

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE OUTWOOD PARISH MEETING 2004

Your new Council, which took office in May 2003, has four new members, and thus there has been a continued learning curve over the past twelve months. Your Council has continued with its predecessor's policy of being a non-political Parish Council, with the interests of the community as a whole remaining our most important consideration. As a small parish we feel we should concentrate on the day-to-day issues of village life, and not become too concerned on the wider issues of Local Government, most of which are decided well beyond the influence of any Parish Council. There is no statutory duty on a District or County Council to do other than "to take note of" the views of Parish Councils. They are not obliged to act on decisions taken by Parish Councils.

We are however forward looking enough to investigate new issues as they affect our community, and we shall hear more on that subject following the second part of the meeting.

Financial Report.

Our precept remains unchanged at £6000 for the forthcoming year. This is the same figure we were given when the Parish Council was created in May 2000. As at 31st March, 2004 we have £200 in the Current Account, £8080.30 in the Reserve Account and £8804.69 in the Capital Account. We feel it is necessary to build up reasonable balances, as there may be some future expenditure arise, of which as a comparatively new Council we are not aware.

At the beginning of our year the most dominant factor concerning the village was the future of Gatwick Airport and the possible development of Redhill Aerodrome. These issues have at least been resolved in the short term, but the position long term is still unresolved, and the future of Redhill Aerodrome is still under consideration. We are fortunate to have as a Councillor Ian Frow, whose knowledge of the aviation industry is of great help to the many groups that investigate proposals for airport development, and their effect on the surrounding areas.

We are pleased to be able to report that the Boundary Changes to the Parish, first raised by the steering group that was involved in the formation of our Parish Council, and which was continued vigorously to be implemented by the previous Council, has finally been approved of by Tandridge District Council, and will be submitted to the appropriate Ministry for implementation. It is hoped that these changes will come into effect in the spring of 2005. This will basically mean that people who live in Woolborough Lane and the area around Shepherds Hurst e.g. the whole of Prince of Wales Road will become part of Outwood, instead of Nutfield.

Council Services.

These are areas, where despite having very limited powers we are endeavouring to see that the residents of Outwood receive the same degree of service as elsewhere in the District. The question of litter picking is one issue which we have tried to have improved. Unfortunately we are informed that the District Council cannot change our current sequence – which in Outwood consists of litter picking on a twenty-six week (and some thirteen week) cycles. We feel that this is totally unacceptable in view of the amount of litter being deposited by mainly motorists travelling through the village. We appreciate litter is a national problem, but do not consider we are getting a satisfactory service, when compared to other parts of Tandridge. We do note that since the District Council has been running the litter and road sweeping service, there have been some new sweeping vehicles in the village. This is most welcome, but the frequency of the service will be closely monitored.

Your Council is currently employing someone on a trial basis to clear litter; the results have been quite encouraging.

We are also endeavouring to obtain from Tandridge agreement that they will ensure the organisers of the London to Brighton Charity Cycle Race in June, remove all rubbish from the route – mainly Daysey's and Rookery Hill, but also adjoining areas. We would expect the District Council to pass on any costs incurred in clearing the village of rubbish following the event to the race organisers and not to the Parish Council.

It should however be mentioned that we have received no complaints with regard to refuse collection, and recycling, and that on a personal note, I have found that generally when in contact with officers at Tandridge, they have been most helpful. Our Parish Clerk – David West – is nodding in agreement!

The Daysey's Hill project, will hopefully be completed this year. The unusual climatic conditions over the past twelve months have not been conducive to forward planning. There are areas for concern however – not least the prevention of vehicles driving onto the verges. We are investigating, whether County Highways can assist with kerbing the remaining stretch of road, or if we can obtain some grants to fund this. We have asked the Cycle Ride Organisers to ensure the area is adequately fenced off to prevent damage to plants and shrubs, not only this year but should the race continue on the same route, in future years.

Lloyd Hall Car Park.

Your Council has been actively concerned in this project, and will be attending the hearing next week, when the Appeal against the Car Park being refused is heard. We have submitted letters, photographs and maps, which have been accepted by the Appeals Board. We must however express regret that the Lloyd Hall Management Committee,

has not seen fit to keep the village informed of what is happening. The Hall Management Committee is accountable to the owners of the Hall i.e. the villagers of Outwood. It is also to be regretted that we as a Parish Council have not received support for this project from our elected District Council representatives.

Post Bus.

The future of the Post Bus is still uncertain, with conflicting views circulating in the area as to what is the current position. Your Council – despite several phone calls to National Royal Mail Offices, is still awaiting a written answer to the question. Verbally we have been told that all Post Bus Services will be withdrawn, but no date has been fixed. Should we lose this service, it will cause considerable problems for many residents. There is however a proposed 'dial a bus' service being developed by the East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership and Surrey County Council with over £700,000 being made available to provide a ground breaking new type of public transport service. We have been promised full details when they are finalised.

In conclusion I would like to pay public tribute to our Parish Clerk – David West, who has been a most valued and trusted servant to our Council. He has been particularly good at lowering the temperature of frustration that frequently occurs when I get a touch of the "Victor Meldrew's", when complaining about the slow processes of local government!. Thank you David.

To the residents of Outwood I ask

“BE CONCERNED FOR YOUR COMMUNITY”

To my fellow Councillors I ask

“BE COMMITTED TO THE TASK OF SERVING YOUR COMMUNITY”

*Geoffrey R. Last
Chairman
Outwood Parish Council*

Date: 29th April, 2004.