

Bersted Parish Council
Electors' Meeting 2018

We as a Council have held our usual 12 full Council meetings and our twelve Planning meetings and although we are not a planning authority we have voiced our opinions most vociferously on our views about developments in the Parish, besides these meetings we have held 6 Community Resources and 6 Finance and General Purposes meetings.

This year has proved to be very demanding on the numerous planning applications that have come before us for our thoughts and observations and one of our main considerations has been what effect any plans have on our Neighbourhood Plan which was 'made' by Arun District Council and we all thought that the localism bill would have given weight to local concerns particularly in regards to adequate off road parking facilities and unsustainable developments adding to our increasing traffic problems.

We as a Council have tried various ideas to promote the Parish Council including the continued publication of the Bersted Buzz which is now placed on all notice boards and in the two free publications that serve our Parish Bersted in Focus and Sussex View.

We once again held our Bersted in Bloom competition and saw entries from local play groups and this year hope to build on that, we also held our play schemes in the summer and again this has been programmed into

this years activities.

Unfortunately due to reasons beyond our control we had to abandon the Parish Festival but this year the programme looks to be better than ever let us hope for some good weather.

As you will hear from other reports much has been achieved again this year, without the dedication of our Clerk and RFO Debbie our Deputy Clerk Sue our Caretaker Terry and our Groundsman Gary and of course our Councillors a lot of this would not have been possible. To them all we are grateful/

BERSTED PARISH COUNCIL – ANNUAL ELECTORS' MEETING 27 MARCH 2018

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2017/18 budget called for a precept of £97,276 which represented a 5% reduction on the previous year due, in the main, to prudent housekeeping, greater efforts to secure best value for money and increased revenue from hall lettings, especially the new meeting room. In total £23,200 was realised from lettings, an increase of £4k on the previous year. This trend continues today. This has enabled us to tackle several outstanding maintenance issues including electrical work, new sensor taps to save on our hitherto enormous water bill, a new kitchen floor, a dropped kerb in the car park that will enable us to use the grassed area as an overspill car park during events (the plastic matting is here but has yet to be laid), new signage and new seat cushions in the foyer. Additionally, we have contracted Sussex Views and Bersted in focus magazines to include our Bersted Buzz newsletter thus dramatically increasing its circulation. While all of this expenditure was planned, we were (quite literally) hit by an unplanned expense due to the same window being deliberately smashed twice with bricks in the early hours. Repairs plus adjustment to the CCTV system cost £945. This year we have awarded a total of £2000 in Section 137 grants and £600 in Section 142. In view of the unexpected volume of applications, with organisations searching for new income streams as traditional sources dry up, these totals will have to be reconsidered next year. At the same time we will be seeking to make urgently needed improvements to the changing rooms and showers which have almost become unfit for purpose. These improvements will be backed up by a robust zero tolerance approach to those users who fail to treat the facilities with due respect. In sum, your Parish Council continues to deliver a first class service to the local community which is founded on perceptive budgeting and sound financial management.

D I LAINCHBURY
Chair, F&GP Committee
27 March 2018

BERSTED PARISH COUNCIL

ELECTORS' MEETING

27 March 2018

Report from the Planning Committee:

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen.

After serving on our Planning Committee for five years, it was my very great honour to formally be voted in as Chairman of the Committee for this year. Our Committee has waxed and waned in terms of the number of members during the year but, whatever our size, we engage in lively debate and investigate all of the planning related issues which come before us. It is always good to have members of the public in attendance to give their views on applications and we will continue to welcome them in future.

It has been another challenging year on the planning side. The main emphasis has been on responding to the Arun District Council Local Plan, firstly in May and then again in October. Planning generally is becoming increasingly technical and difficult for us all as lay people to firstly understand and then to get our views across. At Bersted Parish Council we have put a lot of effort into helping our own local community, as well as neighbouring ones, to be able to more actively participate.

As UK citizens, we were originally promised in 2012 a much more localized input into the planning process but the pressure for more and more houses has taken precedence. In fact our Bersted Neighbourhood Plan is now seen as severely out of date by the planning hierarchy.

