

Fontmell Magna Parish Council

Annual Report for 2017/18

Annual report to parish residents for the year ending 30th April 2018.

1. Introduction

This annual report summarises the activities of the Parish Council over the past year ending 30th April 2018. 2017/18 has been a challenging year with two major issues in play, namely (i) negotiating improvements for traffic management along the A350 running through the village and surrounding villages, and (ii) drafting the Neighbourhood Plan to guide future development of the housing and amenities in Fontmell village and the wider parish.

2. Governance

The Parish Council (PC) met seven times through the year, with the AGM and Annual Parish Meeting held in May, then five scheduled bimonthly meetings plus an extraordinary meeting called in December 2017. The minutes of meetings of the PC and all significant associated documents are available on the Parish website <http://www.fontmellmagnapc.co.uk/FontmellMagna-PC/Default-9778.aspx>.

From May 2016 the Parish Council had a complement of 6 councillors and one vacancy, with the responsibilities shown below:

Howard Horstead (Chairman)	Development Control
Robin East	Highways
Michael Humphreys	Neighbourhood Plan and Vice-Chair
Maggie de la Perrelle	Footpaths and Tree works
Gideon Roberts	Website
Leo Williams	Flood Warden

The duties of Clerk were shared during the period May-September by Robin East (Acting Clerk), Maggie de la Perrelle (RFO) and Michael Humphreys (Assistant Clerk). Marianne Wheatley assumed the duties of a paid Clerk from September.

Following the county council elections in May 2017, Cllr Graham Carr-Jones became the councillor for Stalbridge and Beacon, the area which covers Fontmell Magna.

In July 2017 Maggie Ayre was co-opted to the PC.

Robin East resigned from the PC effective from end January 2018 but agreed to represent the PC on matters relating to Highways. Robin was thanked for his continuing efforts in this area to secure tangible improvements to the road network and traffic management. Maggie de la Perrelle resigned from the PC effective from end March; Maggie was thanked for her many years of service to the PC.

In March 2018 Chris Bellers was co-opted to the PC and agreed to cover footpaths. As a consequence Chris will step down as chair of the Village Hall committee after the AGM on 25th July 2018.

In November 2017 the PC reviewed some important regulations, policies and procedures: Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Freedom of Information policy, Risk Management & Code of Conduct, Contract of Employment, Disciplinary & Grievance procedures, and Equal Opportunities policy.

Dorset County Council and District Councils have received approval from the Secretary of State to create two unitary authorities, one covering Bournemouth, Poole & Christchurch, and the second covering the remainder of Dorset county. The new structure will come into effect in April 2019 and is likely to have implications for parishes in relation to council tax, planning and development control, roads and delegated duties.

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3. Finance

The financial year runs from April 2017-March 2018. The PC started the financial year with a balance of £8,041 and closed the year with a balance of £8923.15.

Main sources of income through the year were:

Parish precept	£7000.00
Neighbourhood Plan grants	£7437.00
interest	£4.18

The principal items of expenditure were:

Neighbourhood Plan	£8259.60
Clerk's salary	£2352.00
Village Fete gazebo	£450.00
Insurance	£691.15
Maintenance	£280.00
Dorset Planning Consultant	£490.00
DAPTC/SLCC subs	£233.86

Full details of income and expenditure through the year can be found on the Parish website.

The Parish precept for 2018/19 was set at £7000 in line with the precept for 2017/18. It was agreed that the precept should remain at this level to fund the PC to employ a paid Clerk, support the Neighbourhood Plan work and meet other expected costs. Precepts in previous years have been:

2017/18	£7,000
2016/17	£2,050
2015/16	£1,618
2014/15	£3,500
2013/14	£3,470
2012/13	£7,315

4. Planning

The Parish Council has a responsibility to consider planning applications for their potential impact on the parish and benefits to the parish community. Some 23 planning applications have been reviewed in 2017/18 and a further 14 applications for tree works. The Parish Council is developing a Neighbourhood Plan and has considered planning applications in relation to the emerging NP policies as these best represent the residents' opinions on future development (see Section 5).

The emerging Neighbourhood Plan and the failure of NDDC to maintain a 5-year housing land supply has potentially encouraged property developers to submit planning applications. Three recent applications have triggered some lively debate amongst the parish community:

2/2017/1856/FUL - Middle Farm Lurmer Street Fontmell Magna SP7 ONT
Erect 2 No. dwellings, convert and extend existing single storey stables to form 1 No. dwelling, and erect garage/car port. Modify vehicular access.
Parish Council objects. Awaiting NDDC decision.

2/2017/2014/OUT - Land at Mill Street Fontmell Magna Dorset
Develop land by the erection of 29 No. dwellings, form vehicular access. (Outline application to determine access).
Parish Council objects. Awaiting NDDC decision.

2/2018/0338/OUT - Land at E 386515 N 116640 South Street Fontmell Magna Dorset
Develop land by the erection of 30 No. dwellings, form vehicular access, parking, a school drop off area and landscaping. (Outline application to determine access).
Parish Council supports. Awaiting NDDC decision

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The Parish Council's comments on these three housing applications are available on the NDDC Planning Applications website <https://planning.north-dorset.gov.uk/online-applications/>. An application for a 17.5m mobile phone mast in the village near the sewage works was refused by NDDC.

