

December 2012

Birdham Parish Council Newsletter



Your Parish Council needs you!

Do you think you might be interested in being a Birdham Parish Councillor? If you are over 18 and live within 3 miles of the parish you can be.

You don't need to be interested in politics (there's no party politics in village parish councils) and although we have had very highly qualified residents on the Parish Council in the past you need no formal qualifications. An interest in a voluntary role doing the best for Birdham parish and its residents is the most important attribute.

Currently we have 6 councillors, so there are 3 vacancies. As no election has been requested we need to co-opt suitable volunteers.

"The hardest part for me, when I first became a parish councillor, was understanding that the council makes decisions, so getting things done can seem to take ages! Once I understood that proposals needed to be worked on before a council meeting (rather than in the meeting) and must be an agenda item (otherwise a decision cannot be made) I was able to be much more effective." Jane, current Chairman.

Why not try something different?

Contact the clerk for more information

Love West Sussex



The County Council have launched a new way of reporting problems with roads and paths called Love West Sussex. If you have a smart phone you can download the app, take a picture of the pot-hole or whatever and use the app to log the problem. The information goes straight to the people who will be doing the repair and because you've sent a picture it won't need to be checked by a council officer first.

Report with the mobile app

If you have a smartphone you can download the free app, which will enable you to report issues on the move and track progress.

The app is available on the following phones:

[iPhone](#)

[Blackberry](#)

[Android](#)

You can send a report in three easy steps:

See the problem and take a photo.

Check the location (which is detected for you automatically by your phone).

Pick a report category, and submit.

Your report will be sent directly to officers and you can be kept informed of progress in a variety of ways, including text and email messages or via the [Love West Sussex](#) website.

Report online

Visit the [Love West Sussex](#) website to report an issue and upload a photo using our live map. You can also check the progress of other issues you have submitted as well as reports and photos submitted by other residents and council staff.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about Love West Sussex then please contact us at lovewestsussex@westsussex.gov.uk

Surface Water Drainage

The wet weather in November has made us all very anxious about a repetition of the flooding which happened in June not only in Birdham but all over this area, when something like 119mm (more than 4 inches) of rain fell in forty eight hours.

The geology of Birdham is brick earth overlaying London clay. The rate of drainage through the top soil is very slow – as we see on the Playing Field every year. Added to that is the very high water table – the water level under the ground – which is bound to be high as we are so close to the sea. It is usually at its highest in January and February when you hit water only about 50cm (less than 20 inches) down in some parts of the village. So the water going down meets the water coming up and has nowhere to go. That's what happens in the car park at Birdham Stores.

So the only hope is for the water to be carried away to the sea through the system of ditches which we see everywhere in this area. But then there are three further problems: the fall of the land is so slight that the water moves very slowly; the ditches were dug at a time when they were meant to serve agriculture and not houses; and the whole network has been poorly maintained for years.

So whose responsibility is it to keep the ditches clear?

The Environment Agency is responsible for rivers and the seashore. They grade the Flood Risk – but only for those threats. Most of the village is Flood Risk 1, the lowest rating – which is hardly surprising because we don't have any rivers and our only coast is along the Harbour between Chichester Marina and Greenacres. But they are responsible for the Earnley and Easton Rifes and Medmerry, which is where most of the water south of Birdham Straight goes, eventually.

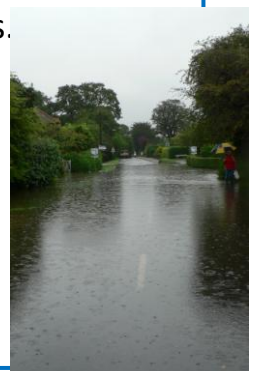
For the rest, the oversight of drainage lies with West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council. But their departments have very few staff and very little money. They are not responsible for clearing ditches, although they do what they can to help.

The bottom line is that you are responsible. If you have a ditch on your property, even if it's outside your hedge or fence, you are responsible. If only one person in a run of ditches does not keep their ditch clear, they risk not only their own property but their neighbours' as well.

The Environment Agency, West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council have all been working hard since June to identify what went wrong, what should be done about it and to mobilise communities to protect themselves.

Your Parish Council identified where the problems lie under normal conditions and has helped to get things done at the Shipton Green turn. The next targets are Church Lane, Court Barn Lane, Crooked Lane, and Bell Lane.

Probably no amount of preparation would have prevented the flooding in June but we – that is you – do not need to let history repeat itself.



