

East Clandon Parish Council

Annual Report 2008/09

Finance

Following the planned stretching of our resources in 2007/8 to complete the Tunmore Field fencing project, this last year has been one of consolidation. This has been achieved successfully and a small surplus of £247 resulted to leave us with £1,156 in the bank at the year end, despite a precept increase of only 2.5% and no field rental income. Thanks to grants of £601 from Guildford Borough Council, £500 from Surrey County Council and a donation of £152 from FROST, we have been able to improve fencing in the recreation ground, purchase a new mower and make some hedging improvements.

Looking forward, however, to 2009/10, we have already received the first annual rental of £1,500 for Tunmore Field and this will enable us to progress a range of projects to improve the village, helped by concurrent functions grants from Guildford Borough Council, which have now been approved. Our finances should be fundamentally stronger, thanks to this rental income.

Maintenance

Jim Bacon has once again done a superb job all around the village, ably supported by Roger Nickolds and more recently, Ray Corstin. We are very grateful for all Jim's hard work and skill and the fact that he goes that extra mile to look after the village and keep it tidy. More than ever, this year, he has been supported by various village initiatives. Some 22 villagers turned out in January to collect over 20 bags of litter from roadside verges and this was followed by the planting of new hedging and another working party of over 20, recently, to clean the inside and outside of the church. Residents of Snelgate, led by Simon Wood, also worked hard to improve the verges of the Old Epsom Road in Snelgate.

Ray Corstin has been busy improving the recreation ground equipment and landing areas and this has been much appreciated by young and old alike. The two stolen benches were quickly replaced by Ray, who like Jim and Simon just got on and got the job done. Thanks to everyone for a great community effort, which has helped to keep the village looking better than ever.

Projects.

Work has started on improving the biodiversity in the village. The Council subcontracted the work of cleaning the Back Lane pond at a cost of £400pa to a specialist in pond maintenance and biodiversity. This will be undertaken in October each year to encourage wildlife but also to ensure that the bulrushes do not become invasive. We are also very grateful to Adam Johnson and his family for the donation of the bench by the pond, which will be popular with those wishing to enjoy this tranquil spot.

Planning applications

During 2008/9 the Parish Council has considered fewer planning applications than usual – probably as a result of the tougher economic climate. Most, happily, have been approved. It has been most encouraging to see progress at two

important village sites, where planning permission had been achieved only after considerable difficulty in the past. Work has progressed at both Clandon Manor Farm and at Home Farm Barns. Both sites have been on the Council agenda regularly over at least 5 years and the village should benefit greatly when the work is finished and both sites are fully occupied.

Attendance

2008-2009 has been another busy year for the Parish Council. The Council has met 9 times with more attendance by Councillors than in any recent year, despite the level of their other commitments. Councillor attendance averaged a very creditable level of 80% level during the year.

The Future

The Star Energy gas storage project in Albury and the pipeline through East Clandon will continue to be one of the key issues over the coming years. The Council's position is that it is in favour of the principle of additional gas storage in the UK and understands that the geology of the Albury/Blackheath/Shalford area might provide a possible location. It seems very probable that the project will proceed, subject to test drilling, and that the linking pipeline will run through East Clandon. We have joined with other local Council's to ensure that the inconvenience is kept to a minimum. Paul Richardson and Ray Corstin have attended several meetings and will seek to ensure that Star Energy commits to the minimum level of disruption and will make good the inevitable short term damage as quickly and effectively as possible.

Simon Wood has been in negotiation with the National Trust about fishing in the pond that is just inside the Hatchlands grounds. We are hopeful that a fishing club will soon be formed that enables some 20 villagers who would like to fish this pond as was possible in the past.

Thanks

We are very grateful to Georgina Mercer for taking over from Mary Leech as parish clerk. She has been enthusiastic and conscientious and has done an excellent job this last year. Sadly, she has had health problems in the last two months and we hope the village will understand if a few matters have had to wait for her full recovery. I have decided to stand down, both as Councillor and Chairman, at today's AGM after five years on the Council and over three as Chairman. I think it is good to have change and some of my charity interests need more time than I have been able to give of late. However, I would particularly like to thank all my fellow Councillors for their support and good humour over the last five years. The present Council is a strong one and the village is as friendly and welcoming as ever and I am sure that Council matters will be well looked after by the remaining team.

Adrian Thompson
Chairman
14th May, 2009