

Balcombe Parish Council



Annual Report 2020 – 2021

Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 5th May 2021 – 7:30pm – Zoom

Please register with the Parish Clerk for dial in details

parish.clerk@btconnect.com

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020-2021

It's been a funny old year! Who could have foreseen 12 months ago that we would spend so much time physically apart, and yet so much time connected to one another through the medium of the internet?

The start of 2020 saw the government having to rush through legislation in order that councils could carry on and meet virtually whilst the spectre of Covid hung over us. I will confess, having only used Zoom and Teams once or twice prior to the pandemic, the thought of having to conduct all our business via the internet was not one I relished. However, I think all our councillors have done an amazing job of adapting. Only last week I had to chuckle during a meeting as screens were efficiently shared between one another as points were debated. Dare I say it, but I feel we are all rather proficient with it now.

Adaptability has been the buzz word for this year, and I think the whole community should be justly proud of how they came together to meet the challenges the pandemic foisted upon us. It is through times like these that you realise the value of community and the uniqueness of living somewhere like Balcombe. Whilst our physical surroundings are stunning and situation perfect for so many reasons, it is the people that really add beauty and value to life. The speed and efficiency the whole community pulled together in those early days was truly remarkable.

It is at this point that I feel a special mention is warranted. Just as the whole lockdown saga began, we appointed our new Clerk, Jemma McCarthy. To say that she encountered a baptism of fire doesn't do it justice. Not only did she have to get to grips with the new role, but the myriad of unique challenges the pandemic threw at us. From contending with the daily alterations to our operating conditions, to helping organise the village response to lockdown, Jemma rose to the challenge – and it is in large part thanks to her that we performed so well when the situation asked so much of us.

As a council we have said goodbye to a few members over this year. Jackie Emery left us for sunnier climes. Jackie had served with us for 4 years, overseeing our youth provision for the village. Also, Henry Le Fleming had to step down due to the pressures of balancing work and family life. I would like to thank them for their service to the village.

A major change to the council was the departure of Charles Metcalf. Charles had been our Chairman for 5 years, and a councillor for 6. Charles led the council through one of the most difficult times in its recent history. He did so with diplomacy and aplomb. It is thanks to his commitment and desire to see the best outcome for Balcombe that the council was able, not only to survive what it has been through, but to come out stronger on the other side. How we never had a Handforth moment is beyond me, and testament to his skill.

With the departure of these councillors, we were awarded the opportunity to co-opt some new faces to the Council and would like to welcome Helen Caudrey, John Butcher, Lyndon Hoare and Massi Smith.

I suppose that leads me on nicely to the elephant in the room. Angus Energy.

The oil companies, in their various guises, have been a feature of our daily lives for over a decade now. The collective sigh of relief on receipt of the Planning Committees refusal of their latest application must have been heard in Redhill. There was a lot of work going on behind the scenes putting the objections together for that day and I know many people have expressed their gratitude for what was achieved. However, I am very conscious that we were stood on the shoulders of giants that day. Ours were arguments and points that had been formed over a decade of learning and struggle by many people in the village. It was only via their hard work and tenacity that we were able to achieve what we did. Thank you all.

As we, metaphorically, emerge from the cloud that had engulfed us, I am filled with hope and excitement for our future. There are new developments on the cards for the village, from remodelling the centre, to new housing and park facilities. We have a lot to look forward to. If there is one thing the last 12 months has demonstrated to me, it has been the value of the people who surround us. When all the trappings of life are taken away, it is people who really add value. Nature can be capricious at times and has recently demonstrated how important our symbiotic relationship is. If nothing else, perhaps this 12 month pause for thought will allow us to review the value of all our relations around us.

Now, over to the reports from the various working groups.

Jon Millbanks *Chairman*

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

This year we reviewed 84 planning applications (20 more than the previous year); 7* were for new houses, 26 for extensions, 12 for tree work, the remaining 40 were for alterations of one kind or another. ** 1 was for the Rectory Development of 17 houses.*

During 2020 work started on the new development at Barnfield (next to Buttercup Barn). The site will deliver 16 of the 42 homes allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan, 5 of which will be affordable. Despite a lengthy debate, our aspiration for traffic calming to be incorporated along Haywards Heath Road as part of the development was not supported by WSCC and so did not happen. Nor was a pedestrian refuge provided and we have had to move the vehicle activated sign.

