and where we welcomed three new councillors, but also lost two, one of whom had been a parish councillor for many years. With a new Chairman, and new ideas, you will have seen quite a change in this last year in the structure and workings of the Parish Council, with more responsibilities being taken by committees. That has brought about some lovely innovations, such as the carol singing and the tree outside the post office, and — as you can see from the above — there are a number of irons in the fire.

It is good to see results from the Parish Council's labours over the past year, such as the newly restored Village Green and a new light outside the library, greatly improved verges and a good number of potholes filled in, to name but a few.

As the Chairman has mentioned, we are to aim for Quality Status this year. This is one of the most important things we can do as a Parish Council, as it will enable us to have much more say at Borough Council level, and will also allow us to take more matters into our own hands, such as some of the tasks carried out by Borough and County Council on our behalf — that way, we believe, we could make sure that they are done not only quicker, but better. Of course, there is a lot of work to be done to achieve Quality

Status, such as producing quarterly newsletters and my achieving a recognised Local Government qualification, but a lot of the criteria that is expected from a Quality Council is already in place — so we are already on the road to success!

As you know, Parish Council meetings are held on the first Monday of the month, at 7.30pm, in the Memorial Library. This is with the exception of months where the first Monday is a bank holiday, in which case the meeting moves to the following Monday, and August — where there is no meeting at all. We also endeavour to ensure that there is an updating report in the Parish Magazine, and the minutes of each meeting go onto the web site: www.albury.org.uk, so it is quite easy to keep up to date with the workings of the Parish Council. My contact details are: joanna@joannacadman.com or telephone me on 01483 268627. Even better — come to a meeting and hear for yourself what is happening in your village, and take the opportunity to make comments or requests in person.

The Annual Assembly is to be held on Monday 7th April, in the Village Hall, starting with a reception at 7pm. This meeting is held for the village, rather than the Council, and is the opportunity for local organisations and societies to report on their activities for the past year and their plans for the future. It's a good social evening, and one where you might either be able to recruit members for your society, or join another! Please come and join us.

My best wishes for the coming year.
Joanna Cadman

Community Committee

It has been a busy year for this newly formed Committee with the main focus being the Parish Plan and the new website.

A questionnaire was sent out to all households in the Parish asking for their views and importance placed on a wide range of issues and subjects from Affordable Housing to the Mobile Library service. We asked people to respond with whether these issues were important to them as individuals firstly, but then also if they believed the subjects were important to the Parish as a whole. The reason for doing this was that whilst some people may not require Affordable Housing, they could have the opinion that this was important to others and therefore should be considered. We had over 25% of questionnaires

returned completed — as far as surveys are concerned this is a good percentage — however it would certainly have been good to get more views from everyone and particularly to have more response from younger families with children. There were some very good suggestions made and interesting views that people wanted to share; an update of all results will be published in the Parish Magazine during May. We have invited representatives of all local interest societies and associations to help with the Parish Plan and will also be holding an 'Open Day' in the Village Hall on 26th April when parishioners can learn more about what the societies and groups have to offer and if they would like to sign up for membership

Domi Nicholson, March 2008

Highways & byways

This year the Highways and Byways Committee has had a certain measure of success. There has been a very good co-operation and liaison with John Cheesman of the Surrey County Council Highways Department.

The constant hue and cry about potholes has abated a little following reasonably good results using the Jet-Patching machine that was on hire from another Local Authority. It is hoped that Surrey will think seriously about investing in its own machine and will finally be able to get on top of this constant source of residents anger.

We have had notable successes with the 15 potholes and part re-surfacing in Shophouse (Row) Lane, Farley Green and also the infamous Guilford Lane has been receiving some good attention from SCC.

The flooding in Farley Green has, at last, been sorted out and there has been good progress in alleviating the flooding at the bottom of Little London.

Within Albury village there have been improvements of kerbside wheelchair access in Weston Fields and the clearance of the felled tree and thick undergrowth alongside the bridge across the Tillingbourne near the Post Office. The hedge along Sherbourne has recently been flailed and is in good shape for the new spring growth and the trees by the bus stop cleared of ivy and all of the suckers. At the time of writing we are in negotiation with SCC and the Surrey Hills Partnership to replace the very urban metal fence in front of the Estate office with more rural looking oak posts.

The corner posts that were fixed in place on the grass triangles at the junction of Park Road/ Little London and at New Road/Sandy Lane seem to have been well received and it is hoped that they will act as deterrent and prevent traffic cutting corners across the grass.

A new list of Village Tasks will be drawn up at the end of April which will include both Capital Works and General Maintenance. If there are any items to do with local Highways and Byways, including pavements, verges and ditches that you think will help improve the appearance of Albury, Little London, Brook or Farley Heath then please e-mail the Parish Clerk at joanna@joannacadman.com and the Committee at royhogben@tiscali.co.uk. Let us know as soon as possible so that it can be included in the tasks for this year.

Roy Hogben, March 2008



Open spaces

During the past year, we have undertaken and completed a number of projects throughout the parish. Work continues to put others in place.

