

Maintaining services - responding to pressures

At the end of last year the Parish Council received two important letters. The first, from the leader of Surrey County Council, warned us of the dramatic effects that would result from reductions in Surrey CC's budget. The second came from the Surrey County Association of Parish and Town Councils and carried a similar message on the likely impacts of the Government's Localism Bill.

As a Parish Council, we were already aware of cuts in the quality of service - such as failure to provide enough grit bins and to refill them after snow and ice, inadequate gritting of local roads and failure to cut back overgrown hedges. More services and facilities are under review by Surrey CC and therefore at risk in the future, including probably the Hill Library. We discussed these issues at a planning session after Christmas and there was total agreement that we must be ready to respond positively to these threats and to maintain our vital community services.

We also decided that the Parish Council must be adequately resourced for the tasks which may lie ahead. We therefore took the tough but necessary decision to raise the Parish precept by £4.77 a year (Band D) to a level where we can support key services when the County or District Councils fail to continue them. Our precept - still well within the lower half of parish precepts in the District - is, of course, dwarfed by the District and County Council Taxes. The Parish precept accounts for less than 1% of your Council Tax.

We will continue to assess how the Parish Council can best act in the interests of the local community. We will always keep residents informed and we will monitor our expenditure to ensure that the Parish precept is used wisely and effectively.

Thank you once again to Buxton Homes for supplying the power for the Cedar Tree Lights and for allowing use of their car park during the Cedar Tree Lights Ceremony.



Welcome to the spring edition of your Parish Council newsletter. What a time we have been through!



Above you can read about the Parish Council's positive response to the threats we face to our local services and facilities. On other pages we report on the various projects we are undertaking and planning. Our aims are to increase civic pride and improve life on the Hill.

I have greatly enjoyed being your Parish Council Chairman over the past year. It has been a challenging time, but I am very pleased that all our key decisions have been taken with cross-party support and that we can face the future with confidence.

Do let us know if you think there is more we can do to make Caterham on the Hill a better place in which to live and work.

John Orrick, Parish Council Chairman

Bus service update

The Parish Council continues to support local bus services. Over the winter, Surrey County Council (SCC) ran a consultation on the future of bus services in Tandridge. The Parish Council was disappointed that SCC declined our request to hold a public meeting on the Hill about this. The Parish Council therefore convened its own public meeting in the Hill Library. Over 70 local residents attended, and their views helped inform the Parish Council's formal response to the consultation. The Parish Council objects to SCC's planned cuts to the 409, 540 and Buses4U services from September 2011. We will not know the outcome of SCC's review until June.

Meanwhile, the Parish Council continues to subsidise the 541 Caterham Hopper service that runs in a loop, up and down the Hill, to the Valley on Monday to Friday evenings. We know this service provides a valued connection between De Stafford school and the leisure centre, and other parts of the Hill and Valley. The Parish Council's current subsidy of the 541 runs until the end of August 2011. We will review whether to continue



Public meeting held on the bus consultations

the subsidy in June. We need residents to make full use of this service, in order to justify continuing the subsidy. Timetables are available from the operator Metrobus, and have been distributed locally.

Councillor David Gosling



Trees were recently planted in public areas of Caterham to help celebrate the 10th anniversary of Caterham on the Hill Parish Council.

Surrey County Council planted 6 trees in the area around the library and the Parish Council purchased another 6 trees, with the help of environmental grants. These were kindly planted by Tandridge District Council on Westway, Salmons Lane Green and the Hambledon Estate.

The Parish Council would like to thank Tandridge District Council, Surrey County Council and Parish Councillors Jean Pidgeon, Mary Mountain and Sarah Burningham for all their work on this project.



Come and "Beat the Bounds"

Caterham on the Hill Parish Council's Circular Walk will take place on Saturday 28th May at 11.30am. The walk is approximately 6 miles long and where possible follows the boundary of Caterham on the Hill Parish.

"Beating the Bounds" is an ancient, and once widespread custom. A group procession walked around the 'Bounds' of a common, carrying sticks or 'wands' to hit landmarks along the way. This was believed to pass knowledge of the land onto the next generation.

The walk will start at St Mary's church car park at 11.30am. There will be a break for refreshments after 3 miles, near Coulsdon Common, where people who can only do 3 miles can leave or join.

Please bring a packed lunch.

For more information contact the Parish Clerk at caterhamhillpc@msn.com

As this years Chairman of the Financial & General Purposes Committee I have been asked to write a few words about how we spend the Precept.

Wisely and well is our first priority. We look for good value for money and use local companies wherever we can. This year, 2010/2011, we have continued to support the bus route and the Caterham Community Partnership. As it was also the 10th Anniversary of the Parish Council being formed we decided to plant trees for the future. The majority of the funding for this was received from grants.

With an eye to future responsibilities we have started a roll-out scheme for grit-bins and are looking at ways of ensuring the roads are gritted so that we don't get marooned on the Hill so easily. We also decided to renew the lights on what now seems to be known as "The Iconic Cedar Tree". As these are L.E.D. lights and are low on electricity they should last a few years. With cut-backs in Local Government having to be so harsh this coming year and, perhaps beyond, we are aware that we may have to pick up the bill for things that used to be taken care of by Surrey County Council & Tandridge District Council. Accordingly, we are raising the Precept as we need to be ready to fund services such as hedge cutting for sight-lines, supplying salt for salt bins, road gritting and, most importantly, being able to fund our Library if the need arises.

