



Chidham & Hambrook  
Parish Council

## **CHIDHAM & HAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This Business Plan is designed to help our local community have a better understanding of what the Parish Council does and clarify what it cannot do. There may be occasions when the Parish Council has to make decisions contrary to our stated commitments if budget constraints, new legislation or changes in our policies make that necessary. Any changes will, however, be reflected in an updated Plan.

To ensure this Business Plan is consistent with our residents' wishes we need the help of the community. We will periodically consult on the Plan's contents through our Parish Council website, our Facebook page, news briefings through the Village Magazine and at the Annual Parish Meeting held with residents in May each year.

The Business Plan is available on our website. Please tell us what you think about it as we welcome your comments.

## **2. A VISION FOR CHIDHAM AND HAMBROOK PARISH**

Chidham, Hambrook and Nutbourne East will remain a beautiful harbourside parish with the environment and a close, supportive community at its heart. We aim to create a sustainable place to live with housing suited to local needs, whilst preserving the ecology and character of the coastal area, our local economy, our rural and agricultural surroundings while maintaining views of the harbour and South Downs.

## **3. MISSION STATEMENT**

To deliver a sustainable living environment through the development and effective use of land, to meet the parish's future housing, transport, community, education, health, recreational, retail and employment needs.

This will be achieved through a strategic approach and proactive investment and improvement in local infrastructure. Local housing need will be met through eco-friendly design, appropriate density, siting and affordability criteria, in line with parish vision.

## **4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

### **Housing**

The Council recognises that housing development can meet a local need. However, all development has an environmental and social impact on the parish. A key objective is to minimise such impacts. Inappropriate development (which could be size, location, design etc.) could compromise the north-south connectivity of the protected habitats of the SDNP and the AONB and the Council will resist such plans.

### **Economy**

To encourage the retention of existing employers and attract new employers at appropriate locations in the parish, consistent with the development plan.

### **Built Environment**

To promote high-quality sustainable design, while ensuring our historic, attractive environment is preserved and enhanced.

### **Natural Environment**

To safeguard our natural environment and enhance biodiversity through sensitive development that protects and enriches the landscape, including the creation of wildlife corridors. To maintain the connectivity between the AONB and the SDNP.

### **Infrastructure**

To seek on-going improvements to transport and parking, to drainage and flood defences and to utility infrastructure. Holding developers to account to ensure that infrastructure considerations are reflected in planning applications.

### **Amenities, Leisure and Well-being**

To ensure that residents have excellent local facilities and access to open spaces and recreation, to maintain a strong, active, healthy and vibrant community to help alleviate social isolation.

### **Tourism and Leisure**

To support tourism and leisure facilities to promote the heritage of the area.

### **Farming**

To work with the farming community to improve farming methods and stimulate best practice in environment issues. To continue to encourage the retention of good grade arable land.

## **5. GOVERNANCE**

### **The Parish Council**

Chidham & Hambrook Parish Council is the first tier of local government closest to the local community, with an important role to play in promoting the parish by representing the interests of residents.

Parish Council elections are held every four years. The last election was in 2019; the current one is in May 2023. By-elections can be held if a vacancy occurs and a formal request is made. Otherwise, the Council fills such vacancies through co-option. The Council elects a Chair and Vice-Chair annually, together with chairs of its committees and working groups, and reports to the electorate at the Annual Parish Meeting in May. Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties other than occasional expenses and a small allowance for the Chairman. They commit a time contribution to maintaining and improving the parish as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and do business. Details of all councillors can be found on the Parish Council website [here](#).

The Council aims to be competent and professional through being open and accountable and ensuring sound financial management of Council resources. To this end, the Council includes within its goals:

- To be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the parish's residents by consulting them on major issues
- To encourage its members and staff to develop their skills through appropriate training
- To ensure councillors have the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policy changes
- To be a fair employer
- To promote public participation in all Council meetings and initiatives
- To deal with enquiries from members of the public in a professional and efficient manner
- To be an effective custodian of the Council's property and documents
- To promote a socially inclusive community of residents within the parish.

### **How the Parish Council operates**

The Council carries out its statutory duties as required by:

- Aiming to meet a minimum of four occasions per annum (usually the first Thursday of every month). These meetings are held in the Village Hall beginning at 7.30 pm and lasting no more than two hours.
- All full Council meetings are open to the public with a period towards the beginning of the meeting set aside for members of the public to address the Council. Members of the public raising an issue or asking a question will receive a written response within two weeks. An oral response might also be given at the time of a question being raised but this is dependent on

the complexity of the matter being raised. Occasionally, for special reasons, part of a Council meeting is held in closed session.

