



COPPULL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

THE PARISH COUNCIL

In May 2016 Councillor Michael Atherton was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the third time and Councillor Nora Ball was re-elected as Vice-Chair. Two members of the Council resigned in May 2016 due to personal commitments, Councillors Lynne Fogg and Alan Hughes, and Councillor Steve Holgate was co-opted on in June 2016. Unfortunately, Councillor Ken Ball died in December 2016 and Councillor Judith Corrigan resigned in February 2017, again due to personal commitments. This has left the council with three vacancies.

At the end of March 2017, the Parish Council consisted of the following Councillors and the Clerk:

Michael Atherton	- 07780 971364	Steve Holgate	- 07876 844243
Nora Ball	- 01257 792131	Sheila Makin	- 01257 792896
Pauline Cobham	- 01257 792443	Marjorie Parkinson	- 01257 793566
David Cole	- 01257 483958	Maggie Peel-Impey	- 01257 470465
Paul Eastham	- 01257 791713	Simon Thomson	- 07525 756190
Elaine Jones	- 01257 793056	Stella Walsh	- 01257 791868
		Sue Edwards (Clerk)	- 01257 470120

Financial Statement: This is subject to audit - an independent internal auditor audits the accounts twice per year and an external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission undertakes a final audit at the end of the financial year.

Conclusion of External Audit 2015/16 – The external audit stated that, on the basis of their review of the annual return, the information is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirement have not been met.

Issues arising from the audit are:

- Bank Account – Gratuity – Advice has been taken into this matter and the gratuity has been paid to the Clerk in accordance with the contract of employment. All relevant employees have now joined a pension scheme as part of the auto enrolment scheme.

Conclusion of the Internal Audit 2015/16:

- Completion of the annual internal audit of the Parish Council accounts by carrying out a selective assessment of compliance, with relevant procedures and controls being examined.

The Parish Council operates a very effective accounting system which shows the Council's control objectives are of an adequate standard to meet the needs of the Council.

There were no issues arising.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

At the end of the last financial year there was £62.95 remaining. A further £1,972.39 was received from Chorley Council in April 2016 and a late payment of interest of £39.98 received in October 2016. This amounted to £2,075.32. The mother and baby swing was purchased out of this for £1,089.99, which leaves an amount of £985.33. This amount has been set aside towards the new path at the Leisure Centre.

Precept: The precept was set at £92,625.00 for 2017/18 – this represents an increase of approximately 5% on last year's precept.

ALLOTMENTS

The allotments behind St. Oswald's Church are now coming up to their third year and continue to be very popular. It is hoped to secure funding to provide eight additional allotments at this site in the coming year, for people on the waiting list.

COMMUNITY

Christmas lights: The lights near the railway bridge were again extended and provided a lovely display throughout the Christmas period. Lighting in the Memorial Garden and Berry's Garden on Chapel Lane received extremely good comments. The uplighting of the soldier in the Memorial Garden will remain throughout the year, at the request of residents.

Dog fouling: This is still a huge problem, especially in the winter months. Chorley Council's Dog Warden makes regular patrols around the village and can issue on the spot fines if someone is caught not cleaning up after their dog. A decision was made to name and shame anyone caught not cleaning up after their dog.

Grot Spots: Most grot spots in the village have now been dealt with and Councillors each have an area of responsibility in the village which they regularly check and report any concerns.

Noah's Ark: The Pre-school continues to run from the Village Hall and provides excellent care and education. The front of the hall has been painted and essential repairs made.

COPPULL IN BLOOM

The Parish Council does not enter the competitions anymore, but continues to maintain and improve the beds/flower displays around the village. Volunteers are always welcome, even if it is only for an hour or so each week. Chorley Council is contracted to plant the hanging baskets and barrels throughout the village and the flower beds along Spendmore Lane. A new gardener, George Evans, has been appointed to look after Springfield Leisure Park and various gardens in the village. The mowing of all grassed areas is undertaken by James Riding of JR Garden Services.