However, we were able to influence the allocation of the £58,000 of S106 (developer contribution to infrastructure) money for WSCC highways to be directed towards centre of the village enhancement scheme. An additional £12,000 is allocated to be spent where we like, and we intend to use this for signage and village gateways along the Haywards Heath to improve driver awareness and hopefully slow speeds (see traffic). The school, recreation ground and the Victory Hall have also been allocated large sums from the developer contribution. We were also successful in collaboration with Balcombe Estate and Buttercup Barn Nursery school, in getting a footpath link from the development through the Barnfield allotments, which will allow pedestrians a safer walk into the village without having to cross the Haywards Heath Road and will link to the footpath at Barn Meadow.

In December 2020, Shanley Homes submitted plans to MSDC for a housing scheme on the allocated site next to the Rectory. Currently these plans will deliver 4 or 5 affordable homes and 11 or 12, 3 bedroom homes. Importantly, it will provide a separate village car park with 10 spaces, as per the policy in our Neighbourhood Plan. Discussions are ongoing, and we hope that a suitable scheme will be approved later this year.

It is now five years since our Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in 2016. As planned, we are now preparing to carry out the 5 year review. We will revisit the policies, looking at various national and local planning policy changes which have happened in the intervening period and at the effectiveness of the policies in our plan.

One example is that the 2016 Neighbourhood Plan allocated a site for a new graveyard as the churchyard is nearly full. However, that site is not entirely suitable and so we are in discussion with Balcombe Estate regarding the viability of land next to the scout hut as a preferable alternative to that allocated in the Plan. We will also review how the sites have provided the housing mix we envisaged and the effective achievement of our planned infrastructure improvements from developer funding.

Whilst we have certainly made progress over the last five years, new challenges and initiatives come along, and we will be seeking to update the plan where relevant. Any significant changes would require consultation with residents and other stakeholders and possibly a new referendum.

Alison Stevenson

TRAFFIC

During 2020-2021 we made considerable progress towards our goal of enhancing pedestrian and driver safety in the centre of the village.

Following the drop-in session in September 2019 to present 4 options for the village to consider, we took the preferred option to the next stage by undertaking a Road Safety Audit level 1. In 2020 the Road Safety Audit ('RSA') on the layout option raised a number of issues and so the second option was the one eventually progressed to a fuller design, passing a second RSA. This plan was distributed via door-to-door flyer in December 2020, face to face consultation not being possible due to Covid restrictions.

Feedback from the consultation indicated support for the proposed scheme, and we are now reviewing some concerns and fine tuning the scheme before moving to the next step of a detailed design proposal and costing. Reserves have been put in place to fund the design work and with allocation of S106 developer funds from the Barnfield housing site to this project we will have some of the construction costs.

Our Neighbourhood Plan contained provisions for traffic calming along the Haywards Heath Road as part of the Barnfield Development, but despite lengthy negotiations with the developer and WSCC, it was deemed not to be a legal requirement or necessary.

So, at the end of 2020 BPC carried its own review of the traffic signage on the Haywards Heath road south of Mill Lane along with representatives from WSCC Highways. As a consequence, we now have a number of initiatives scheduled with WSCC that aim to improve road safety and reduce speed on this section of road. They include boundary gateways at the village entrance, new road signage and remarking white lines. We have purchased self-adhesive 30 mph signs for residents along Haywards Heath Road to place on their wheelie bins to act as a reminder to drivers. The funding for these projects is also coming from the Barnfield S106 monies levied by MSDC.

We continue to monitor speeds and volume of traffic in village hotspots using a Speed Indicator Device (SID) that we share with other local parishes. We would like to get an enhanced version of

Speedwatch up and running again, and we wait for appropriate training and a couple more volunteers.

Nicky Gould

ENERGY

On the 2nd March 2021, the WSCC Planning Committee heard the application by Angus Energy for an extended well test at Lower Stumble. Representatives from the Parish Council, Mid Sussex District Council, West Sussex County Council and FFBRA (Frack Free Balcombe Residents' Association) all spoke against the latest Angus Energy's application and asked for it to be refused. Despite the Planning Officer's recommendation for acceptance, the WSCC planning committee voted 13 to 0 to refuse the application.

