



Bothenhampton & Walditch
Parish Council since 1886

ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

WHAT BOTHENHAMPTON & WALDITCH PARISH COUNCIL HAS BEEN DOING THIS LAST YEAR 2021-22

Our last year has been exceptional for the bad news we received:

- Storms damaged a Veteran Tree, in the Sycamore Avenue in Walditch, and another tree suspended over the roadway which had to be felled. Two tall trees in Jellyfields fell and crushed a car. Such events, along with flooding, will become commoner in the future, and we need to become resilient to natural emergencies. Most of the trees along Walditch Road carry Tree Preservation Orders, and so do those surviving in the parkland below The Hyde. In principle, this protects them from damage by the landowner, and Dorset Council can require replacement if they die. Enforcement is not a priority because of the low level of resources within the Council.
- A local farmer disposed of rubbish in his quarry on a beauty spot at the top of Walditch Knapp. We contacted the Environment Agency, who phoned him, and he promised to remove it. Months later, it went on fire. Unlike in a National Park, the management of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has no powers to protect the environment. This is an argument in favour of a Dorset National Park.
- Pedestrian access to historic Bothenhampton via Hollow Way became more difficult because of the worsening state of the high pavement. This is a Dorset Council responsibility, and we eventually persuaded Highways Department to put it on their list of capital projects to be funded. This list is long, and their budget and staff numbers are short.
- Bridport Town Council agreed on September 2021 a proposal to change the governance of the Bridport Area. This has been proposed under the Community Governance Review by Dorset Council, and mandates the takeover of Bradpole, Allington, and Bothenhampton & Walditch Parishes without the consent of those parishes. The proposal amalgamates the two wards of Bothenhampton and Walditch and reduces the number of representatives from 9 to 3. These three will report to the Town Council, and any local issues will be assessed for action at Mountfield, not in Bothenhampton or Walditch. The deadline for comments is 23 May 2022, and the parish will cease to exist on 5 May 2024.

WE ARE MOVING TOWARDS OUR OBJECTIVES: CLIMATE EMERGENCY

- We believe that the climate emergency will increasingly test our community's resilience, because we can now see that imported food supplies are under pressure from crop failure, war and the cost of growing and transporting food. The rising cost of living, the cost of housing, the insecurity of our energy sources, and the threats to our environment, all mean we have to look to our local circumstances and tackle the threats that we face.
- Our year began with the great promise of our new Parish Plan 2022-27, based on the survey of residents in 2020. Our principles are to preserve what is great about our parish, to work with residents to resolve issues and concerns, and to support local activities, organisations and events.

PLANNING

- We engineered our specific policies to fit with the aims of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan, the Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency plan, and the Dorset Council draft Local Plan.
- We put Planning first, looking forward to decarbonisation and preservation of biodiversity and to community partnership. The aim is to reduce our production of carbon dioxide.
- We followed this by Accessibility, covering road safety, bus routes and cycle routes, as well as charging points for electric vehicles, because we need to cut our use of fossil fuels.
- Our aims for the Natural Environment and open spaces focus on cleaning up, developing play areas, the Nature Reserves, and wild areas, so that we can keep fit, breathe fresh air, and lower our impact on the environment.
- For Community Support, we proposed improving community resilience and safety by working with groups and agencies safeguarding us.

OUR PROJECTS

Some of these projects have begun, thanks to the assiduity of my colleagues:

- in PLANNING, we are looking specifically for developments that include insulation, low-carbon materials and energy efficiency, and preserve biodiversity. In March 2022 we ran a 'Village Green' event to discuss better transport, energy efficiency and home insulation, allotments and rewilding.
- ACCESSIBILITY has improved marginally with the return of the Community Bus to Coopers Drive, supplementing the service to Maple Gardens, and a dial-up service on Wednesdays in Walditch.
- To improve ROAD SAFETY we have begun to support a 20 mph limit within the Parish, with '20 is plenty' signs to be distributed. We have also put forward possible locations for charging points.
- In the ENVIRONMENT, we have completed a major expansion of dog waste bins throughout the community, and encouraged Friends groups to help improve and maintain our three play areas. We have supported the planting of young saplings on the green area at Slades Green. We have not been able to work much on Jellyfields, but the pathways have been opened up; and in Bothenhampton Nature Reserve, the access to Valley Road has been repaired and the Quarry opened up. We are pushing Dorset Council to finalise their transfer of ownership to Bridport Town Council so our joint Management Plan can be initiated. At the Lower Walditch Play Area, a £10,000 grant from the National Lottery fund meant a Viking Swinger could be installed, turning the Play Area into one of the best equipped around Bridport.
- In our COMMUNITY, we have begun to talk to local groups about resilience, such as our 'Village Green' event. Unfortunately, the continuing and intensifying spread of COVID has prevented us so far from proceeding with our community development activities. Many of the possibilities depend on funding from Government agencies with restrictive criteria and limited time horizons for applications.

AND FINALLY

I want to particularly thank our Defibrillator volunteers, Vicky Hanson and Graham Styles; and Philip Park, our Voluntary Footpath officer. Also, thanks to Chris Trevett, for help with the trees at John Gundry Play Area, and to Danny West for his carpentry skills. My thanks also go to Ed the Lengthsman and his team for responding to our requests, and to the Dorset Council officers who

come out to deal with drains, potholes, broken stiles and broken street furniture. And last, but not least, our team of dedicated councillors: Graham, Chris, Martin, and Edward; and to our Parish Clerk, Tan Cox who organises meetings and manages the finance and correspondence.

2nd May 2022

Cllr A J Basker

Chairman

Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council

Website www.bothenhamptonwalditchparishcouncil.com