- The Council works to legislative requirements, alongside its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations; these lay down the rules by which we operate and conduct our business.
- All Parish Councillors are expected to adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct. Committees and working groups work to terms of reference agreed in Council.
- The Chairman of the Parish Council during the preceding year will hold an Annual Parish Meeting with residents in May each year to review the activities of the previous year and to give residents an opportunity to raise issues of concern.

As part of the statutory planning process, Chichester District Council (CDC) has to consult the Parish Council on planning applications from within the parish. Every year the Council's Planning Committee scrutinises large numbers of applications and provides broad ranging feedback to CDC.

The Council uses committees and working groups where appropriate to discuss and agree action on areas of its work. The Council's standing (or permanent) committees are Finance, Planning, Staffing, and Public Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC).

The Council has also established a steering group to oversee the revision of the Neighbourhood Plan, an advisory group with a membership of both Parish Councillors and members of the local community. The Neighbourhood Plan and the CDC's Local Plan together constitute a framework for planning and other measures important for the local community.

The Council has appointed a Parish Ditch Warden, whose task is to inspect ditches in the parish regularly and to make recommendations for any necessary actions to the Council.

The Tree Councillor works with voluntary Parish Tree Wardens who maintain a watching brief on the trees in the parish, making recommendations and reporting to the Council as necessary.

### **Parish Council Standing Committees**

#### **Finance Committee**

The Council has appointed a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) who is a non-voting member of the Finance Committee.

The RFO provides advice to the Committee to ensure its actions comply with all relevant statutory regulations. The primary purpose of the Finance Committee is to recommend the precept for the following fiscal year, with a meeting for this purpose normally held each year in November. At this meeting, sums are provisionally allocated to specific headings of expenditure; the December or January meeting of the Council receives the recommendations of the Finance Committee and votes to accept or amend them.

#### **Planning Committee**

To meet the current requirements of Chichester District Council and to improve application response time, the Council's Planning Committee meets every four weeks. The meetings are open to the public and press.

Members of the public may attend and speak on any planning matter especially those applications on the agenda. This is limited to three minutes per person.

Site visits are held where necessary. The District Council makes the final decision but the local opinion given by the Parish Council is regarded with high importance.

The minutes and decisions of the Planning Committee meetings are published on the Council's website.

#### **Staffing Committee**

A Staffing Committee has been established to oversee all matters connected with those employed by the Council.

### **Public Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC)**

The Council is responsible for the new public open spaces in Broad Road together with the Council's play area. There are also some other areas open to the public, over which the Council keeps a watching brief. This committee has been set up to advise the Council on what work, expenditure, changes and improvements need to be carried out.

### **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

In 2011 the Localism Act reformed the planning system to give local people more say in determining how their local areas are developed. This has enabled the Council to set out a vision for Chidham, Hambrook and Nutbourne East.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which engages directly with the community, is currently identifying where new homes, shops leisure facilities or employment opportunities are to be built and what these buildings should look like within the local area. The Council intends to complete a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan will set out in more detail policies for housing development locally. These policies will be consistent with the District Council's Local Plan and, subject to agreement by a referendum of residents, will become part of local planning law as an integral part of the Local Plan for the Chichester District.

In carrying out its work, Chichester District Council has to follow National Planning Policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), together with CDC's Interim Positioning Statement (IPS) and its future, long-delayed, Local Plan. Our Neighbourhood Plan must, in turn, be consistent with the Local Plan.

### **Representation on outside bodies**

The Council sends a representative, who is either a Councillor or another resident chosen by the Council, to the following bodies:

- *Maybush Copse Friends* – the body that works in partnership with Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the Chichester Harbour Trust to manage Maybush Copse in Cot Lane.
- *All-Parishes Meetings* – facilitated by the District Council - a twice-yearly meeting to keep parish councils abreast of current developments within the district.
- *The Bournes Community Forum* – also facilitated by the District Council - the Forum is a quarterly meeting of parish, district and county councillors and other agencies to improve communications and to influence daily life in the Bourne area.
- *Village Hall Management Committee* – the body responsible for managing Chidham Village Hall.
- *West Sussex Association of Local Councils* – the body that represents the interests of local councils across East and West Sussex and Surrey.
- *Sussex Police Liaison Meetings* – *arranges liaison between the local Police Force and Town and Parish Councils*

### **Main Areas of Responsibility**

- Management and maintenance of the two meadows in Hambrook – Hawthorne Meadow and Pynham Meadow.
- Grounds maintenance.
- Maintenance of Calloway's Lane.
- Ditch clearance.
- Provision and maintenance of bus shelters throughout the parish.
- Provision and maintenance of notice boards.
- The provision of small community grants.
- Submitting comments on all planning applications and change of use applications in the parish as a statutory consultee of the local planning authority.
- In cooperation with Chichester District Council, provision and emptying of litter and dog fouling bins.