The reasons given for refusal were “The proposed development would represent major development in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, for which there are no exceptional circumstances, and which is not in the public interest. There are alternative sources of hydrocarbon supply, both indigenous and imported, to meet the national need, there would be minimal benefit to the local economy from the development, and there is scope for meeting the development in some other way, outside of nationally designated landscapes. It would therefore be contrary to Policies M7a and M13 of the West Sussex Joint Local Mineral Plan (2018) and paragraph 170 and 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).”

There are 3 possible future scenarios for the site at Lower Stumble:

- Angus Energy have until the beginning of September (6 months from 2nd March 2021) to appeal against this decision. If they are granted an appeal, then this would be considered by a government-appointed planning inspector probably at a public inquiry.
- Angus Energy could make another new application.
- A decision could be made to restore the site. The time frame for such a decision, or who the decision maker is, is not clear. The parish council is currently seeking clarification on this. Restoration, once undertaken, would involve returning the site to its previous forestry use. In order to do this the well would be plugged, hydrostatically tested, and abandoned with an agreed programme or method approved by the Health & Safety Executive and the Department of Energy and Climate Change.

Streetlights

We are currently replacing our street lights with low energy lanterns as they fail. The “ordinary” lanterns last about 4 years and the low energy ones about 15 years. So far, we have replaced 6 of the 70 street lights.

Our lead time for acquiring low energy lanterns is very long (up to 6 months), and this has led to an unacceptable delay in replacing failed lights. The parish council has recently taken the decision to increase its stock of low energy lanterns from 4 to 12 in order to minimise these delays. This will improve the time taken to repair them.

Please continue to report failed street lights to the parish clerk either by calling 01444 811 833 or emailing parish.clerk@btconnect.com

Sue Taylor

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Following WSCC finance cuts, we have fewer buses going through Balcombe to Haywards Heath and Crawley. The 62 bus was going through the village three times a day on Tuesdays and Thursdays (as well as the school bus service term time). An additional daily service is now running from the Half Moon to Crawley at 9am Monday to Friday, returning from Crawley bus station at 14:50.

The trains continue to run their twice hourly service and Govia Thameslink Railway have implemented some improvements at the stations using monies from the Passenger Benefit Fund. You'll notice the new bike racks, baby change and toilet facilities (in the ticket office), and additional seating. The Parish Council continues to request for step-free access to be made a priority for our station with little progress achieved thus far.

ST MARY'S CHURCH

There is very little to report except to mention the new skills we've all had to learn! Zoom and Team meetings, Live Streaming, YouTube Services and, of course, expanding on the written word.

2020 got off to a near normal start having experienced an enjoyable Christmas and Epiphany. Then as Lent began, we were thrown into 'Lockdown' and I wrote a letter to as many of you as we had details for, and every week as well as a video meditation, there was a weekly Eucharist celebrated on my office desk! I was amazed how many 'views' we had for these things – occasionally over 200! Of course, as we were denied access to the Church for any Worship, all our 'occasional offices' such as Christenings and Weddings were put on hold. Funerals were limited to six people and services at the graveside or crematoria were necessary. Checking twice a week on our Church building was important to make sure it was secure and free from any deterioration and vandalism. Thankfully, it was!

Twice, we have had the joy of going back into Church following the 'Lockdowns' but with stringent 'Covid-19' precautions in place. However irksome they seemed; it was still very good to be back in St. Mary's. Services were naturally different and, as singing wasn't allowed, we were so grateful to Max Preston-Bell for providing music on the organ at various parts of the Service which lifted our spirits and gave a real sense of joy. We just managed a Christmas Carol Service before the joys of 'Lockdown' returned, and a small singing group made the event joyous in what was a fairly unique situation. A Carol Service where we can't sing carols doesn't happen too often.

So, a very strange year; however, we all survived and the level of community care that was offered and received was magnificent. Balcombe can truly 'pat itself on the back' and I extend thanks to all those who helped others get through the very real fear and anxiety which touched us all during that first 'Lockdown'.