Wheatsheaf Island/Birkacre Brow: Volunteers continue to weed, plant and maintain this island.

Seats/Flower Beds – A49 at both boundaries, Jolly Tar Lane and small bed near Police Station: These are also looked after by volunteers and 101 Carnations sponsors, plants and maintains one of the beds.

New Road Flower Beds and beds near Spendmore Lane Bridge: These are planted and maintained by Chorley Council on behalf of the Parish Council.

Chapel Lane – Old School: A new volunteer now looks after the small piece of land by the former old Parish School.

DEFIBRILLATORS

The Leisure Centre holds an automatic defibrillator and the Conservative Club also has one that is available at all times for public use. A list of other defibrillators in Coppull can be found in the Parish Council newsletter.

EMPLOYEES

The Parish Council continues to employ one full-time and two-part time Lengthsmen, a cleaner for the Parish Council offices and the Clerk. A new gardener was appointed in July 2016. Auto-enrolment pensions came into effect in April 2016 for the Parish Council and the NEST Pension Scheme was chosen (a government approved pension scheme). All employees were given the opportunity to join the scheme.

The Leisure Centre Manager is now employed by the Leisure Centre, which has charitable status and continues to run successfully, but independently from the Parish Council.

GARDENS

Berry's Garden (formerly Community Garden): The land has been donated to the Parish Council by Keith Berry and will always remain as a garden in memory of his wife, Kathleen. A plaque has been installed in memory of both Keith and Kathleen. A tree is to be planted in the garden in memory of Councillor Ken Ball.

Jubilee Garden (formerly Tanyard Garden): The Jubilee Garden continues to be kept in as natural a state as possible. Funding has been promised from Chorley Council to enable the dead/diseased trees to be cut down, plants put in and seating, sculptures, etc.

Springfield Leisure Park: The park is host to a number of flower beds, a natural area and a sensory raised bed.

Memorial Garden: This garden continues to be maintained by the Parish Council's previous gardener, Bill Bailey.

The Remembrance Day parade was exceedingly well represented this year and a motorcycle contingency followed the parade from the British Legion to the Church and back again.

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The County Council faced a severe reduction in their budget this year and are under extreme financial restraints. Coppull Library is still under threat, together with the Children's Centre and the Youth Centre. Chorley Council has agreed to fund the Library for a further 18 months, but cannot sustain after this time. The Save Coppull Library Group has set up a constituted committee to try and take over the running of the Library after this time.

Bus Services: The bus service through the old parish from Chorley to Wigan has now ceased, due to lack of funding and lack of people actually using the service.

Chisnall Colliery Site - Diamond Jubilee Woodlands and Woodlands from Waste: Lancashire County Council is still looking to form some kind of joint working arrangements to keep this site open.

Highways: Pot holes are prolific throughout the village and Lancashire County Council are constantly being contacted regarding these. Additional works required/planned in for 2016/17 have now been implemented:

- Reduction of speed limit on Wigan Lane (at the junction of Jolly Tar Lane) to be implemented in June/July 2016.
- Repairs to Chapel Lane and Jolly Tar Lane's road surface (2016/17 budget) and also parts of Spendmore Lane.

- Work to improve the mini roundabout at the junction of Spendmore Lane and the A49 (2016/17 budget)
- Work to improve the mini roundabout at the junction of Spendmore Lane and Clancutt Lane (imminent).
- A new pedestrian crossing has been installed on Spendmore Lane, close to the junction of Clancutt Lane, and the two other crossings on Spendmore Lane have been updated. Improvements to the crossing on the A49 is still awaited.

Library and Children's Centre: A campaign to save Coppull Library is underway and this has been supported by the Parish Council, Chorley Council, the MP for Chorley, local authors and members of the public. It is hoped that the campaign will be successful, so that the village does not lose this important service.

