



# COPPULL PARISH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

### 1. THE PARISH COUNCIL

In May 2019 Councillor Michael Atherton was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the sixth consecutive year and Councillor Marjorie Parkinson was elected as Vice-Chair, after the previous Vice-Chair, Councillor Nora Ball, stood down. This was election year, but as there was no call for an election, all previous Councillors were automatically reinstated and Councillor Lynne Moores was co-opted on to take the place of Councillor David Cole who had stood down due to ill health.

At the end of March 2020, the Parish Council consisted of the following Councillors and the Clerk:

Michael Atherton	Matthew Crook	Marjorie Parkinson
Nora Ball	Paul Eastham	Maggie Peel-Impey
Pauline Cobham	Elaine Jones	Lynne Moores
Neil Coggins	Steve Holgate	Paul Taylor
Janette Colecliffe	Sheila Makin	Ashley Whittaker
Sue Edwards (Clerk)		

All Parish Councillors are volunteers who work for the residents of the village and try to keep the area clean, tidy and a pleasant place for all to live and work. The Parish Council is non-political. Elections are held every four years and the next elections are in May 2023.

**Allowances:** As all Parish Councillors had been co-opted (not elected), they are not entitled to any allowances. However, all Parish Councillors for many years previously have agreed to forgo any expenses, with the exception of mileage costs if they are doing work on behalf of the Parish Council – but not for travelling to and from the Parish Council office/meeting room.

**Employees:** The Parish Council continues to employ the Clerk, one full-time and two-part time Lengthsmen. The gardener works on a self-employed basis. The cleaner for the Parish Council office finished work in May 2019.

### FINANCES:

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** The total fund now stands at £204,368.07. Various banks are being sought to look after this money safely until the planned projects can come to fruition – a new Village Hall and a Neighbourhood Plan have been agreed. The Parish Council has five years to spend this money from receipt.

**Financial Statement:** This is subject to audit –an independent internal auditor audits the accounts twice per year and the external auditor, appointed by the Audit Commission, undertakes a final audit at the end of the financial year. The Auditor's appointed are PPK Littlejohn and there were no issues arising from their audit for last year.

The end of year internal audit will take place shortly. The half-year internal audit stated:

"Completion of the half-year internal audit of the Parish Council accounts is 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.

The Parish Council has also put in place internal checks in accordance with Financial Rules and Regulations. A Councillor undertakes a complete check of all payments and receipts against invoices issued, on a monthly or quarterly basis.

**Precept:** The precept was set at £102,130.00 for 2020/21 – this represents an increase of 5.5% on last year's precept. The precept has been kept almost the same for a number of years, with very little increase. To keep the high level of maintenance for the village it needed to be increased this year, as all costs for the Parish Council had increased significantly.

**Christmas lights:** Additional lights were again obtained this year, some to replace broken ones, but also to build on the displays. Comments received for this year were that the lights were the best ever! The up-lighting of the soldier in the Memorial Garden still remains throughout the year, at the request of residents.

**Newsletter:** The Newsletter continues to go from strength to strength and is now a 16 page full colour brochure. It is very popular with residents and is an ideal way to communicate with residents, as it is hand delivered to everyone in the village. It is issued four times a year – Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter and part of the cost of this is recouped from local advertising. However, due to increasing costs with delivery, it was agreed to put the Spring 2020 issue into an A5 size.

**Website/Facebook:** The website will continue to grow and includes information on meetings, finances, policies, etc. There are also three notice boards, one in front of the Library, one at The Berry Garden on Chapel Lane and one in the Leisure Centre.

## **2. CHORLEY COUNCIL**

Chorley Council look after the town centre and surrounding Chorley areas, plus 23 parishes in conjunction with the relevant Parish Councils. Chorley Council is responsible for council tax, waste collection, fly tipping, tree work, some bus shelters, housing, planning, environment, licences ... to name just a few. More information is on their website.

**Call for Sites:** This was a request for sites to meet Government targets and for all planning authorities to have a five year supply of sites available. It gave the Parish Council the opportunity to have a say on what land within the Parish is allocated towards future development. The Parish Council is proactive in keeping the green belt from future development, but understands that some land has to be put forward for housing.

**Designated Public Protection Order (DPPO):** This is around the Leisure Centre, Library, Memorial Garden and a few roads around this area continues to be under this order, which gives Chorley Council and the Police power to confiscate alcohol (no alcohol area) and to help combat anti-social behaviour.

