

## Volunteers

To ensure Birdham can continue to improve the amenities and reduce the risk of unplanned events, the Parish Council are seeking some volunteers from our community. Help is and will be required to maintain the ponds and the Copse that have been described earlier in this newsletter. Training and support will be provided by our partner, the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group.

Secondly, to reduce and hopefully avoid the risk of flooding within the Parish some volunteers are sought to report any drain, ditch or culvert problems before they become too serious.

Walking through the village near to where you reside or out walking with the dog could provide the eyes we need to proactively reduce such problems.

There are two road gullies that take water off the road – one at the junction of Crooked lane and Westlands lane, and one by the village pond, that need to be raked out during the winter months to allow water to move off the road and in to the waterways – a quick job to do but hugely impactful

*If you would like to volunteer for either of these duties please email in the first instance Timothy Firmston using email [birdhampc@gmail.com](mailto:birdhampc@gmail.com) and Thank You.*

## Forthcoming Events

### Opening of Triangle Pond and Copse

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April commencing at 10.30am at the St. James Centre by the Church. All village folk and their children are invited. The morning will include a short talk on the work achieved for the habitat and wildlife, a visit to the sites followed by refreshments in the Centre.

### Classic Boat Festival

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June at Birdham Pool

### Birdham Arts Festival

Friday 11<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020

### Christians Against Poverty course

Run by Chichester Harbour Churches at St. James Centre, Birdham. For more information contact Roy Dyton on email [442942@talkTalk.net](mailto:442942@talkTalk.net) or telephone 01243 514639.

**What's New in Birdham** – The Knowledge Hub invites you to join a series of short talks on varied topics of local interest, held on the second Tuesday of each month. The location is the St. James Centre adjacent to the Church. The sessions commence at 5.30 for 6.00p.m. For further information please contact Susan Monks email: [varnallmonks@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:varnallmonks@yahoo.co.uk)

## Co-option of a Parish Councillor

The Council should consist of nine elected councillors achieved at the four yearly local elections, last held in May 2019. There are currently eight councillors in post so there is the opportunity to co-opt another councillor before the next planned election.

There are eleven monthly Parish Council meetings that include planning applications to discuss and monitor the activities and finances of the Council. Councillors can also engage with some of our partner organisations and undertake training opportunities if they wish to do so. If you are interested in applying for a co-option please contact in the first instance the Parish Clerk Imogen Whitaker on the email [birdhampc@gmail.com](mailto:birdhampc@gmail.com) to chat about what is involved.

## Footbridge Improvements

During last year improvements were made to the footbridges leading on and off the playing field. A new footbridge was installed in the south-west corner leading from Farne Close having been donated by a local resident. The other footbridges were widened and all have hand rails now in place helping safer access for those with buggies or mobility scooters.

## Parish Councillors

There are currently eight parish councillors elected in May 2019 for a four year term.

Cllr. Laurie Pocock	Cllr. Rachel Glover
Cllr. Elizabeth Hamilton	Cllr. Clive Bush
(Vice-Chairman)	Cllr. Timothy Firmston
Cllr. Gordon Churchill	(Chairman)
Cllr. Graham Campbell	Cllr. Barry Richardson

All councillors can be contacted via email to: [birdhampc@gmail.com](mailto:birdhampc@gmail.com)

## Birdham Parish Council

# Newsletter

Spring 2020



## Chairman's Introduction

Commencing my first Chairman's Introduction requires me to pass on the thanks of the Parish to Laurie Pocock, my predecessor, who was in post for five years during which time some major local issues arose and had to be tackled. Laurie remains on the Parish Council, passing on his knowledge, maintaining his contacts for our benefit and bringing his enthusiasm to some key developments.

Living in Birdham we can at times seem to be under pressure on many subjects; increase in traffic flows, increased housing numbers, potential and actual flooding concerns, a local harbour at greater risk of pollution, combined with reducing funds from statutory organisations. As residents, we have to appreciate the place in which we live for the countryside, water features, proximity of beaches, good public transport, a community that is welcoming and the partnerships established.

The Parish Council is consulted on many subjects by a variety of statutory and non-statutory organisations, all trying to achieve ideal outcomes for themselves. However, the council does not make many of the decisions that affect the place in which we live, and some of the decisions made by others are not always those that we would choose. The councillors will always work in ways that benefit the Parish and are available to listen, suggest and refer any matter you may wish to raise.

In this Spring Newsletter we have outlined some of the recent improvements delivered for the Parish, often in partnership with other organisations, as well as forthcoming events.

Timothy Firmston

## Change of Parish Clerk

In December David Siggs retired as Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) having served with distinction for ten years. We welcome Imogen Whitaker our new Parish Clerk and RFO who lives in Hambrook and is getting to know the Parish and the Manhood Peninsula. Imogen has experience as a Clerk at other parishes and is already passing on helpful advice to councillors at the Parish Council meetings.

The dates of the meetings in 2020 are listed at the end of this newsletter if you wish to attend any of them.





## Triangle Pond and Copse

Working with our partners the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group (MWHG) improvements have been made to the three ponds within the Parish. This has been achieved by their Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands (FLOW) project and a lot of hard work by their volunteers. These pond and wetland improvements can also be seen in several other parishes on the Manhood Peninsula.