As this year unfolds and we are still gripped by the coronavirus and, although things may be getting a little easier, let us never lose sight of the love that binds us all together and let our response be seen in love towards one another, humility in service.

I will hang up my cassock on the 25th April for the last time as I prepare to move away. Leaving this lovely Parish has been a hard decision but with the Pandemic and the very strange year that we've all shared, I came to the realisation that some 'quality' retirement time would be desirable and that perhaps now was the right time to embrace a future without the demands and trappings of running a Parish.

Fr Keith

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S TRUST

The Trust is independent of the PCC and exists as a link between the wider community and the historic church building of St Mary's Church. The Trustees during 2020 were Jeff Thompson, Rosemary Corder, Peter Huxley (Treasurer and Parish Council representative), Charles Wilson, Denise Vickerstaff, with Fr Keith Richards appointed ex officio.

As noted previously, the Trust is taking a lower profile deliberately, building our reserves again, and waiting for the next project to emerge from the PCC or our church community. During 2020, there were a number of donations to the Trust totalling £3,931; there were no expenditure or grants made, and the balance carried forward was £25,338 at December 2020.

We are very grateful to all those who have donated to the Trust over the last year, enabling us to prepare and support for any necessary and ongoing work on our Church building and churchyard.

Charles Wilson – Trustee

YOUTH & WELLBEING

Over the last year, St. Mary's Youth Club "Locus" has successfully run every other Friday evening, including sessions by Zoom (video link) since the pandemic started. The group plays an important role in the village community, catering for young people aged 11-14.

Balcombe Primary School has received funding of £4,217.39 to help provide an array of online learning, which adds much enrichment to the curriculum.

Wellbeing – "Balcombe Cares" came into being in mid-March 2020 to deliver invaluable practical support such as medication collection, shopping, befriending and dog walking to vulnerable village residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. They were an invaluable help in these difficult times and we pay tribute to the very many volunteers who have contributed. We would like to extend special mention to Alice Cooke who, amongst a myriad of other things, coordinated laptops and tablets to those who needed them (for keeping in touch with relatives or distance learning). We would also like to thank all the neighbours who have helped each other over the last year, the Balcombe Cares street co-ordinators, the dog walkers, befrienders and medicine collectors.

Police & Neighbourhood Watch (NW) – If you need the police, call 101 for non-emergency business or 999 for emergencies. A big thank you to Julie Mitchell and the Neighbourhood Watch group who rose to the challenge of integrating their network into Balcombe Cares. If you would like to help to keep our village safe, call Julie on 819262 or email her on oldgilletts@hotmail.co.uk, as there are still some roads which need coverage.

The Parish Council has continued to make representations regarding unsatisfactory disabled access to Balcombe station, the new Rydon housing development at Barnfield, and to the Victory Hall.

ACCESS, RURAL & VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS

We would like to give a big vote of thanks to all those who put in hours of work to keep Balcombe looking good, especially those involved in the volunteer litter picking initiatives, plantings around the village, those who inspect and report on the footpaths, plus the Guerrilla Gardeners for their care of the village planters and keeping our station looking good. A special heads up to everyone who contributed to our winning entry to Villages in Bloom. Thank you!

The village acquired both of the decommissioned telephone booths and great progress has been made to transform these. The telephone booth in the village centre is now a book exchange and there are plans underway to turn the booth opposite the train station into a walkers' information point.

Could we remind you to keep dogs on leads around livestock to avoid animal deaths. As a dog owner you should also ensure you bag up your dog's poo and then dispose of it in one of the numerous bins around the village (which you pay for!) or take the bags home and dispose of them, rather than using them to decorate the hedges and trees! Bags are non-biodegradable and thus pose a hazard to wildlife and farm animals. There are also accounts of horses (reportedly attracted by the high cereal content of dog poo) dying painfully after ingesting bags.

Fly tipping is a growing problem nationally, with many incidents in the last year within the village and on our local roads and verges. This has been exacerbated during lockdown, while amenity tips have been closed. Residents should report fly tipping incidents to Mid Sussex District Council or to the Parish Clerk; anyone hiring a contractor to remove waste should check on the Environment Agency website that they have a valid waste disposal certificate.

