



COPPULL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

1. THE PARISH COUNCIL

Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, the Annual General Meeting in May 2020 was not held. Members of the Parish Council agreed that Councillor Michael Atherton continue as Chairman of the Parish Council for the seventh consecutive year and Councillor Marjorie Parkinson carry on as Vice-Chair, for the second year. Only statutory meetings of the council were held in 2020/21 and there were no Management & Finance committee meetings. The three statutory meetings were held by Zoom, with one Hybrid meeting.

At the end of March 2021, 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)		

It is hoped that from May 2021 all meetings will be able to continue as normal, as restrictions in regard to meetings are being relaxed. All Parish Councillors are volunteers who work for the residents of the village and strive 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. They can also be issued with one printer cartridge and one ream of paper, if requested.

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.

FINANCES:

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): The total fund now stands at £208,121.19. Two new bank accounts were opened and deposited with £85,000 each, to keep this money safe until the planned projects can come to fruition – a new Village Hall and a Neighbourhood Plan have been agreed. The remaining money is kept in a deposit account with the RBS. 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.

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 Parish Councillor undertakes a complete check of all payments and receipts against invoices issued, on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Due to Covid 19 the amount which can be spent under the delegated powers of the Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair was raised from £500 to £1,000. Further delegation was also given to allow the smooth running of the council whilst the pandemic remained.

Newsletter: The A5 size newsletter has been received very well and will now continue. There was no Summer 2020 issue, as due to Covid 19 there was no way to get it produced and delivered.

Christmas lights: Additional lights were again obtained this year, some to replace broken ones, but also to build on the displays. A Merry Christmas lit banner was also obtained and which has proved very popular. Another one for the opposite end of the display will be obtained for the coming year. Comments received for this year were that the lights were the best ever (again)! The up-lighting of the soldier in the Memorial Garden still remains throughout the year, at the request of residents.

Precept: The precept was set at £102,000.00 for 2021/22 – this represents a slight decrease on last year’s precept. This was kept at this amount due to the effects of Covid 19 on many people’s livelihood.

Village Hall: Plans have now been submitted to Chorley Council for a new Village Hall on the current site, as another site could not be found. Little Lambs continue to operate from the hall and will continue when the new building has been completed.

Website/Facebook: The website will be added to shortly with a separate page for the Neighbourhood Plan, which can be updated by the NP Steering Group. It has recently been updated to provide an accessible website for all users.

An official Facebook page is to be looked into, as the current page is attached to the Clerk’s personal Facebook. Members of the Parish Council also share information on their Facebook pages.

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.

Designated Public Protection Order (DPPO): This is around the Leisure Centre, Library, Memorial Garden and a few roads around this area continue 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. This has recently been approved to carry on in this area.

Local Plan: A draft Local Plan is being produced by Chorley Council, to replace the current one which is the near its end. When Coppull's Neighbourhood Plan is produced, it will run alongside Chorley Council's Local Plan.

3. COMMUNITY

Allotments: This is the sixth year for the Parish Council Allotments and they continue to be extremely popular with local residents. Six smaller plots were installed on some of the waste ground and these have all been filled. 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 is still an ongoing concern in the village, with the usual teenagers involved. Anyone seeing this type of behaviour should call the Police immediately.

A1 Fitness: A1 Fitness has been closed for the majority of 2020 due to Covid-19. However, they are due to open back up in April 2021.

Chorley A & E: A big campaign took place to try and keep the accident and emergency department at Chorley open. It has now been confirmed that the A & E Department will remain open.

Community Champion: Dorian Pilkington volunteered to be Coppull's Champion and has worked well with the Parish Council on a number of projects throughout the village. However, this scheme is not being continued by LCC, but it is hoped that Dorian will continue helping out within the village whenever his work allows.

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.

Dog Fouling: This also continues to be a big problem in the village, especially during the winter months. There are certain "problem" areas in the village and the Dog Warden has been asked to monitor these.

Grot Spots: The Parish Council is not aware of any grot spots at the present time.

Little Lamb's Pre-School, Chapel Lane: The pre-school had to close during the early days of the pandemic so some income was lost. However, a grant was received from Chorley Council to offset this and to help with the repairs to the hall. The pre-school is not open to capacity, as parents are apprehensive to enrol their children as the hall may have to close when the new building work commences. The Parish Council is working with the pre-school to try and come up with a plan to keep the pre-school open, possibly by finding temporary accommodation whilst the building work takes place.

Neighbourhood Plan: This is now ongoing and a Steering Group has been set up with a few Parish Councillors and a number of very enthusiastic residents. It can take up to three years for the plan to be produced and, after approval by the Parish Council and Chorley Council, has to be

sent to an independent adjudicator. If he/she passes the plan, a referendum has to be held to get the plan adopted. 50%+ of those people who voted have to vote for the plan, or it will not go ahead. Therefore, input by the residents of Coppull is imperative.

Remembrance Day Parade: Unfortunately, the parade could not go ahead in 2020, again due to the pandemic. Dignitaries attended outside the church to lay wreaths and a small blessing was held outside.

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) and George Evans (PC Gardener), who has now taken over the gardening contract as well.

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 continues to look after German Lane and also 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

LCC is responsible for education, social care and highway matters, to name but a few. More information can be obtained from their website. They continue to look after the Chisnall Colliery Site.

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 also still a concern throughout the village and also includes off road motorbikes.

Library and Friends of Coppull Library: The proposed project to plant up a small piece of land at the back of the library was held up with the onset of the pandemic, but some planting has taken place of fruit trees, etc.

Public Rights of Way Scheme: This scheme is no longer in existence, but the Parish Council continue 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 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.

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.

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 and are cleaned and checked each week by the Parish Council's Lengthsman.

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 and also due to the pandemic. The PCSO's are usually on hand to discuss any problems.

10. SPRINGFIELD PARK LEISURE CENTRE

Unfortunately, the Centre has been closed for a vast proportion of 2020/21 due to Covid 19. It will open again on 12 April for limited activities. The café will open up fully again in May, although restrictions and limits on numbers will still be in place. The Leisure Centre is independent of the Parish Council and is a registered charity.

THE FUTURE (2021/22):

Unfortunately, Covid-19 is still amongst us, but appears to be getting under control in the UK with the advancement of the vaccination programme, but the future still appears uncertain at the present time. However, more and more things are getting back to normal, with non-essential shops and some pubs and restaurants with outdoor space opening recently.

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.
- To progress the building of the new Village Hall (plans waiting to be approved by Chorley Council).

- To progress the Neighbourhood Plan – Steering Group set up with local residents who are very keen to get this plan underway.
- To continue to maintain all the gardens, tubs 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 further improvements throughout the village.
- To continue to campaign against anti-social behaviour, litter, fly tipping, dog fouling and speeding in the village.
- To build on the Christmas lighting each year.
- To implement a rolling plan to install Heritage Signs throughout the village - £500 placed into the budget last year, but the plan was not progressed due to Covid 19.

APRIL 2021