I spoke on behalf of the Parish Council in September at the hearing into the 50 additional houses off of New Barn Lane which we had asked the Secretary of State to 'call in'. As part of the Inspectors' comments, he made mention of the fact that our Neighbourhood Plan has largely been superseded by the emerging Arun Local Plan. At the time we worked with all of you to prepare our Neighbourhood Plan, we had to align it with the then emerging Arun Local Plan. However, that Plan was suspended and then radically changed. It was this change early in 2017 which saw the imposition of the 2500 houses at the Chalcraft Lane site to be known as West Bersted.

It will be a matter for the Parish Council and local residents to decide whether to conduct a formal review of our Neighbourhood Plan. At present, the Parish Council do not feel that local people would want this in light of the situation we currently face.

The main threat at present is that, in addition to the housing allocations already set out in the Local Plan, there are approximately 1250 more houses which Arun District need to divide up between the towns and parishes. This will be done either through

Neighbourhood Plans which are being reviewed or allocated directly by Arun District Council. The Parish Council submitted a response to the latest consultation to state that it would not be appropriate for Bersted to be allocated any further housing as there are questions as to whether the infrastructure and services will be sufficient to support the additional 2500 houses already expected.

Some of you may know that I live in Shripney which is a fairly 'hot' area in terms of planning and development. The large Salt Box field (between Shripney village and the Rowan Way Caravan Park) has been approved for industrial development. Jobs are needed but sadly the plans for this site have been downgraded to warehousing, a hotel, a restaurant, and 2 drive through fast food outlets. To lose yet another tranche of our agricultural land and heritage for more relatively low-paid employment does seem to be an opportunity lost. It is a fine balance – we need jobs to be provided alongside the huge increase in housing but our area is uniquely able to grow a wide variety of food, quickly and economically and this part of the equation is not being addressed by the current planning process.

There was an interesting planning application also in Shripney for an additional 20 dwellings next to the Robin Hood Public House. I attended two site meetings to represent the Parish and spoke at the Development Control Meeting at Arun. The application proved to be controversial and a very good point was made that it could be seen as a 'marginal' site in terms of sustainability and even safety. However, the Officer representing West Sussex County Council Highways did not support this view and therefore Arun District Council approved it eventually. Perhaps this could be seen as another missed opportunity to set a precedent that only appropriate development will be permitted?

It is not all doom and gloom – there are some potentially good measures in the Local Plan which we may be able to utilize as and when a Planning Application is submitted for Chalcraft Lane. If the Local Plan goes through, then there will be a requirement that flood risks from climate change need to be taken into account. Also, if the number of houses actually built falls below a target figure, then the Arun Plan would need to be reviewed. If the demand for and ability to buy homes, or the local services cannot sustain the level of building required, then there may be an opportunity to take further action. We must certainly respond robustly to any planning application and, in doing so, we will have at least submitted our views and this will help in any future campaign for mitigation should our worst fears be realized.

Our area and quality of life is worth fighting for!

Gill Yeates (Mrs)

Chair of Planning

Community Resources Committee 2017 - 2018

Spring is somewhat belatedly finally approaching, and I would, first of all, like to thank my Vice - Chairman Hugh Carey and fellow committee members for all they did last year and will do in the year ahead.

The holiday play schemes at various venues accounted for most of our budget and the continuing success thereof means that we will fund a similar scheme this summer.

Bersted in Bloom continues to flourish under the auspices of our very own star resident Philippa Seager and Mrs Margaret Finch and Mrs Cathy Acres have been committee stalwarts representing the WI.

We can also look forward to a reinvigorated Parish Festival with great thanks to the stewardship of Councillor Lainchbury and various helpers and one we hope will have universal appeal with live music including a diverse range of entertainers and children's attractions as well as dog agility displays - all to take place on Sunday 15 July!

Wellbeing for the elderly has been a subject of concern for the committee and I would like to commend Councillor Trevor Marshall for his exciting proposal to initially set up a tea and coffee club session with a view to sounding out viability of a future weekly luncheon club at Jubilee Hall.

Next year, with the various initiatives, we hope to extend out further into our growing community!

Councillor Martin Lury
Committee Chairman