

Welcome to the 114<sup>th</sup> Annual Electors Meeting for the Parish of Bray. My name is David Coppinger and I have now completed my second year as Chairman of the Council.

I welcome our guest speaker Tony Carr who is the Manager responsible for traffic and road safety within the Royal Borough. Joining us on the top table is Chris Graham chairman of both Finance and Planning and Cherry Woodley our clerk.

I also welcome all our guests including our attending Borough Councillors and also those residents who assist us by delivering our newsletters.

We are required by law to hold an Annual Electors Meeting every year and we alternate between the 3 village halls within the Parish.

During this year we have welcomed a new Councillor for Bray ward, Mark Hornby which brings us up to our full complement of 15 councillors and we also have a new Deputy Clerk, Pamela King. The appointment of Pamela was very important to us as earlier in the year, Cherry had asked to reduce her hours and we therefore decided to move to, in effect a job share. The Operations Group and Cherry spent many hours working through the split of responsibilities and the actual recruitment process which has brought us to the current situation where Cherry works Monday Tuesday and Wednesday concentrating on Planning and the main council work then with Pamela in the Parish office with Cherry on Wednesday and for the remainder of the week, concentrating on Parish Finance and financial related matters.

We manage the affairs of the Parish through a number of working groups, Strategy, Projects, Finance, Operations Newsletter Production and IT. Councillors take part in these groups bringing in many cases their own specialist knowledge to the group.

In addition to these groups we have Planning which is one of our most important functions and all members of the Council are members of the Planning Committee which meets monthly.

The level of planning applications in Bray is higher than in the many other areas possibly because people wishing to stay in the area, would rather look to extend their property than move. This year we have reviewed 227 applications at our meetings. The time taken on each application will vary depending upon its size and its impact upon the area and community. Simple extensions are, where possible dealt with outside the meeting but major applications may take up many hours of site visits, meetings with neighbours and developers. My fellow

Councillors work hard to fight matters important to the Community. Unfortunately the Borough or ultimately the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol does not always agree with our arguments.

Planning is not however just about applications since we are also considered the eyes and ears of the RBWM where developments go ahead without planning permission. We are in regular communication with the Borough's Enforcement team but are not acting as spies although we do use our local knowledge to ensure that as far as possible our Green Belt is preserved. One good example of this was the work done together with White Waltham PC on the illegal land infilling in Paley Street and proposed development in the Green Belt.

This year the government have introduced new rules on planning which will make it easier to have small extensions under permitted development. Because of the Green Belt and our two conservation areas in Holyport and Bray village, we are not sure whether this will mean a reduction in applications or not. The Borough is also just finishing their consultation on the new Local Development Framework which will decide what will if any, be the impact of the requirement to build new houses on Green Belt land. Two areas of Fifield have been marked as potential development sites although no decisions have been made on them at this stage.

We published 3 newsletters this year and in the last one included a questionnaire to establish this years priorities for the Bray and Oldfield Neighbourhood Action Group. Whilst separate from the Parish Council, 3 Councillors do sit on the Bray and Oldfield NAG - myself Chris Graham and Helen Howard. Unfortunately the boundaries of NAG's are not aligned with the Parish Boundary and half of Fifield is in another NAG.

This year saw an extension of our youth activities with the Parish funding visits of the Parish Tour to Holyport Bray Fifield and the Broome Farm estate. We are currently finalising plans for this year although unfortunately Parishes now have to pay the full cost of this activity when last year it was grant aided.

We actively supported both Holyport and Fifield on their campaigns to keep their red BT telephone boxes and whilst the campaign itself was successful they will no longer be able to accept cash. Thieves visited the Bray cemetery and like many public buildings we had our

lead stolen. An argument with our insurers did follow but in the end we did get our claim accepted.

We do however now have an active CCTV system in the car park at Bray linked through to the Borough's 24 hour operation room.

We are very conscious that it is your money that we are spending and this year we have not increased our precept although because of a change in the base figures by the Borough this has resulted in a 0.2% increase. We have also started a programme of due diligence on the main regular items of expenditure in order to seek Best Value. We went out to tender earlier this year for maintenance and odd jobs and as a result were able to achieve a reduction of costs whilst increasing the work required. We are now carrying out a similar process for grass cutting.

Our relationship with the Borough continues to improve not only at officer level but this year though the offices of the District Association of Local Councils, which I chair, we have also agreed a charter for parishes which defines clearly the expectations and duties of both parties to one another. We have worked closely with a number of departments, planning obviously but also with the Highways Department where we have met to discuss safety schemes on the A308 and the A330. Our Parish SID purchased in 2007, is moved under Borough control, around to various agreed locations in the Parish at regular intervals and local residents in general have welcomed this and seen its effect in reducing traffic speed in the Parish.

#### Fifield Oakley Green and Dedworth.

I congratulate Fifield in taking the plunge to prepare a Community Plan. Whilst totally independent of the Parish Council we did initiate the process and have provided the initial funding. Cllr Grenville Annetts gives us an update at every meeting and I think it is no exaggeration to say that we are astounded by the success so far in bringing together a community for a common purpose and we all wish them every success and will give as much support as we can.

During the year we were able to get the Borough to move the grasscutting programme in Fifield from rural to urban so that verges are cut more often.

One disappointment, although outside our control has been the delays in the Pipeline Scheme which has left many areas muddy wastes. We all hope that this will be finished soon.

### Holyport

We had similar problems on the green at Holyport with South East Water and final restitution was only achieved two months ago.

With the Highway's Dept support we were able to restrict the end of the road in front of the BUPA nursing home on the green to prevent vehicles turning onto the Ascot Road

### Bray

I must congratulate Bray Enhancement Committee yet again for their success in gaining prizes in the Britain in Bloom competition. Last summer they achieved the best small village category, and received a prestigious GOLD award. Bray also won a special regional award for the best interpretation of the RHS chosen theme of "Local Roots." Bray Enhancement Committee has no connection with the Parish Council but we actively support their work and do provide significant grants to them.

Bray restaurants have been in the news this year and we took the blame in the Maidenhead Advertiser for dead fish on the slipway at the Waterside. Whilst we could not be blamed for the problems at the Fat Duck we were inundated with phone calls, everyone from the National Press to people wanting to know how to make a claim.

We were all very disappointed at the result of the planning appeal for what is known as the Bray Triangle which has permitted gravel extraction in an area so close to the Bray conservation area. This was especially disappointing as this year also saw a conservation area appraisal adopted by the RBWM to protect the uniqueness of Bray..

Finally can I thank all our councillors and Cherry and Pamela for all their work this year.