Councillor Hooper, Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee

Update on Planning Issues

Although Tandridge District Council is (for most matters) the Planning Authority for our area, the Parish Council is a 'statutory consultee', which means that TDC takes our views into account in making its decisions. We submit comments on applications which have a wide impact or raise significant issues, and on the most important sites we get involved at an earlier stage where that is helpful. We particularly seek to maintain the character of the local area and to avoid overcrowded developments. We request adequate screening and off-street parking.

We are disappointed that applications are sometimes allowed despite our concerns. For example, a new block of four flats to the rear of Westway, which we regarded as a cramped and intrusive development, has been given approval. Conversely, we are pleased that a proposal for an overlarge 49-bed care home to replace The Clifton Arms pub has been rejected. However, the developers have appealed against that decision. The Caterham and Chaldon Action Group to Resist Overdevelopment (AGRO), chaired by John Orrick, continues to scrutinise the proposed redevelopment of the Oaklands site in Coulsdon Road.

All planning applications affecting our Parish can be inspected at the Caterham Hill Library during the consultation period; the Parish Council's comments are included in the documents on the TDC website.

Cllr Hilary Turner

Chairman, Planning Committee



Clive Milsom, Bob Riddle, David Gosling, Sarah Burningham and Angela Beagley, outside the Clifton Arms.

Before and after



Last Autumn the Parish Council organised the planting of bulbs in the wooded area of Hambledon Park, next to Coulsdon Road, and on the mound at Town End recreation area.

Bluebells were planted in Hambledon Park with the help of Parish Councillors and residents. Crocuses were planted at Town End with the help of some brave children from St Francis School. It was dark, cold and very wet during the planting so a big 'thank you' to the teacher and children who helped.



Parish Council Grit Bins

Over the last few winters we have experienced heavy and prolonged spells of snow which have made getting out and about hard for many residents.

Last year, your Parish Council decided to consult local people about the possibility of providing grit bins to supplement those already provided by Surrey County

Council. First discussions with County had led us to believe that they would provide extra bins, but later in the year, it became obvious that this was not going to happen.

We decided to buy 9 bins for suggested sites and after our warden had checked their suitability we had them installed at the end of December.

The salt in these bins is for use by local residents on roads and public footpaths only. The recommended usage is about one tablespoon per square yard.

Bins were placed in Foxon Lane, Salmon's Lane West, Eldon/Campbell Road, Oak Road, Manor Avenue, Stanstead Road, Avenue Road, St Michaels Road and on Hambledon Estate. We will be considering providing further bins where needed.

Councillor Sarah Burningham



John Orrick and Chris Botten with one of the new Parish Council grit bins.

The Parish Warden continues to report issues with potholes, hedges, litter, graffiti etc. If you have any issues you would like reported please email caterhamhillpc@msn.com.



CATERHAM COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

In the four years that Caterham Community Partnership (CCP) has existed it has been working hard to improve the ambience of Caterham using the feedback from the original Health check and we are now beginning to see the benefits.

They have finished the improvements to the Square and the associated improvements to the Hill are also nearing completion. The Raglan Precinct planters are about to be planted up. This will then complete the refurbishment of this area which included the new benches and recycling bins. They are still waiting for permission from Tesco to install benches and planters on the unused area near the Coulsdon Road traffic lights. The Parish Council is in regular communication with CCP concerning these next stages.

In the meantime there is a proposal to install a mini roundabout at the junction of Station Avenue and Harestone Valley Road to ease traffic congestion but this is still in an early stage. A bid from the Soper Hall Group, under the auspices of CCP, to put the Soper Hall back into community use is under consideration by Tandridge District Council and there is also some tentative movement with the Rose and Young site – the two areas of ongoing concern.

Councillor Mary Mountain



The Parish Council was delighted to award Citizen of the Year to well-known resident Peter McNeil for his long-term work within our community.

Police neighbourhood meetings are an opportunity for you to let the police know about problems being experienced in and around Caterham on the Hill.

The next meetings are Tuesday 24th May and 26th July 2011 at 7.30pm at the Linden Building at the Barracks.

FESTIVAL OF TREES

St. Lawrence's Guild of Friends again held a successful Christmas Tree Festival in December to help raise funds for the maintenance of the Old Church.

Visitors were greeted by an amazing scene of 19 Christmas trees: real, artificial and hand-made. Each tree was beautifully decorated with the theme of each participating organisation and gave the church a wonderful, magical Christmas atmosphere.

There was a raffle and Christmas-themed sales table which added to the festive atmosphere and we were able to have refreshments while admiring the sparkling scene.

The Guild managed to raise a staggering £736.76 profit for the maintenance fund.

Well done to everyone who took part. A truly amazing effort by all.

And a special thank you to the Guild of Friends for organising such a wondrous pre-Christmas event.

Councillor Pat Groves



The Parish Council Tree

Council meetings now take place on Wednesdays at Caterham on the Hill Library at 7.30pm. Members of the public are welcome to attend and have the opportunity to give their comments.

For dates go to caterhamhillpc.org.uk or contact the Parish Clerk on 01883 708310.

Councillor surgeries are being held on the last Saturday of the month at Caterham on the Hill Library (with the exception of August and December) from 10am to 12 noon.

If you have an issue you would like to discuss with your local representative please come along.

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