

# ARDINGLY PARISH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL REPORT 2012 / 2013

### Chairman's Report

Reading the Chairman's report from last year, I notice it opened: "it has been another eventful year" and it seems difficult not to repeat that same statement again this year. Although the planning applications for Butchers Field and Standgrove have been quiet as their appeals have been postponed until we have clarity over alternative walking areas to Ashdown Forest, there have been many other things going on.

We have progressed our Neighbourhood Plan in earnest. Having carried out a number of consultations with the Village, completed a survey and had a number of reports completed by Neighbourhood Plan sub-committees and external consultants, we are now in the process of appointing a consultant to write the plan. When drafted, we will be circulating it so that all villagers have the opportunity to comment and input on the document.

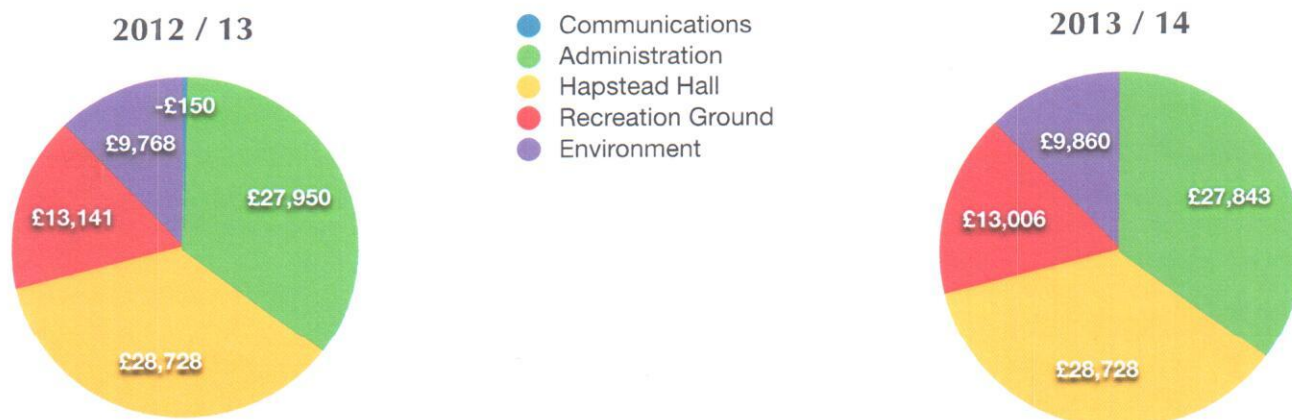
Separately we have commissioned another consultant to take a keen eye to a thorny village issue: traffic. Following a presentation to the village in 2012 and a survey in 2013, they are in the process of preparing their recommendations. Very interestingly, it will most likely advise softer measures to influence driver behaviour and not the erection of signs, cameras and flashing lights. We will then need to work on finding funding to execute the plans.

All this work would not be done without our staff and councillors. I want to thank Anne Rumble and Louise Meehan for all their work as clerks over the last year; they have both given us a tremendous amount beyond simply their hours. And particularly this year I want to thank all our Councillors. Council work is entirely voluntary and without recompense and barely noticed by many. Without our councillors, nothing would move forward - and this year there has been much to do. We owe the councillors an enormous debt of thanks for their dedication, time, application and good humour. Thank you

*Will Meldrum, Chair of Parish Council*

### Finance Committee

Below is the summary of budgets for this financial year and last. In total our budgets have remained flat year on year as we continue to focus on costs whilst still providing high quality services to the village. Our balance sheet remains strong, with the council making sure that reserves are spent only on valuable projects.



And, once more our thanks go to Rachel Jarvis our Responsible Financial Officer.

*Will Meldrum, Committee Chair*

### Recreation and Open Spaces Committee

**Pavilion:** As mentioned in last years' report the Working Party has been consulting and investigating the way forward for the development / repair of the Pavilion. A basic feasibility study has been undertaken and the Committee is investigating two options – extending the existing (approx. cost £140k) or a complete rebuild (approx. cost £350k) – before embarking on any repair type work. The idea behind the proposed change is to modernise and update the facilities so it can be more fully utilised by a wider range of mainly village groups.

We do not think this will impact very much on the hire of the Hapstead Hall as we believe that there will be two distinct Parish Council village venues - one indoor type and one outdoor type.

The Parish Council favours a complete rebuild on the condition that the project is self financing and will not impact on the Council Tax bills. Before we proceed we have organised one final meeting with all interested parties to gauge likely users and following on from this we will then be able to investigate the grant situation of each potential user. This Meeting took place on March 7th.

**Grounds Keeping:** Once again we would like to thank Pat Killian for all his efforts in keeping the Recreation Ground tidy

**Dog Fouling:** There have been recent incidents of dog fouling in the recreation Ground, in particular on the path between the Playground and the School. This is completely unacceptable. There is also a problem with dog litter in plastic bags not being placed in bins but being thrown into hedges. We have two bins at the moment – one by the entrance off the High Street and the other near the Playground. We intend to put in two further bins and some signage highlighting the penalties for failing to dispose of dog litter in a proper manner.