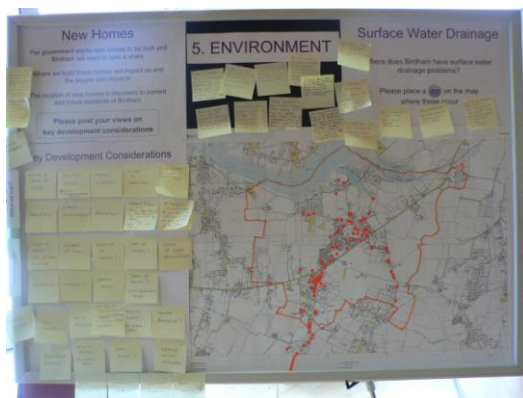
Birdham Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbour Plan Open Day was a great success with over 200 people coming to the village hall to find out what it is all about and to find out how they can contribute to the future of Birdham. There was no holding back as hundreds of Post-its were left giving opinions suggestions and concerns.

Using this valuable information the Neighbourhood Plan Team is now putting together a **questionnaire** for the whole village making sure they ask the right questions. When this comes through your door don't miss the opportunity to have your say.



The reasons we all choose to live in Birdham were made very clear. These include the beautiful environment, tranquillity in the AONB, community spirit and leisure opportunities and yet so near Chichester and its wealth of cultural attractions.



A key concern was flooding. In response, the Environment Focus Group has given priority to documenting how the drainage system currently works. The recent heavy rainfall clearly showed where some of the problems are. All of these findings will be shared with the community so that we can all understand how it should work and what the problems actually are.

The recent planning applications have highlighted the issue of where and when new houses should be built. This is a bit of a moving target as the 50-100 new houses proposed in 2006 is still the target despite Longmeadow and Meadow View.

Also we need to think very carefully about not only where any new houses should be sited but also the type, density and what they should actually look like. This is one of the key results of the whole NP process and it will take a great deal of time and effort to get to this point.



As you can see this is an ambitious project and the Team needs all of the help it can get. If you would like to get involved with the Team please contact Terry Cloughton on 01243 512902.

What do you want to see here?

We're using the newsletter to inform you about things we think you ought to know. Please let us know if there's something else you want to see – contact any of the councillors if you have suggestions – as we are working hard to improve communication to suit everybody's preferences.

Village Hall Gardening

Historically members of Birdham WI have maintained the borders around the Village Hall. Members are finding it difficult to do this work so Trustees would be very grateful if any residents would be able to help out.

Local Groups

There is a strong community spirit in Birdham and lots of activity too. If you want your local group or your social event to get a bit of publicity on the Parish Council web-site please do contact us. We're keen to make the web-site useful for you.

Look out for each other!

In the New Year Councillors and volunteers will start work on a Community Resilience plan for Birdham. In the meantime please check on vulnerable neighbours when the weather turns icy or if it snows.

Who do I contact?



Parish Councillors:

Jane Finch (Chair) jane Finch1@talktalk.net
Carolyn Cobbold (Vice-Chair) trcobbold@msn.com
Marion Barker marion.barker@talk21.com
Andy Grafham andy.grafham@gmail.com
Angela Parks camping@ellscottpark.co.uk
Roger Tilbury rogetilbury539@btinternet.com
Or write to or email the Parish Clerk (David Siggs)
 clerk@birdhamparishcouncil.org.uk
 28 Langdale Avenue, Chichester, PO19 8JQ

The Neighbourhood Specialist Police Team responsible for Birdham is:

PCSO Rose Bainbridge **07881 754535**
rosemary.bainbridge@sussex.pnn.police.uk and
PCSO Ollie Broad **07825 735399**
oliver.j.broad@sussex.pnn.police.uk

If a crime is being committed dial 999.
If you have information about a crime or an incident which is no longer happening dial **101** (from a landline) or **0845 60 70 999**. Or you can call Crime Stoppers anonymously on **0800 555 111**

If you and your household would prefer to receive this **newsletter by email** in the future please send your name, address and email address with your request for an email copy to clerk@birdhamparishcouncil.org.uk with **"Newsletter"** in the subject line.

What's coming up?

Christmas Carol Service – Sunday 23rd December (4pm in St James' Church)
History Group - Monday 28th January (7.30pm in the Village Hall)

Don't forget to tell us about your events too!

The next parish council meeting is **Monday 17th December 2012** at 7pm in the Village Hall. Everyone is welcome and we would love to see you.

(Meetings are every 3rd Monday in the month except August)

