

CRANLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT – MAY 2006

Throughout the year, the Council has continued to effect improvements in the facilities and services we provide on behalf of the community. In doing so however, and mindful of the burden of ever increasing Council Tax, we have maintained a careful control on our spending, containing annual increases in the Parish Precept over the past two years to less than 1.4%. In the current year the Parish precept equates to just 75 pence per week for Band D Council Tax payers.

In the Village Hall, we have installed a new sound system and provided new seating, and in the coming financial year we will be replacing the floor which, following years of sanding and polishing, has become rather thinner than when it was first laid in 1933. Funds have been set aside this year, and added to in 2006/07 so that internal and external redecoration of the hall can be carried out. While making these investments in the building, we have kept our hire fees competitive with comparable facilities elsewhere in the village, and Cllr Mrs Dodd and her committee are to be congratulated for the careful and successful management of the hall.

Improvements to our sports pavilion this year include external redecoration, the installation of an intruder alarm, a replacement refrigerator and a new cooker, the latter with generous assistance from the Co-operative Community Fund. In the coming year we plan to provide access and facilities for the disabled and improved facilities for our grounds staff. Elsewhere in the recreation ground, we allowed the senior football pitch to lie fallow during the year so that our ground staff could undertake improvements. New dog-proof fencing has been erected around the children's playground and new swings are being installed. Two new lighting columns have been installed along the pathway from the pavilion to Northdowns. Overall, while maintaining the recreation ground for the benefit of the whole community, we have also endeavoured to provide additional sports facilities for local clubs within the limited resources available to the Council, and we very much appreciate the commitment and hard work of Nick Barnett, our Grounds Manager, and his assistant, Derek Heselwood.

During the last year the Lych Gate leading to the cemetery was fully renovated and a number of the paths resurfaced. The need for additional maintenance equipment has meant that the Sexton's hut is no longer large enough and additional storage facilities have been installed elsewhere in the cemetery. New health and safety regulations have required the implementation of a new policy restricting the height of headstones, and our existing regulations for the cemetery will be reviewed and updated in the coming year. Sincere thanks are due to our Sexton, Kevin Cave, and the chairman and members of the Cemetery Committee for their continued hard work.

The Parish Council's Planning Committee, which meets every three weeks throughout the year, has had to deal with a 16% increase in planning applications and an even greater increase in the number of consultation documents. The committee also deals with tree preservation orders, telecoms masts and traffic and highways matters. The Chairman, Cllr Mrs Ellis, and her committee continue to provide timely and comprehensive input to Waverley Borough Council on all local planning applications and associated matters.

Turning to finance, our income is obtained from several sources. We levy fees for the facilities we provide, seek grants where these are available, and receive a Compensatory Grant from Waverley Borough Council, reflecting the fact that Cranleigh Council Tax payers not only pay for their own recreation facilities, but also contribute towards those elsewhere in the borough. We receive interest on our reserves, and may draw on those reserves where

they have been earmarked for specific projects in previous years. The shortfall between this income and our planned spending for the year is levied as the Parish Precept, and the following table shows how our total income has been made up over the past three years: -

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Fees & Charges	51302	53247	58808
Interest on Reserves	7301	8102	5000
Compensatory Grant	34186	34285	30764
Other Income	2605	2886	227
Parish Precept	194901	197593	200283
Total Income	290295	296113	295082

Our revenue expenditure – the day-to-day spending on providing, maintaining and improving our facilities – is spread over a number of areas as follows: -

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Administration	98100	90931	108925
Grants	1920	3720	4000
Recreation	69861	76880	74525
Cemetery	29288	29807	32005
Village Hall	39544	37022	45205
Total	238713	238260	264660

Capital expenditure – our spending on new equipment for grounds maintenance, IT, etc. – is also spread over several areas: -

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
General	10311	16845	26000
Recreation	20659	10033	7100
Village Hall	2578	2820	8000
Cemetery	13799	0	1000
Total	47347	29698	42100

Beyond our core responsibilities, your Council continues to invest in opportunities that we believe will be of benefit to the wider community. We remain fully committed to the Cranleigh Initiative and Cranleigh Healthcheck, having spent £15,000 on the past three years, and we will invest a similar amount over the next two years. On behalf of the community we donated £10,000 towards keeping the Village Hospital open through the winter, and continue to work with Cranleigh Village Hospital Trust and the League of Friends to retain and improve our community hospital. Elsewhere we are working in partnership with Surrey Police and Surrey Youth Service to improve local youth provision; Surrey County Council, Waverley Borough Council, and SEEDA on the High Street improvements; and CVHT, the Primary Care Trust, Waverley Borough Council and Surrey Social Services on long term health and social care. We are also working with the Rector, Nigel Nicholson, for a Coat of Arms for Cranleigh; and we are aiming to achieve Quality Status for the Council this year.

Each year we receive a grant from the Henry Smith's Charity to be spent on disadvantaged local residents. This year we received £4,400 from the Charity and agreed to transfer £4,500 to the Cranleigh Community Fund which distributes it on our behalf.