**Housing:** Chorley Councillors continue to work with the Parish Council and Jigsaw Housing to make improvements to the housing estates within the village – Arcon Road Estate, Byron Crescent Estate and Longfield Avenue Estate.

**Neighbourhood Priorities:** The Jubilee Garden has been improved and there are three structures awaiting installation, a large bird house, a child's "throne" type story chair and a wooden crocodile, which will emerge from the stream. The other priorities which were set for this year were a community garden on the Byron Crescent Estate which has been implemented by Chorley Council, and a footpath at the top of Clancutt Lane. Unfortunately, due to the costs involved, this will not be implemented.

### **3. COMMUNITY**

**Allotments:** This is the fifth year for the Parish Council Allotments and they continue to be extremely popular with local residents. There is a waiting list and as an allotment becomes vacant, people on the list are asked if they would like to take it over. The Allotments have their own Association, providing help and advice, insurance, etc. and they have also been successful in obtaining grants to further improve their open space.

**Anti-Social Behaviour.** This has been an ongoing concern this year and culminated in Chorley taxi firms refusing to come into the village due to a small minority of teens who were throwing stones at their cars. The Police took enforcement action against those concerned.

**A1 Fitness:** A1 Fitness took over what was the former Youth Club at the Leisure Centre and appears to be working very well for local residents.

**Chorley A & E:** A big campaign took place to try and keep the accident and emergency department at Chorley open. This is still ongoing.

**Circus:** Unfortunately, due to personal/health reasons of the owners of the circus, this had to be cancelled.

**Community Champions:** Dorian Pilkington volunteered to be Coppull's Champion and has worked well with the Parish Council on a number of projects throughout the village. The Parish Council is very pleased to have Dorian help out within the village and hopes this will continue after the initial pilot is finished.

**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.

**Digital Inclusion:** The Leisure Centre has again played host to a number of free classes on "Making the Most of Your Smartphone/Ipad".

**Dog Fouling:** This continues to be a big problem, especially during the winter months. The Parish Council has put dog signs around the Leisure Park and other areas. The signs indicate what can happen to children if dog faeces goes into their eyes. Chorley Council's Dog Warden can be contacted over problem areas 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. Since then, the local Scout Group has taken over with providing dog bags in plastic bottles on numerous lamp posts throughout the village. The Parish Council has also obtained four dog bag dispensers, which will be put up in the problem areas shortly.

**Grot Spots:** Any grot spots in the village are now dealt as soon as possible. Most Parish Councillors each have an area of responsibility in the village which they regularly check and report any concerns back to the Clerk, for reporting to the relevant authorities.

**Noah's Ark:** Unfortunately, the preschool closed down this year, partly due to not having enough children on the books. The Parish Council was very sad to see this happen, as they had provided a much needed facility for the Old Parish side of the village. It is hoped that another nursery will open there in the near future.

**Remembrance Day Parade:** This is organised by the Royal British Legion and was again extremely well attended. The Parish Council contributes financially to the event and obtains and places a wreath, together with a great number of other organisations. The motorcycle group attended again and followed the very large procession this year from the club to the church and back.

#### **4. GARDENS/FLOWER BEDS**

**Berry's Garden (Chapel Lane), Jubilee Garden (Spendmore Lane), Memorial Garden (Spendmore Lane) and Springfield Leisure Park.** All continue to be maintained by the Parish Council, in conjunction with Bill Bailey (Volunteer Memorial Garden), George Evans (PC Gardener) and James Riding (Gardening contractor). The

**New Road Flower Beds and beds near Spendmore Lane Bridge: Wheatsheaf Island, Birkacre Brow / Seats/Flower Beds, A49 at both boundaries, Jolly Tar Lane bed, small bed near Police Station and beds on Chapel Lane at the old school:** Again, these are all maintained by the Parish Council, either through the above mentioned, or on contract with Chorley Council, together with volunteers.

**Rivington View Nursery** sponsors a flower bed on Preston Road and also a bed on the Berry Garden. The **Wheatsheaf Hotel** sponsors the island. Olga, our new volunteer, has completely improved German Lane and also looks after some of the flower beds.

Thanks go to all the volunteers and sponsors for helping to make Coppull a nicer place to live and work and the Parish Council will continually strive to make improvements in the future.