Public Rights of Way Scheme: The Parish Council joined this Local Delivery Scheme, whereby LCC pays a certain amount of money for various type of work to be undertaken by the Parish Council. Strimming of three ginnels in the parish was undertaken through this scheme and it is hoped it will continue in the future.

Youth Club: The Youth Club is also under threat due to the cuts and the outcome of this is still awaited.

NATURE RESERVES

Blainscough Nature Reserve: This is looked after by Chorley Council on behalf of the Parish Council and provides a relaxing place for people to walk and take their dogs.

Hic-Bibi Nature Reserve: This is also looked after by Chorley Council on behalf of the Parish Council and is kept in a very natural state, with wild ponies being kept on for part of the year to help control the vegetation. There are numerous sightings of deer in this area, together with hares, rabbits and plenty of bird life.

Yarrow Valley Park Nature Reserve: Chorley Council have complete control over the park and is very successful in making improvements and winning awards. This park is used by many people from Coppull, but also from out of the area. There is an award winning play area and a café which is going from strength to strength. The Friends of Yarrow Valley Park undertake many tasks and put on events for adults and children. The Park has an abundance of wildlife both on the lakes and the surrounding grounds.

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter continues to be very popular with residents and will now be issued four times a year, as previously – Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. The number of advertisements has increased, which has helped to fund a further issue.

PLANNING

Quite a lot of development has taken place in recent years, namely the development by Seddon Homes on Chapel Lane (still under construction), the small development at the bottom of Clancutt Lane and a few individual builds. A pre-application meeting took place in regard to a proposed development at the back of Coppull Hall Lane. This was fiercely opposed by a large number of residents from around the village, as it would be encroaching into the green belt. To date, no planning application has been received by Chorley Council.

PLAY AREAS

Byron Crescent Play Area: The new play area has proved very popular by local residents and children.

Springfield Leisure Park: The walkway from Springfield Road to the end of the play equipment is now complete and children can walk safely off the road, which is now quite busy due to the success of the Leisure Centre.

Funding was received for another sculpture on a tree which had to be felled. The three owls were again sculpted by Karl Baxter of Yorkshire.

Tansley Avenue Play Area: CIL money has been promised to update this play area. A consultation was held with residents and three quotes and designs were received. A design was chosen, but this had to be changed due to some of the money having to be spent on fully enclosing the whole of the area. Chorley Council approved the equipment and provider and work should be commencing shortly.

POLICE

The Police service has also had budget cuts and the station is no longer open on Wednesday evenings, but the Police can be contacted by using the 101 number.

SPRINGFIELD PARK LEISURE CENTRE

The Springfield Centre continues its success and is managed by a number of Trustees, staff and volunteers. Activities available are Climbing Wall, Trampolining and Free Running, to name a few. Local groups can hire the meeting room at very reasonable cost. At the moment, the Friendship Group is held twice per month, and the room is also used by the Save Coppull Library Group and Save the Greenbelt group at no charge.

The Café is doing very well and hosts children's parties with an activity at very reasonable rates.

WEBSITE

The website is now up and running: www.coppullpc.co.uk. This will be updated on a regular basis and added to when possible.

THE FUTURE (2017/18):

- To continue to maintain all the gardens, barrels and beds throughout the village and maintain the children's play areas owned by the Parish Council – Springfield Park, Byron Crescent and Tansley Avenue and to make improvements throughout the village.
- To consider installing Christmas lighting in conjunction with businesses along Spendmore Lane again.
- To consult with Chorley Council on the upkeep and maintenance of the Blainscough Wood Nature Reserve and Hic-Bibi Nature Reserve.
- Chisnall – the community woodland will continue to be developed through Lancashire County Council over the five year plan at the present time, but with the cessation of the countryside service, its future is now uncertain.
- To look into obtaining funding to provide a new village hall.
- Leisure Centre – to increase the usage in the centre during the day time and to continue to build on the activities on offer.
- Consultation – Continuing to ascertain from the residents of Coppull what improvements they would like to see in their village (through the newsletter).