- Aiming to ensure the health and safety of all residents in the parish in line with the Council's Parish Emergency Plan.

### **Communication**

The Council recognises the role of good communication in building positive relationships with the public and with organisations that provide services in the parish. We strive to be proactive and we will continue to seek to improve established channels of communication and find new ones. The Council will continue to develop and expand its website and its email circulation to residents and provide:

- clear information about the Council and its activities
- signposting to other services
- regular news of Council initiatives
- the most up to date Parish Council financial information and a Business Plan

Parish community information is now included on the Council's website and on the Council's Facebook page, therefore it has been agreed that the publication of a Parish Newsletter is no longer required, although flyers on important issues have been delivered to homes and this will continue.

At Council meetings and the Annual Parish Meeting, held in May, the Council will:

- provide an opportunity for public participation
- invite representatives of other agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest
- share Council activities during the previous twelve months

### **Community facilities**

#### **Children's Play Area in Broad Road**

The Council owns the children's play area in Broad Road. The Council keeps this play area safe and maintains the present facilities to current standards. Weekly inspections take place and an annual external inspection from an appropriately qualified play area inspector.

#### **Open Spaces**

In 2018 the Council acquired land in Broad Road known as Hawthorne Meadow and in 2021 it took ownership of Pynham Meadow to the north. These two areas are being fully adapted for community use, with plans now taking significant shape to provide an active programme of improvement and development for the benefit of all.

#### **Bus shelters, benches and notice boards**

The Council has provided and maintains three bus shelters on the A259 in the parish – these are at the corner of Broad Road, Chidham Lane and Drift Lane. The Council reviews the condition of these bus shelters annually and takes any appropriate action.

The Council also has various benches and seats around the parish and two noticeboards.

#### **Public Footpaths and Bridleways**

The Council works closely with the County Council to ensure that these public rights of way are protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

#### **Events**

The Council will support individuals and organisations that wish to run public events, providing advice and support where the time and/or financial commitment is from another organisation or from individual volunteers.

## **6. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

The Council will monitor the cost effectiveness and environmental sustainability of all major procurement.

## **Financial information for 2022-2023**

### **Income**

The residents of Chidham and Hambrook fund the Council through a 'precept'. The precept is the local tax levied by the Parish Council that Chichester District Council collects on our behalf as part of the Council Tax bill for the district.

In addition to the precept, money is available to the Council from developers who have built developments either within the parish or even more widely in the district. These result from either specific grants or legal agreements.

### **Expenditure**

The Council's precept for the current financial year 2022-2023 is £51,512.

The main items of expenditure using the precept are:

- Office Equipment, Salaries, Pensions, Training and Expenses – 36.7%
- Street Lighting – 3%
- Contracts – 27%
- Repairs and maintenance – 7.5%
- Support for community projects – 7.8%
- Miscellaneous – 18%

### **Reserves**

The Council holds unallocated reserves, equivalent to 55% of the precept, to protect against major problems requiring emergency funding that could affect the Council's activities.

The Council also holds reserves earmarked for special projects, typically funded by grants.

## **6. KEY PROJECTS**

The following key and future projects may be found in the District Council's Infrastructure Business Plan and have been allocated CIL funding.

### **Key Projects for 2023-24**

- Development of open spaces in Broad Road [[IBP809](#)]
- Review of the Neighbourhood Plan [[IBP 889](#)]
- St Mary's Church Graveyard, Cot Lane, Chidham. Extension of graveyard. A local farmer has donated land adjacent to the main churchyard and the extension of the graveyard will be financed through money provided from CIL [[IBP709](#)].
- Developing the Parish Council's existing website by 2020 to meet required legislation and supply of Parish Councillors laptops [[IBP816](#)]

### **Future Years**

#### **High Priority**

- Traffic calming measures in Broad Road and establishing better footways [[IBP814](#)] [This may be covered going forward with the Local Transport Improvement Programme where we have £160K of S106 towards sustainable transport. Much has already been achieved with provision of SIDs in 2020.]

#### **Medium Priority**

- Provision of cycle racks in strategic locations [[IBP?](#)]
- Placement of additional litter/dog bins in appropriate areas of the parish [[IBP746](#)]
- Consideration of street lighting in Broad Road [[IBP813](#)]



**Lower Priority**

- Replacement/repair of bus shelters in the parish [\[IBP821\]](#)
- Improve residents' parking in the following areas: East side of Chidham Lane from A259 to Hamstead Meadow, both sides of Broad Road by Broad Meadow and top of Cot Lane [\[IBP603\]](#).