5. Highways

Robin East and Roger Thomas have been very active through the year, lobbying Dorset Highways, Simon Hoare MP and others, to take action to improve traffic management through the Village. Working with A350 Community Group they successfully achieved a decision to retain the existing voluntary HGV one-way routing scheme against pressure from Melbury Abbas to allow two-way routing of HGVs along the A350.

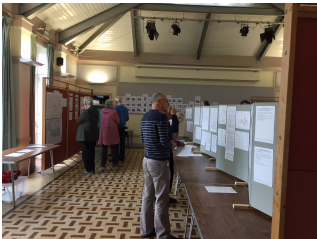
In February/March 2018, DCC Highways undertook resurfacing of the A350 from Sutton Waldron through Fontmell Magna. This programme of works includes improved signage, and gateways at the north and south entrances to the village. The 30mph limit is being extended to the north to the cricket pavilion. Options for improving pedestrian safety were discussed but would involve installing traffic lights which had no support, or rumble strips which are very noisy. It is hoped that the proposed housing development on land to the west of South Street could include speed reduction measures.

6. Neighbourhood Plan

A Working Group of volunteers continued the work to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish. Two major consultations were carried out.

The Options Consultation took place in April-May 2017, when over 100 people visited an exhibition in the Village Hall and 71 questionnaire responses were received; several statutory bodies were also consulted on the options presented. This feedback guided the Working Group on support for the Vision and Objectives of the Plan, on which sites were preferred for housing development, and on support for designating Local Green Spaces.

The Pre-submission Consultation was held in October-November 2017, where residents were asked



for comment and feedback on the draft NP prior to submission to NDDC. Again several statutory bodies were also consulted. Two open meetings were held in the Village Hall attracting over 70 residents. 145 questionnaire responses were received, with strong support (over 90% favourable) from residents for most of the policies and less strong but still favourable support (over 75% favourable) for the housing policies.

All the feedback received, from residents and statutory bodies, was carefully considered by the Working Group and the plan updated to meet the concerns expressed as far as possible. In March 2018 the PC agreed that the updated Plan should be submitted to NDDC for examination. This process takes several months and will involve a further consultation on the NP. If all goes well, the plan should become "made" in October 2018. All material documents relating to the Neighbourhood Plan development are available on the Parish website http://www.fontmellmagnapc.co.uk/FontmellMagna-PC/neighbourhood_plan-9778.aspx.

As part of the NP process, the WG also developed a Conservation Area Appraisal, to complement the NP in setting out the built and landscape character of the Conservation Area. This document has now been approved and formally adopted by NDDC. Special thanks are due to Barry Roberts for his work on this document.

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7. Parish Projects

During the past year the PC has commissioned or facilitated improvements to Parish amenities and facilities including:

- building a Parish-wide e-mail directory, to keep residents better informed;
- War Memorial maintenance;
- repainting the Bedchester telephone box and installing a defibrillator (not yet operational).

The Parish received a “welcome back” award at the Dorset Best Kept Village competition 2017.

Bedchester residents are close to installing a defibrillator in the telephone box and discussion continues on providing one in Fontmell Magna. Negotiations are continuing with DCC over transferring responsibility for the Bedchester allotments to Fontmell Magna PC.



8. Plans for 2018/19

The PC will seek to achieve a range of improvements and targets in the coming year, including:

- supporting examination of the Neighbourhood Plan by NDDC and seeing it through to approval;
- continuing to support the A350 Community Group to obtain an improved North/South route;
- continuing to liaise with DCC Highways to improve traffic management through the village;
- continuing to liaise with Pennyfarthing Homes regarding the proposed development in South St;
- maintenance to Bedchester notice board, the village Pump House and other facilities in need;
- improving liaison with the Police, patient participation groups and DAPTC;
- supporting the provision of a defibrillator in the village;
- supporting community litter picks;
- continue to negotiate with DCC over the management of Bedchester allotments;
- entering the Dorset Best Kept Village Competition 2018.

In order to pursue these initiatives, the PC will seek support and volunteers from the Parish community.

And finally.....

The Parish Council wishes to thank Chris Bellers, for editing the informative and entertaining Parish newsletter, The Gossip Tree, and to thank all the distributors.

Thanks to all the volunteers, and many accommodating partners, who have worked on the Neighbourhood Plan, which has required a great deal of effort and time from the people involved; these are Dick Stainer, Chris Bellers, Robin East, Michael Hobbs, Barbara Humphreys, Michael Humphreys, Roy King, John Knight, Hannah Lister, Lorna McCurrach, Robert McCurrach, Emma Reeman, Caroline Rhodes, Ken Rhodes, Barry Roberts, Laura Scott-Walby and Jo Witherden.

Thanks to Cllr Langham and Cllr Carr-Jones for their regular updates through the year.

And finally, thanks to the current Parish Councillors and the Clerk, and the councillors who stepped down during the past year, for their work in supporting the parish. It would be very helpful if more people came forward to serve on the Parish Council and its associated committees (Village Hall) and working groups, otherwise all the work falls on the shoulders of a few volunteers. It's your parish as much as theirs.