Please report missing or damaged footpath signs to the Parish Clerk – this is particularly important at the moment as there are many more people than usual rambling the fields and woods – healthy walks, but we want you to keep to the paths! Thanks to Balcombe Estate for their contributions in the year regarding the continued repair and maintenance to the Chaileybeate spring bridge, and their work behind the scenes to reinstate the much-missed benches at the side of the lake.

COMMUNITY AND ASSETS

The Pavilion had a leak in the year which has been fixed with a new ceiling put into the away changing rooms. In normal years, the Pavilion is used by the football club, and for the village fete, for which the council pays the insurance. We hope these activities will resume once the Covid-19 pandemic is under control.

On several occasions during the year, graffiti appeared and was removed, not just at the Pavilion, but also around the village.

Bramble Hall was forced to close for much of the year due to national lockdowns and constraints regarding meeting indoors arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. We hope to see our usual groups and activities return to the hall in the coming year

Welcome Packs with useful local information are given to all new residents, so if you are aware of newcomers, please contact the clerk (811833)

COMMUNICATION

We broadcast news and information on the council website (<https://balcombeparishcouncil.com>), our Facebook page (@Balcombe Parish Council), which we link to the Balcombe West Sussex News and Events Facebook page, Balcombe Bulletin Facebook, and the village website, www.Balcombe.community.com, that now holds a diary populated with village events. Please use these to find out what is going on and to share information about our village.

The monthly Balcombe (parish) magazine, is available from Balcombe Stores, or distributed around the village to those who subscribe annually. It also contains village and Council updates, events and advertisements for local businesses.

Nicky Gould

FINANCE

These accounts are prepared on a cash rather than an accruals basis. At the Year End bank balances stood at £146,367. The Accounts below are draft but are in the process of being reviewed by the internal auditor and are due to be signed off by the Council before the end of June 2021.

During the year, BPC paid £1,400 to the Victory Hall towards the cost of new exit doors; and from S137 money: £4,217.39 to Balcombe School towards the provision of online learning; £1,500 to Tiggers to help build a new storage shed, and £50 towards the Balcombe “Bull Run” cross country running event.

An amount of £870 was paid for consultancy services in relation to the village centre traffic enhancements. Additional amounts of £295 were paid to facilitate the village centre traffic consultation held in December 2020.

Amounts totalling £18,097 were received in relation to business grants for Bramble Hall which was forced to close due to national lockdowns during the year. The United Reformed Church (‘URC’) also provided Bramble Hall with a 3-month rent holiday over the summer in 2020 resulting in a rental saving of £1,875.

The Precept had been increased from £70,000 to £75,000 to support the village centre traffic enhancements and to cover costs which may go up as District and County Councils cut back services. This has been held at £75,000 for the coming financial year as we aim to finance any further costs relating to the village centre traffic enhancements from reserves. A detailed listing of payments made the previous month is available to the public at parish council meetings and is published on the website www.balcombeparishcouncil.com