Triangle Pond and Copse lies at the junction of Crooked Lane and Westlands Lane. It sits behind the set of gates that were installed in January with funding through the New Homes Bonus scheme. The improvements have been substantial as can be seen in the two photographs below. They have certainly benefited the wildlife as evidenced in the November 2019 newsletter article by the MWHG (reproduced here).

"Now that the ponds retain more water during the summer months, we've seen common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule bats which were not recorded here last year (in 2018). Aquatic species seen were freshwater shrimp, common frog, dragonfly larvae, sticklebacks and lesser water boatmen.



Additionally, the new wildflower bank has attracted small white, holly blue, red admiral, speckled wood and painted lady butterflies."

*Source: FLOW e-bulletin October 2019.*

These improvements have been achieved with the cooperation of the owners, Church Field Ltd.

Kingfisher Pond and the Village Pond have also benefitted from work achieved last year and the advantage of deepening all three ponds was evident in their improved capacity for the heavy rain in December 2019.

Having achieved these improvements it is important the ponds are maintained on a regular basis and develop to benefit the wildlife, habitat and drainage. Birdham based volunteers are being sought for these tasks to gradually take over from the MWHG volunteers. Training will be provided with support from the Group for a regular day of the month selected for some months of the year depending on the tasks to be undertaken.

Some Birdham residents have volunteered over the past year for which the Parish Council is grateful. If you are interested in finding out more about volunteering please contact Timothy Firmston using email [birdhampc@gmail.com](mailto:birdhampc@gmail.com)



## Birdham Arts Festival

Initial discussions are now being held with regard to setting up a Birdham Arts Festival to be held every two years, continuing on the success of the past Arts in the Aisles exhibitions in St. James Church, and the opening of the St. James Community Centre in 2019. The idea is that this event would use both the Community Centre and the Birdham Village Hall.

It would be expected to include performing and visual arts and run for three days over the weekend of September 11th to 13th.

It has been suggested that events would cover all its costs and any profits would benefit the community.

The Festival this year would include specific arts-based activities for children, and in subsequent years could be expanded to include similar activities for adults. Initial planning meetings were held at the end of 2019 and further meetings are planned for the Spring. If you would like to be involved or would like to contribute your ideas or make suggestions please contact Alan Drew on email [alandrew4@aol.com](mailto:alandrew4@aol.com)

## Drainage and Ditch Review – Spring 2020

Now that we are getting towards the end of a particularly wet winter, it is opportune to review the performance of the Parish surface water drainage system.

The last time we had as much rain as we have had during this winter was in 2012, when Birdham had significant surface water flooding in several areas of the village. A number of houses in Bell Lane and Church Lane were flooded, and for several days Church Lane, Bell Lane and Westlands Lane were submerged, with the A286 under water for a time.

As a result of this flooding, much work was done by residents, the Parish Council, the Earnley and Birdham Flood Group, and West Sussex County Council. Money provided by the County Council, under the heading of Operation Watershed, paid for extensive ditch and culvert works in Earnley, which removes water from the Bell Lane area, and a large culvert was built behind the houses in Walwyn Close, to remove water from the A286 and Church Lane. Recently, another Operation Watershed project has been completed, to repair the ditch from Burlow Close across the field towards Itchenor.



Two more Watershed application have recently been approved to the value of £27,000, to repair the culvert from the Saltings to St James Close.

So far this winter the rainfall has been heavier than in 2012, with storms Ciara and Dennis, and the performance of the ditch and culvert network has been much improved, but not perfect.

The culvert under the road at the junction of Church Lane and Crooked Lane is not fully functional, resulting in Crooked Lane becoming flooded from Pescotts Close to Westlands Lane (see photo below, apologies for poor quality). The Parish Council is currently drawing up a Watershed application to repair this culvert.

Areas of Sidlesham Lane also became flooded, endangering 3 houses, as the result of ditches in the area becoming blocked. West Sussex County Council are looking at this problem, as the ditch network covering this area passes into Earnley.

Martins Lane became flooded at the top end on the inner pool at Birdham Pool, as the water could not move out of the inner pool fast enough. This problem needs addressing.

Surface water drainage in rural areas, like Birdham, is based on the principle of Riparian Ownership. Riparian Ownership effectively means that property owners are responsible for the free flow of surface water on and around their properties.

To clarify the rules and responsibilities of Riparian Ownership, a West Sussex County Council leaflet on the subject is available at [www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/11194/riparian\\_owners\\_faqs.pdf](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/11194/riparian_owners_faqs.pdf).

## Birdham Heritage Trail Leaflet

In 2019 a leaflet was designed and printed describing the Birdham Heritage Trail, covering 12 points of interest around the Parish from the 14th Century to present day viewpoints. Copies of the yellow and blue leaflets are available in the porch of St. James Church and at The Boat House Café in Chichester Marina.

## Birdham Tea Party

Held on the first Tuesday of every month in the Village Hall, Crooked Lane at 3.00pm Tea – Cake – and a Chat. Everyone is welcome. There will be a small charge to cover costs.

## Dates of Forthcoming Parish Council Meetings

Meetings are held on the third Monday evening of each month (apart from August) commencing at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall, Crooked Lane.

16 <sup>th</sup> March	21 <sup>st</sup> September
20 <sup>th</sup> April	19 <sup>th</sup> October
18 <sup>th</sup> May	16 <sup>th</sup> November
15 <sup>th</sup> June	21 <sup>st</sup> December
20 <sup>th</sup> July	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2021