

Winter 2015

# Birdham Parish Council Newsletter

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## Parish Council Elections – Are you interested in becoming a Councillor?

Parish Councillors are elected once every four years in whole council elections; in other words all 9 seats are up for election. The next Parish Council election is May 2015.

### What do parish or town councillors do?

Councillors have three main areas of work:

1. Decision-making: through attending meetings and committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented;
2. Monitoring: councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working;
3. Getting involved locally: as local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their parishioners and local organisations. This often depends on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available.

As a councillor you can become a voice for your community and affect real change. It helps if you're a "people person" who enjoys talking to other residents but, more importantly, you need to have the concerns and best interests of the parish as a whole at heart. Parish councils are the most local part of our democratic system and are closest to the public. Why don't you stand for your local parish council and see what difference you can make to your local community?

Council meetings are always held in the evening – as are most meetings of the other groups which councillors attend on the Council's behalf.

**Interested? Come along at 7pm on Monday, March 30 to Birdham Village Hall, where we're hosting a seminar on 'Being a Councillor'**

## Drainage – improving but still work to do

Over the last two years a lot of progress has been made in resolving drainage issues in Birdham, but there's still some way to go. Much of this progress is thanks to the Birdham & Earnley Flood Prevention Group encouraging riparian owners and working closely with engineers from WSCC. The County's powerful cleaning equipment cleared neglected culverts under properties where maintenance would have been beyond the resources of the ordinary home owner. B&EFGP have also helped village organisations to apply for Operation Watershed funds to clear ditches/culverts where ownership is uncertain. The biggest current project is the Walwyn Close culvert, which should drain the North East of the village. Problems include ingress of tree roots, poor installation, the wrong materials and a partial collapse. Operation Watershed has provided a solution, without years of legal wrangling about who was at fault. (Operation Watershed money is not available to individuals, but your resident's association or Parish Council can act as sponsor if your project fits the criteria.)

Despite extensive ditch clearance in Bell Lane this area still has significant drainage issues and it is not clear what still needs to be done. Therefore we are asking for a volunteer to work with residents in the Bell Lane area, to identify the problems and to prepare a case for funding that the Parish Council can place before the developers of both Tawny and Rowan Nurseries. The developers are likely to resist this approach but the funds required to solve the problems are insignificant compared to their total budgets.

## The Village Pond

The Parish Council would like to support the enlargement of the Village Pond, opposite the Church. A larger pond would add visually and environmentally to this tranquil location, appreciated by both residents and visitors alike, not to mention the additional capacity this would provide to our drainage system. Funds are possibly available to carry out the excavations.

The owners of the adjacent field have indicated they are prepared to sell a suitable piece of land to the Parish Council. In addition to cost of the land we would be responsible for fencing and legal cost.

The Parish Council doesn't have the funds available for this and therefore we're looking for help from residents to raise £12-15,000, which would allow us to apply for other funds that are available for this type of project. A task like this is likely to take up to 4 years. A council debate is likely to take place later in the year so please let your councillors know your thoughts on this idea.

## Village Hall news

Birdham Village Hall is now on Facebook! Special Events and regular activities will be appearing soon so please 'Like' the page to get notifications. But in case you don't have access to the internet make a note in your diary of:

**Quiz night - April 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**(First question @ 7.30 pm)**  
**£1.50 per person**  
**(Max per team 6)**  
**No prizes, just for fun**  
**Get your teams together now**

**Race night - May 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**(7.15 with first race 7.30)**  
**Entry Adults £2.00**  
**Children under 16 £1.00**  
**Betting at 50p per horse 8 races**  
**Bar available**

## Planning Applications

**BI/13/00316/FUL** – Birdham Pool appeal to be held 25<sup>th</sup> February.

**BI/14/02662/OUT** - Koolbergen & Ramsay, Bell Lane, Birdham. Outline application for the erection of 81 houses, B1 floor space, retail and open space with the retention of 1 dwelling. We '**Strongly Objected**' to this application as it conflicts with the submitted Neighbourhood and Local Plans. See council minutes for our detailed response.

## New Homes Bonus

We were successful in our bids for funding for community projects from the New Homes Bonus Fund. We secured funding for equipment for the Village Hall and improvements to the playing field, both areas highlighted by residents during our Neighbourhood Plan Open Days.

## Who do I contact?

Parish Councillors:

Laurie Pocock (Chair) [lauriepocock@btconnect.com](mailto:lauriepocock@btconnect.com)

Elizabeth Hamilton (Vice-Chair)

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Tim Firmston [timothyfirmston@yahoo.com](mailto:timothyfirmston@yahoo.com)

Gordon Churchill [g.t.churchill@intelynx.net](mailto:g.t.churchill@intelynx.net)

Or write to or email the Parish Clerk (David Siggs)

[clerk@birdhamparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@birdhamparishcouncil.org.uk)

28 Langdale Avenue, Chichester, PO19 8JQ

## What's coming up?

All events are in Birdham Village Hall unless otherwise stated:

**History Group** 7:30pm fourth Monday every other month

**Village Choir** 6pm every Monday in the Church Room

The next parish council meeting is  
**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015**  
at 7pm in the Village Hall.  
Everyone is welcome and we would love to see you