Jemma McCarthy

BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS							
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual [Unaudited]	Budget	Budget
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
INCOME							
Precept	60,000	60,000	66,000	70,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Recreation Ground	2,928	2,222	2,037	1,959	1,414	2,350	2,145
Pavilion Usage	1,329	925	1,090	912	(219)	1,100	1,100
Sundry Income	94	135	-	-	-	-	-
Bank interest	83	110	313	416	184	320	250
TOTAL INCOME	64,433	63,391	69,440	73,287	76,379	78,770	78,495
ROUTINE PAYMENTS							
Clerk's Salary & Allowances	(16,012)	(16,005)	(15,969)	(18,323)	(22,299)	(20,800)	(27,701)
Street Lighting	(7,766)	(5,062)	(6,793)	(8,596)	(6,623)	(10,050)	(11,800)
Ranger Expenses	(2,942)	(2,969)	-	-	-	-	-
Recreation Ground Hire	(1,882)	(1,351)	(1,554)	(1,314)	(900)	(1,400)	(1,500)
Dog Bins	(827)	(1,241)	(1,241)	(1,241)	(1,358)	(1,250)	(1,250)
Audit	(1,229)	(1,454)	(1,000)	(1,075)	(860)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Pavilion Costs	(830)	(1,123)	(917)	(1,494)	(966)	(3,000)	(2,500)
Members training and exps	(175)	(225)	(140)	(440)	(180)	(300)	(300)
Communication	(862)	(1,000)	(1,321)	(1,120)	(1,512)	(1,500)	(1,500)
Subscriptions	(638)	(631)	(593)	(722)	(654)	(700)	(700)
Insurance	(799)	(952)	(1,016)	(841)	(708)	(900)	(850)
General administration	(602)	(851)	(900)	(550)	(1,794)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Rubbish Freighter	(315)	(644)	(666)	(685)	-	(750)	(750)
Snow plan	(275)	(1,650)	(945)	-	(1,420)	(1,200)	(1,200)
Maintenance	(80)	(580)	(941)	(1,620)	(720)	(1,400)	(1,000)
Election expenses	(6,711)	-	-	-	-	(1,762)	(1,750)
TOTAL ROUTINE PAYMENTS	(41,945)	(35,738)	(33,995)	(38,018)	(39,995)	(47,012)	(54,801)
GRANTS							
Victory Hall	(3,901)	(4,220)	(23,320)	-	(5,900)	(4,500)	(5,000)
Other/Village Organisations (S137 Monies)	(6,497)	(3,005)	(5,692)	(4,400)	(5,767)	(5,000)	(12,000)
TOTAL GRANTS	(10,398)	(7,225)	(29,012)	(4,400)	(11,667)	(9,500)	(17,000)
PROJECTS							
Traffic	-	-	(16,367)	(6,413)	(1,287)	(20,000)	(12,500)
Other Projects	(323)	(754)	(1,893)	(351)	(261)	(1,500)	(20,500)
TOTAL PROJECTS	(323)	(754)	(18,260)	(6,764)	(1,548)	(21,500)	(33,000)
BRAMBLE HALL							
Income - Hall Rental	8,210	9,485	8,770	7,280	1,550	9,000	3,000
Income - Covid19 Related Grants	-	-	-	-	18,097	-	-
Lease	(6,996)	(6,996)	(7,248)	(7,500)	(5,625)	(7,500)	(8,500)
Running Costs	(2,603)	(2,217)	(2,580)	(2,154)	(3,239)	(2,300)	(2,800)
BRAMBLE HALL LOSS	(1,389)	272	(1,058)	(2,374)	10,783	(800)	(8,300)
VAT NET	2,024	(353)	(2,277)	3,256	(495)	-	-
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	12,402	19,593	(15,162)	24,987	33,457	(42)	(34,606)
RESERVES							
Reserves b/f	71,090	83,492	103,085	87,923	112,910		
Current year results	12,402	19,593	(15,162)	24,987	33,457		
Reserves c/f	83,492	103,085	87,923	112,910	146,367		

BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCILLORS 2020-2021

John Butcher: I settled in Balcombe, with my wife back in 2007. Now as a family with our two young children at local schools we enjoy living here and care greatly for the people, countryside and businesses of Balcombe. My wife teaches at Balcombe school and I have previously twice been on the committee at the Balcombe social club. Now ready to contribute to all our community as councillor, since February 2021, I am very much looking forward to helping us live safely, sustainably and enjoyably. My 25-year career has been mostly in multinational Procurement and Supply Chain Management, with increasing emphasis on sustainable business. As a London commuter in pre-covid-19 times and lover of countryside hikes I'll be active in the travel, energy and youth working groups. I spend much of my working time listening, consulting, advising and negotiating – skills which I hope will be of good use to our parish.

Helen Caudrey: I have lived in Balcombe for 2 years with my fiancé and our son and joined the parish council last summer. We have grown to love the village in the relatively short time we've been here, including for its beautiful setting and the impressive number of activities that are organised.

I am glad to be able to contribute to protecting and enhancing the village for everyone and I am particularly interested in improving accessibility in the village. This priority is aided by my being a Chartered Building Surveyor, although in my career I now specialise in dispute resolution in the construction industry.

The time I have been on the Council has been a steep but interesting learning curve; I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their proactive and positive attitudes.