We are sure that all residents will wish to see this problem resolved and we ask you to go the extra mile to ensure that dog litter is placed in the bins so the Recreation Ground can be used and enjoyed by everyone.

*Nick Moorey, Committee Chair*

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## Planning Committee Report

Although the Planning Committee incurs no expenditure within the precept it fulfills an important role within the Parish Council. All applications are considered by the committee and their views are sent to Mid Sussex District for their decision.

The Parish Council do not have any authority and can only make recommendations to the District.

The Neighbourhood Plan is progressing slowly and this is an important project regarding the future of the village.

The Butcher's Field and Standgrove developments have gone to appeal, as yet no decision has been made.

The Committee is in the process of streamlining the way all applications are dealt with.

*Ken Monk, Committee Chair*

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## Emergency Planning Committee

The committee met early in the autumn to review our emergency plans.

Fiona Rocks has represented the Parish Council at all the Mid-Sussex District Council Winter Management briefings, giving sound insight to procedures surrounding heavy snowfall. As a result, the committee recommended to the full council that we engage a local contractor, EFP, should snow clearance become necessary. As a result of this forward planning in early January we were able to rapidly engage EFP to snow plough and grit designated roads in the Village to make the morning traffic be able to move freely. We feel this initiative worked well and have received many positive comments from residents. We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Pat Killian for clearing so many of the footpaths.

*Rowena Chalk, Committee Chair*

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## Communications Committee

The communications committee continues to provide direction on the village voice and the website. The village voice is published independently of the council and is distributed to all households in the village. It continues to be a great repository of all village matters. I particularly want to thank Margaret Meldrum for her dedication to producing such a professional newsletter and

Barbara Lucas for her keen editing eyes. And of course, to our stalwart army of delivery folk that run our distribution.

The website remains a key repository of information and notices and have successfully used the site to distribute information and documents regarding the Neighbourhood Plan. Ideally we would have more information posted more regularly, therefore if you have items you would like to contribute, please do send them to our clerk.

Finally, we are always looking for volunteers to help drive both the village voice and website forward. So if you are keen on taking this on, please let us know. It would be ideal for a young student or graduate that wants to beef up their CV with a real piece of work.

*Will Meldrum, Committee Chair*

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## Traffic and Environment Committee

Our main focus has been to appoint consultants to undertake a Traffic Appraisal for the Parish, and the project got under way in December with a public meeting and presentations. The event was attended by over 140 residents who gave their support to the approach outlined by the consultants.

This was followed by a survey to ascertain residents' views, receiving close to 300 responses. Draft proposals for traffic calming measures will be explained at a subsequent public meeting and exhibition. It is hoped that firm proposals will be published in early summer, subject to a quality audit prior to approval by West Sussex County Council. A range of measures are likely to be proposed, some able to be achieved quickly and cheaply, others more ambitious for the longer term. The consultants' approach is based around the concept that drivers tend to travel at the speed that they think is safe for them - this is often known as the design speed. It is difficult to enforce a speed limit where it is lower than the design speed and the approach is therefore to reduce the design speed so that it is equal to or lower than the legal speed limit.

We have been delighted to see the appointment of a school crossing patrol at Hett Close and her presence in the morning and afternoon has been much appreciated by parents and children crossing the road at this point.

Last year's sowing of wild flowers on the bank at top of College Road was much admired. Our thanks to Steve Alton of Sussex Nature for donating the seeds and leading a team of volunteers to prepare the ground. It is proposed to repeat the display this year.

Many thanks to Pat Killian for all his work keeping the pavements clear and picking up litter.

*Sarah Chapman, Committee Chair*

# HAPSTEAD HALL

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### Hapstead Hall Management Committee

**Hirings:** Hirings are approx. £2,000 down on last year and £1,000 down on Budget coming in at approx. £12,000.

Some business has been lost to the Koorana Centre. We have therefore held our prices for next year and increased local advertising. We plan to maintain this level of income in the 2013/2014 Budget.

As part of our efforts to make the Hall more attractive to hirers we plan to install a pay phone in the inner lobby of the Main Hall.

**Repairs and Maintenance:** No major repairs were necessary this year but we plan to set a rolling maintenance programme to ensure that all necessary work is undertaken on a timely basis and is within an agreed budget. Likely repairs in the next year or so include replacement of windows in the main hall which cannot be white plastic as the Hall is in a Conservation Area. We have earmarked £6,000 from our reserves to go towards this.

**Events:** Once again we had a very successful Christmas Fayre and our thanks go to Don Walker and all the volunteers who helped with the set-up beforehand and on the day.

Thanks also to our Hall Clerk, Jane Simmonds, our maintenance man, Brian Jones, and our cleaner, Kim Meaden. And a very special thanks to the out-going Chair, Ken Monk who has put in an extraordinary amount of work into the Hall and remains Vice Chairman.

*Nick Moorey, Committee Chair*