Our Christmas tree outside the Post Office will hopefully become a fixture from now on, bearing in mind that a slightly larger one would have been an improvement. The 'new' village green in Albury is apparent to all, and we are discussing a grand opening to celebrate its success. A much needed light has at last been installed outside the Library, much to everyone's relief; I might add. Throughout the parish we have carried out a general tidy up, including various areas of grassland and banks which had become overgrown and unsightly. This work will carry on as and when needed.

We are delighted to have been able to support the Cricket community generally with the provision of new nets, through the use of development money, given to the Parish Council by the Borough Council to spend on recreation facilities. These nets have just been finished, and will be ready for use at the beginning of the new season. They are open to everyone and not just cricket club members.

Our last Committee Meeting took place on March 12th. The agenda included: The sorry state of the Village Hall, which needs redecorating urgently. We would welcome suggestions from the public for the improvement of the kitchen area, such as the purchase of equipment etc. *Any bright ideas, please?*

Other concerns are the filthy state of grass verges throughout the parish and the possibility of engaging the help of the Probationary Service to help with a clear up. The refurbishment of the pond on Farley Green will be undertaken during the next few months, once we have organised the logistics which are quite complicated.

As you can see, we have not been idle and are always ready to listen to suggestions from parishioners.

Pru von Radowitz, March 2008



Finance

In December, some of the most important decisions of the year are taken when the Parish Council sets its budget for the coming financial year, and decides how much to ask for in Precept. You will know that our Precept comes from the Borough Council, but comes out of your pocket as the 'Parish Rate'. The Parish Council is very aware of the fact that its activities are funded by you and very keen that we should not only give you value for money, but that we should not ask too much of you whilst doing so. Consequently, it has been decided each year for the past three years not to increase our precept request thus, effectively, reducing the amount of rate that you pay for our activities.

However, there are a lot of plans afoot at the moment, not least the re-decoration of the village hall, the refurbishment of the "village green" and an urgent need to tidy up the parish as a whole — cut back hedges, tidy up verges, excavate ditches, clean pavements and sort out Farley Green pond, to name but a few of our plans. There is work to do on traffic calming, the future of the landfill site — and Star Energy has certainly not gone away, even if things have quietened there a little at present.

We have an income from hire of the village hall — which is not enough to cover its running costs, unfortunately, and we are also able to raise funds in the form of grants, but in order to be able to realistically fund all the activities that we consider essential to the well-being of the village, it has been decided that this year we must increase the precept, and that the increase should be a modest 3.9%. This small increase will ensure that we are able to progress with all the plans mentioned above, but still be able to draw on reserves in case of unforeseen events.

John Brockwell, March 2008

Planning committee

In the last year we have looked at over fifty applications which were generally for smaller extensions and tree work and less demolition and rebuilding of larger houses

After so many years of anticipation it is exciting to watch progress at the old Albury Mill site being developed for housing. This has included altering the course of the river and will provide waterside flats.

The new Gasrec gas extraction plant is due to commence production within days. This is the first of its kind in the country and means that the methane produced at the landfill will no longer be flared off but processed and re-used as a carbon neutral fuel. Gasrec have worked closely with the Parish Council from the start to answer all our fears over planning issues and safety and we wish them well with this project.

Obviously most eyes have been on our two major concerns, Star Energy and The Landfill Site. Things have been fairly quiet at Star Energy, possibly due to the fact that they have been in talks and now taken over by Petronas, a Malaysian company. They have not, however,

gone away and the Parish Council and the Star Energy Liason Group are watching closely to see the outcome of the current plan to use the Albury 1 well site for gas storage and the exploration of Albury 2 for gas production and storage. The planning Committee are maintaining a watching brief on the plans for the restoration of the site.

Albury House site has been taken up by Guildford Borough Council in their development plan as a possible site for development at some point in the future. This is likely to involve a large percentage of affordable housing. The fact that it is listed may however prevent any development. Any planning application would have to include change of use from office to residential.

The committee discussed this, and added two new suggestions for inclusion: the field opposite (North) of the church that runs down to Old Bakery Mews could be used to create a village green, and a retail area could be created around the village hall and car park and the car parking area extended to the other side of the river, with a footpath running to the Drummond Arms car park.

Peter Gellatly, March 2008

Landfill liaison group

Representatives of the Landfill Committee met with SITA management in February to voice their concerns and frustrations over how long it is taking to get a restoration plan drawn-up for Parishioners to agree on. It was obviously felt that our voices were pretty loud and clear on that particular day because at long last External Consultants who are experienced in land-fill restoration have been appointed by SITA. We met with their representative a couple of weeks ago and have been promised a plan for initial consultation towards the end of June.

As far as day to day activity at the site is concerned it is filling up very fast and is now likely to reach maximum capacity within two years. As can be seen from the village, some capping has already taken place although further restoration has been delayed following changes to agreed settlement rates and to what can now go into landfill. Sita have been required to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment, to be considered by Surrey County Council. A further application from Sita under consideration would mean the removal of the mountain of soil from the site, for temporary storage nearby, until its re-use in the restoration.

We will report regularly on restoration plans and ask for all parishioners to have the chance to review these.

Domi Nicholson, March 2008