



## COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER: MARCH 2016

**In this issue:** an update on general Parish Council matters, to include the development of the Lengthsman Scheme and proposals for the War Memorial, together with a particular focus on the Affordable Housing consultation, feedback and the preparation of a report

### **The Parish Council**

The Parish Council has been considering a variety of topics in its past few meetings. There are a number of developments which have taken place within the normal work programme for the Council including some specific developments regarding the Lengthsman Scheme programme and also the project to add names to the War Memorial.

### **Lengthsman Scheme**

The Parish Council has now approved the next stage of the work programme for the Lengthsman.

The Lengthsman is employed across four Parish Councils to undertake general maintenance work on areas such as verges and hedgerows on roadside areas in the public domain of the village. He also undertakes general maintenance works to Parish small infrastructure such as the Parish Council noticeboards.

Projects which have been agreed for the next few months include:

- Maintenance and repairs to the seven Parish Noticeboards;
- Clearing vegetation from the area of the noticeboards and removing outdated postings;
- Brockishill Road - Cutting back overgrown vegetation at the forest entry and painting the two metal barriers white;
- Shepherds Road: Culvert - Cutting back overgrown vegetation and painting the two metal barriers white;
- Shepherds Road: Riverside Close - Inspect and clear the gullies and inspect the ditch and carry out / report on the need for any clearing work required;
- Barrow Hill Road – clear debris from the ditches to enable a full inspection of the possible flooding issues.

The Parish Council welcomes suggestions from the community for inclusion in the programme of Lengthsman works provide they fit the criteria for his role. If you have a suggestion for the programme, please contact the Clerk to the

Parish Council, whose details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

### **War Memorial**

At its meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, the Parish Council received a report on progress with the proposal to add new names to the Copythorne Parish War Memorial.

Agreement on a way forward had been reached with interested local groups and the Council received a report to its meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> February which set out the results of the resolution to proceed and the necessary next steps to completion of the exercise.

There was a decision to add 5 names to the War Memorial, representing the addition of those with a direct connection to the Parish who had served the country in the First or Second World wars. As we noted in a previous Newsletter, Historic England has now listed our War Memorial. This was done as a part of their review of Memorials and other structures relating to the centenary of the First World War. Listing helps to mark a building's significance and celebrate its special architectural and historic interest and will bring specific protection.

Therefore, the work of the Parish Council together with other important local groups to add the names has been very timely in the pursuit of the continuing importance of our Parish War Memorial.

We also need to determine how the names will be added as there are a number of options available. The Parish Council received a further report at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, where these options were further discussed. Representatives of the various bodies involved will be invited to a future meeting of the Council to discuss these options.

We have also looked into how we might further 'protect' the War Memorial, including completing the length of bollards around it. Finally, the Parish Council will look into insurance cover for the War Memorial, given that it is now formally 'listed'.

### Affordable Housing

In our work on the Affordable Housing initiative, we have encountered a specific, major issue regarding the impact of the new Housing Bill currently being considered in the House of Lords.

Our original plans for the consultation were:

1. A public information exhibition to be held at the Parish Hall on 28<sup>th</sup> January;
2. An 'Open Forum', for questions and clarifications, to be held at the Parish Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> March, and
3. A formal written feedback process to invite comment, opinion and views on the initiative. After detailed analysis of the feedback, a report would be presented to a Parish Council meeting at a date to be agreed to enable the Council to decide whether or not to proceed with any detailed work and proposals.

The public exhibition took place on 28<sup>th</sup> January with a very impressive attendance by, we believe, approximately 450 Parishioners. There was a great deal of interest in the overall presentation and representatives from our partners in Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH), the National Parks Authority (NPA) and New Forest District Council (NFDC) were in attendance to respond to questions and clarification requests.

The next major event was planned to be the Public Open Forum on 16<sup>th</sup> March at the Parish Hall. **However**, at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, the Council received a report from its Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG), which highlighted some of the emerging, major, implications of the new Housing Bill on our programme. The original resolution agreed by the Parish Council October 2014, set out that:

- any housing would be only available for people with a strong connection to the area;
- a section 106 Agreement would be put in place to ensure that the housing created would be for rental in perpetuity (no right to buy);
- there would be no shared ownership schemes – only rental;
- no more than 15 units would be built over no more than 2 sites;
- all properties would be let on fixed term agreements, and
- no approach to the Parish for further Affordable Housing development for at least 10 years.

The Housing Bill contains many requirements which, if implemented as an Act, would mean the Council can no longer give the guarantees it has set out in the resolution above. For this reason, the Parish Council approved the resolution:

**To postpone the Open Forum set for 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and to 'freeze' the consultation process until further notice, when we will have clarity of the Housing Bill implications on our pre-conditions for any development.**

Once we have greater clarity on the content of the Housing Act 2016, we will be able to make a decision whether or not we can continue with the consultation on the basis we have agreed and set out in the resolution in October 2014.

We believe that this is the right, honest thing to do. We cannot proceed with a consultation when we cannot be certain that some of our conditions could still be met for any development.

### Parish Council meetings

The Council meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7.00 pm in the Copythorne Parish Hall (rear extension). Members of the public are very welcome to attend the meetings and speak on any matter of concern at the start. The dates of the next few meetings are:

Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	Planning meeting cancelled
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30 pm
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	Affordable Housing Open Forum <b>NOW POSTPONED</b>
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2016	Full Council at 7.00 pm

\*The Clerk to the Council (Michael Mortimer) can be contacted at Riverside House, Riverside Gardens, Romsey SO51 8HN. Telephone and fax 01794 511379, e-mail [copythornepc@btinternet.com](mailto:copythornepc@btinternet.com). Website: [www.copythorne.org.uk](http://www.copythorne.org.uk). Details of individual Parish Councillors, as well as information on District and County Councillors, can also be found on the Parish Website and on community notice boards.