Nicky Gould: I have lived in the village for 11 years. This is my second term as a Councillor. I am part of the Traffic, Neighbourhood Plan and Community Asset Groups. Our aim is to match the aspirations of our villagers to maintain a thriving, safe and inclusive community. We use the policies set out in our 2016 Neighbourhood Plan as our reference points. It is challenging and frustrating at times, but also rewarding to (slowly) bring about change. I am also one of the organisers of the village fete, something that is enjoyed by all, and follows these principles. We are all lucky to live in this beautiful village.

Simon Greenwood: I would like to thank those councillors who have retired in the last year for their considerable contributions and welcome their replacements. Getting the balance between experience and fresh ideas is not easy but with the average age having fallen the new councillors' fresh enthusiasm will contribute to an already active council. Representing the residents of a vibrant village in pleasant surroundings, which have made Balcombe such a desirable place to live, is a pleasure and privilege. I have particular interest in the more rural aspects of the village and in its long-term prosperity and quality of life. I will continue to work for the best interests of the whole parish.

Lyndon Hoare I was brought up in Berkshire, but had many visits to Sussex each year as my father's family had lived between Sharpthorne and Forest Row, since the 1890s when the Wier Wood Reservoir was still the River Medway. In 2011 my husband and I looked for a house outside London and were fortunate enough to find what is now our home, in Newlands. My career has been in Human Resources in commercial organisations, professional services, charities, and higher education. I have recently finished a contract managing a number of complex restructures for a local housing association. I am an active member of Balcombe Club, belong to the Frack Free Balcombe Residents' Association and have been a part of the

Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan Working Party since early 2020. As a Parish Councillor my aim is to support development of the village's social and economic infrastructure, including road safety, transport and affordable housing, as well as helping to sustain Balcombe's character.

Malcolm Kenward *Vice Chairman* I was born in Brighton and have lived in Balcombe with my family since 1988. I am now retired after a long career in Information Technology, starting back in the days of punched cards and mainframe computers with just 32k of memory. My wife, Marian, was a Senior Lecturer in Education at Brighton University, and now works part time supporting the training of new school teachers. My children both live in the village, my daughter and her husband (Sarah & Tom), with their two children, who attend our Primary school. I have historical family connections in Balcombe and Turners Hill. I am a member of REPOWERBalcombe and the Frack Free Balcombe Residents' Association and hold shares in our pub. I also run the Balcombe Community website with Rachel Hall and am a typesetter for the Village Magazine. I am still getting to grips with the wide variety of responsibilities of the Council, but remain committed to undertaking initiatives that benefit the whole community. Many of you will have seen me installing the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) on our roads. I hope to meet more of you in the future at the Community Links meetings where I endeavour to answer any questions you may have about Parish Council activities.

Jon Millbanks: *Chairman* Wendy and I moved to Balcombe just over three years ago, having previously lived in Brook Street for about 10 years prior to this. Although I started my working life in the Air Force, I spent 22 years as a police officer in the Met, reaching the rank of Inspector. Having retired from the police a few years ago, I now work for Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority. I am a special adviser to the Welsh Safety Board and the National Training Lead and Regional Prosecutor for the Animal Protection Services Charity. I hope to bring my analytical skills and eclectic range of experience to the role to help the council further its Neighbourhood Plan for the benefit of the whole village.

Alison Stevenson: I came to Balcombe in 1971 and grew up here, moving back in 2000. My children have also grown up here. I have been active on village organisations such as the PTA and am in the Gardeners' Association and Garden Guerrillas. My husband is a Cub Leader. I have been a Councillor for 17 years; in which time I have seen many village projects to fruition. The mini roundabout at the school, ripple print and speed limits on approaches to the village, Newlands Parking restrictions, redevelopment of the play area on the recreation ground, the Neighbourhood Plan, acquiring Bramble Hall to name a few. I am a Civil Engineer working on major road projects and am currently installing the smart motorway on the M23. I am involved in the project for enhancing the village centre and will continue to endeavour to influence the application of the Neighbourhood Plan through developments coming forward and the allocation of any new sites.

Massi Smith: I moved to Balcombe in 2017 with my husband (who grew up in Balcombe) and my two children. Since then, I have been active on village organisations such as the Baby and Toddler's Group. Besides being a full-time mum, I also work part-time as a consultant for a firm in the City that specialises in Capital Markets Intelligence and Investor Relations. I have particular interest in helping parents and their children. I bring my experience in project management, presentation, negotiation and stakeholder management to my role. Originally

from Italy, I initially moved to London to pursue a university degree almost 20 years ago. I have a Master's degree in Political Economy from LSE and I speak 4 languages.

