

In this issue: an update on general Parish Council matters regarding the Lengthsman Scheme, Parish Council Mailing List, Affordable Housing, Riparian Landowner Rights and Parish Council Meeting dates.

The Parish Council

The work of the Parish Council continues to be varied and busy. The Council held the Public Annual General Meeting on the 9th March. The event was attended by District and County Councillors and reports on all our activities were delivered, followed by a short public participation session.

Dates for future Council meetings are to be found at the end of this Newsletter.

Lengthsman Scheme

The County Council funds the Lengthsman Scheme which certain Parish Councils manage. However, as Parishioners will be fully aware, general Council budgets are now being cut back over time through the reduction of government grant and various areas are under particular scrutiny.

However, a report recommending the continuance (and slight expansion) of the scheme was considered by the County Council's Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on 21st March. The result was that the scheme will continue for the current year. The work schedule for the Lengthsman has been agreed and these tasks have now commenced.

Building a Mailing List for the Parish Council

As a part of its work to develop a Media and Communications Strategy for the Council, so that we can communicate far better with our Parishioners, we are intending to try and establish a Parish Council email list. Signing up to this list would mean that Parish Council information can be sent out electronically to those Parishioners registered on the list, (including the Newsletter).

To that end, we are asking that if you would like to receive the Newsletter via email (and any other important communications from the Council about Parish wide events), then please could you send your **email address**, together with your **name** and **postal address** to the **Clerk to the Parish Council**, whose details can be found at the end of this Newsletter. All your details will be

secure and safe and will not be divulged to any third party.

We look forward to building our electronic communications and hope you are able to join our mailing list!

Affordable Housing

As Parishioners will already be aware, the Parish Council voted at the meeting on the 23rd February, to postpone the Affordable Housing Open Forum, planned for 16th March, until the outcomes of the Housing Bill in Parliament are known, as some of the current proposals in the Bill conflict with the pre-conditions set by the Council in respect of any housing which might be developed.

However, despite the postponement, the Council also resolved to maintain the issue on its agendas for the foreseeable future for the purposes of any updates which might be forthcoming.

The Parish Council's Working Group have continued to meet to maintain oversight of any developments nationally and in particular sought to complete the set up of the new pages for Affordable Housing which can be accessed from the current Parish Council web site by clicking on the Affordable Housing button. This will take the user directly to the new website pages. The web pages include all contemporary documents in relation to the Council's programme of work on this issue, as well as enquiry forms (interactive and downloadable), which can be used by Parishioners to raise questions to the Council regarding the development of the Affordable Housing Initiative.

Your rights as a riparian landowner

If your land boundary runs next to a watercourse it is assumed you own the land up to the centre of the watercourse, unless someone else owns the land over which the watercourse flows.

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Your rights as a riparian landowner cont'd

If the watercourse is the responsibility of a third party it should be noted in your deeds.

If you own land with a watercourse running through or underneath it, it is assumed you own the section of the watercourse on your land.

You have the right to protect your property from flooding and your land from erosion. If this work may affect the flow and storage of water, you need to seek consent from Hampshire County Council (see Ordinary Watercourse Consenting)

COMMON QUESTIONS

Q. If I fail to regularly maintain the watercourse on/adjacent to my land and flooding occurs as a result, do I have to compensate for damage caused to others?

A. If you do not carry out your responsibilities, you could face legal action and may be liable for any damage which occurs as a result of your failure to maintain the watercourse.

Q. If I own land on both banks of a watercourse, am I fully responsible for its maintenance?

A. Yes

Q. If I own land on one bank of a watercourse, what am I responsible for?

A. You are responsible for the maintenance up to the centre of the watercourse.

Q. If the watercourse is not on my land, but I am the nearest landowner to one bank, am I responsible for maintaining any part of the watercourse?

A. Yes, you are responsible for maintaining up to the centre of the watercourse, even if the watercourse and bank do not fall within your property boundary.

Q. If I own land on one bank of the watercourse with a Highway on the opposite bank, what am I responsible for?

A. It is likely that you own both banks and are, therefore, responsible for the maintenance of the whole watercourse. The majority of Highways are constructed via a dedication of land by landowners, meaning the soil beneath the Highway remains in ownership of the landowner.

Q. If I want to fill in a ditch on my property and replace it with a culvert, do I need consent to do this?

A. Yes, you will need to have the consent of the Lead Local Flood Authority, if you live in Hampshire this is Hampshire County Council.

Please read the "Guide to Ordinary Watercourse Consenting", which details the necessary consents and explains how to apply. www3.hants.gov.uk/flooding/watercourses.htm

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 April 12th 2016	Planning meeting
Tuesday April 26th 2016	Full Council

*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. Website: 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.