#### **5. LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

The County Council is still faced with severe reductions in their budget, but the government did grant additional funding for highways, mainly repairing pot holes and road surfaces. LCC is responsible for education, social care and highway matters, to name but a few. More information can be obtained from their website.

**Chisnall Colliery Site** – Further planting has taken place at the site, together with new paths and maintenance. Two Councillors and the Clerk had a very informative site visit with Tim Blythe from the Lancashire Environmental Fund, who look after the site. It is home to a vast array of plants and wildlife.

#### **Highways:**

- There are still numerous concerns in regard to the mini-roundabout at the Clancutt Lane junction with Spendmore Lane and also with the mini roundabout at The Grange junction with Spendmore Lane. LCC is aware of the problems.

- Parking illegally or just irresponsibly is still a concern throughout the village. The Parish Council passes on any concerns to the Police, who have the authority to deal with this problem.
- Speeding vehicles is now a major concern and also includes off road motorbikes. The Police have the authority to deal with these concerns.

**Library and Friends of Coppull Library:** The proposed project to plant up a small piece of land at the back of the library, an external reading area with raised beds and a sensory garden, is ongoing.

**Public Rights of Way Scheme:** The Parish Council continues with this scheme, which pays £250 to the council, who then appoints a contractor to trim the ginnels three times per year.

## 6. NATURE RESERVES

**Blainscough, Hic-Bibi and Yarrow Valley Park Nature Reserves:** Coppull is extremely lucky to have three nature reserves on its doorstep. They are looked after and maintained by Chorley Council and provide an abundance of wildlife, flora and fauna.

## 7. PLANNING

All planning applications are looked at in depth by the Parish Council's representative and comments then made to Chorley Council who make the final decision on whether or not

to approve the plans.

## 8. PLAY AREAS

**Byron Crescent Play Area, Springfield Leisure Park and Tansley Avenue Play Area:** These are the play areas in the village owned and maintained by the Parish Council. They are inspected regularly by Chorley Council and appointed Councillors.

## 9. POLICE

The Police continue to patrol around the village, but this has seemed to be less frequent due to the vast area they have to cover. The PCSO's are usually on hand to discuss any problems.

## 10. 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. Local groups can hire the meeting room at very reasonable cost and also hire out the hall. Coppull Bouncers hire the hall for use of their trampoline club. TAAG uses it one night per week and a local bowling club hires the hall for a day during the winter months. There is a hoist available for disabled users. Recently, Teacher Assistance courses have also been run from the small meeting room. This has proved very popular and it is hoped that a further course will be arranged in the future. A local friendship group has also returned to the meeting room on alternative weeks.

The Café is doing very well and hosts children's parties with an activity at very reasonable rates, as well as providing drinks and snacks for children and parents throughout the week. The Centre is open from 4 pm each weekday and on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The Leisure Centre is independent of the Parish Council and is a registered charity.

## **THE FUTURE (2020/21):**

Unfortunately, in early 2020, the world was hit with the Coronavirus Pandemic and this has seriously changed the world in which we live.

A great number of people the world over have lost their lives to this virus, including many doctors and nurses. On the 20 March 2020, pubs, clubs, shops, businesses, etc. were closed and people were asked to stay at home to try and contain the virus and stop the stress this was placing on the NHS. Many people are working from home if they can, but key workers (NHS, Care Workers, Shop Workers, Street Cleaners and Bin Men) are still continuing. Another three weeks of staying at home was implemented by the government and communities have rallied around to support the NHS and all the key workers.

The Parish Council office remains open for telephone and email enquiries only. Volunteers from the Parish Council and local residents are undertaking shopping for residents and collecting prescriptions, etc. These are very uncertain times for everyone, but the community has really rallied round and it is hoped that this will continue in the future.

The Parish Council's plans for the future are:

- To continue to upkeep the buildings owned by the Parish Council – the Village Hall and Leisure Centre, including A1 Fitness (all closed at the present time). To provide a new Village Hall as soon as possible and to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan for the village, led by local residents.
- 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 (all closed at the present time) and to make improvements throughout the village.
- To continue to campaign against litter, fly tipping, dog fouling and speeding in the village.
- To build on the Christmas lighting each year.
- To continue to consult with Chorley Council on the upkeep and maintenance of the Blainscough Wood Nature Reserve and Hic-Bibi Nature Reserve.
- To implement a rolling plan to install Heritage Signs throughout the village.

**APRIL 2020**