Sue Taylor: I am a retired chartered accountant, and have lived in Balcombe for 12 years. I'm approachable and hard-working, and have been involved in the campaign to keep the oil industry out of Balcombe. I support appropriate levels of new housing in the village and am engaged in the neighbourhood planning process. We have several sites about to be developed and I will fight to ensure that developer levies collected by MSDC are spent to alleviate issues arising from new housing, such as traffic, parking, school capacity and health care. I would like to see our street lighting gradually converted to LED. This will save both energy and villagers' money. I am happy to help in any way. I want transparency in local government and representation for all.

Lloyd Thompsett: I have lived in the village since 2015 and I enjoy the village lifestyle, community and the beautiful countryside around. I am the finance director of a local software company having previously worked at senior level within IT. I have been a member of Rotaract and Lions, serving on many committees and holding the chair and serving as a middle school governor. I bring my previous experience in project management and financial management to my role on the council. In my first term as a councillor, I am involved with the Neighbourhood Planning and Traffic groups helping to support our Plan and the requirements of the village. I am also on the Village Fete committee for the last few years and enjoy the involvement. The village idyll needs to be protected to ensure Balcombe remains the village we all enjoy and I hope to contribute to that future during my tenure.

2020 - 2021 WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Neighbourhood Plan & Planning Including Infrastructure Planning

Alison Stevenson*
Nicky Gould
Malcolm Kenward
Charles Metcalfe~
Sue Taylor
Lloyd Thompsonett

Traffic

Nicky Gould *
Henry le Fleming~
Malcolm Kenward
Charles Metcalfe~
Alison Stevenson

Energy

Sue Taylor*
Jackie Emery~
Jon Millbanks
Henry Le Fleming~
Charles Metcalfe
Alison Stevenson

Community Assets, Victory Hall etc

Nicky Gould*
Simon Greenwood
Lloyd Thompsonett

Youth, Recreation & Wellbeing

Jackie Emery~
Jon Millbanks

Public Transport

Henry le Fleming~

Access & Rural

Jackie Emery~
Malcolm Kenward
Simon Greenwood

Finance

Simon Greenwood
Sue Taylor
Lloyd Thompsonett
Jemma McCarthy

Security

Simon Greenwood
Jon Millbanks

*Group Leader

~No longer on Balcombe Parish Council

2021 – 2022 WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Recreation, play, youth, halls

Helen Caudrey
John Butcher
Massi Smith
Simon Greenwood
Jon Millbanks

Outside groups

Malcolm Kenward
Jon Millbanks
Simon Greenwood
Helen Caudrey

Neighbourhood Plan & Infrastructure

Alison Stevenson
Massi Smith
Nicky Gould
Helen Caudrey
Lyndon Hoare
Lloyd Thompsonett
Sue Taylor

Environment & Well-being

Sue Taylor
John Butcher
Jon Millbanks

Transportation & Traffic

Nicky Gould
Lloyd Thompsonett
Alison Stevenson
Malcolm Kenward
John Butcher
Massi Smith

Admin & Assurance

Sue Taylor
Simon Greenwood
Lloyd Thompsonett
Lyndon Hoare

Balcombe Parish Council

www.balcombeparishcouncil.com

Chairman:

Jon Millbanks

Email: jon.millbanks@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Clerk:

Jemma McCarthy

Telephone: 01444 811833

Email: parish.clerk@btconnect.com

Members as at May 2021:

Nicky Gould: nicky.gould@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Simon Greenwood: simon.greenwood@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Malcolm Kenward: malcolm.kenward@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Jon Millbanks: jon.millbanks@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Alison Stevenson: alison.stevenson@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Sue Taylor: sue.taylor@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Lloyd Thompsett: lloyd.thompsett@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Helen Caudrey: helen.caudrey@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Lyndon Hoare: lyndon.hoare@balcombeparishcouncil.com

John Butcher: john.butcher@balcombeparishcouncil.com

Massi Smith: massi.smith@balcombeparishcouncil.com