



Report of the Chair to 2025 Annual Parish Meeting (APM)

Introduction

Your Parish Council (PC) is pleased to present its report on the year since the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 21 May 2024.

This year the Annual Council Meeting (ACM) will follow on from the APM. The roles on the PC are currently as follows:

Chair: Cllr David Kirkby

Vice-chair: Cllr Connie Leach

Website and Social Media: Cllr Steph Ironside

Newsletter: Vacancy

Planning: Cllr Rona Blundell

Recreation Ground Repairs and Maintenance: Cllr Simon Leigh-Jones

Link to Events Working Group: Cllr David Kirkby

Link to Handyperson Working Group: Cllr Simon Leigh-Jones

Link to Sustainability Working Group: Cllr Eve Almond

Link to Oliver's Battery Primary School: Cllr Steph Ironside

Tree Warden: Cllr Tony Gaster

However, these roles may change after the ACM later this evening.

Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to restrict parking on Oliver's Battery Road South (OBRS) and at the Old Kennels Lane (OKL) junction

As drivers pass Compton Way, heading along OBRS towards OKL, they are faced with a long line of vehicles parked on the left-hand side and have been seen to accelerate to get passed them in order to be able to pull onto the correct side of the road before the bend. The distance that has to be travelled on the wrong side of the road due to all the parked vehicles is a real safety issue. My suggestions are:

Extend No Waiting Mon-Sat 8am-6pm along OBRS to connect to No Waiting At Any Time approaching the junction of OKL. *This generates restrictions all along OBRS from Compton Way to the junction with OKL.*

Also introduce parking restrictions along the first section of OKL. *This generates restrictions from the junction with OBRS to the first bend. This would help deter casual day time parking being "transferred" from OBRS to the start of OKL (both on the main road through Oliver's Battery, which is used by HGV and buses). Day time parking by non-residents cannot be prevented but if it is main road through Oliver's Battery, it will be significantly safer for all road users.*



Although many near accidents have been noted by local residents approaching and at the bend at the start of OKL, there is a concern that the HCC proposal will not include such extensive restrictions.

There will be an opportunity for residents directly affected by the proposed TRO to comment on the proposals during a consultation. HCC have advised that they will review their proposals if there is a significant response calling for more extensive restrictions.

Cllr David Kirkby

Communications Report

Engagement with the Facebook page has continued to grow this year. We now have 350 followers (+38 on last year), of which 250 are 'active' – which means they regularly view and/ or engage with our posts.

In the last year we have posted 59 items, covering:

- Community events (e.g. the Easter Egg Hunt, Scarecrow competition, 'Big Swap', film club nights)
- Local initiatives (e.g. the heat saving project, air quality report, new local exercise classes)
- Parish council updates (e.g. meetings and resolutions, road closures)

Views for the posts are usually page followers (70%) but with 30% coming from non-followers. This indicates that posts are being shared on to the wider community.

Of our followers, 75% are women and c.80% over 35 years old.

In the past 90 days (which is the maximum reporting period) the top content was:

- The Easter Egg Hunt (1,100 views)
- The Big Swap (640 views)
- Buy Back Bushfield (430 views)

In the coming year we will continue to post useful updates and community information. We are also in the process of creating a community WhatsApp group for a more direct and speedy way to share local updates.

We hope that the Facebook page and WhatsApp group will go some way towards mitigating the loss of the newsletter. If you have any local information or articles that you think could be appropriate to share on our social media, please contact Councillor Ironside.

The Parish Council also has a wide range of information on its website at <https://www.oliversbattery.info/>.

Cllr Steph Ironside



Newsletter

Until December 2024, every two months a 16-page newsletter was published and delivered to every home in Oliver's Battery, the local shops and school. After this edition, Tony Gaster stepped down from the editor role and since then we have been looking for a volunteer to be the new editor. There is a regular team of people who are willing to report on activity and happenings within the community. If you are interested, please contact the Clerk on clerkoliversbattery@gmail.com.

Cllr David Kirkby

Planning

The Parish Council (PC) is notified of planning applications in the parish and these are reviewed at PC Meetings.

The Council considered 12 new applications in the year and objected to 4.

In the case of the application for 141 Oliver's Battery Road South, amended plans were submitted addressing the main concerns raised. Of the remaining 3 objections, the application for 6 Pine Close was rejected by WCC and the applicants' appeal was also rejected; the application for 68 Old Kennels Lane was approved and the application for 39 Old Kennels Lane remained under consideration at the time this report was produced. With respect to the latter, the PC has asked that this go to the Planning Committee if the case officer is minded to approve the application.

One application remains ongoing from previous years (9-11 Mount View Road) where the PC commented about the need to remove what was a temporary spoil heap on the land concerned in 2024). In the current year, the Parish Council has asked that a site visit be arranged prior to this being considered by the Planning Committee and the case officer has stated they will inform the Parish Council of when this application is on the Committee's agenda.

The Winchester City Council Local Plan Examination is in progress and the Planning Inspector is considering the proposed Local Plan, which includes Bushfield Camp. Although the South Winchester Golf Course site is not included in the proposed Local Plan, predictably developers are lobbying for this and other sites to be included for housing etc. Although the South Winchester Golf Course site is in Hursley parish, the Parish Council continues to object strongly to this development proposal (as does Hursley Parish Council).

As was the case last year, and while the Parish Council might not always agree with the decisions made, the Planning Officers contacted with requests and queries have been unfailingly helpful to the Parish Council.

Cllr Rona Blundell



Recreation Ground Improvements

The Recreation Ground has seen significant improvements over previous years, encouraging a wider age-range of visitors and to use the space in different ways.

The smaller football pitch proved so popular that remedial works were required to the goalmouth areas.

The Handyperson Group managed a tree watering arrangement by volunteers for the recently planted trees at the Recreation Ground, which have flourished.

This year will see less spent on improvements; the key exception is a proposal to repaint the tennis court surface.

Cllr Connie Leach

Recreation Ground Repairs and Maintenance

It would be fair to argue that the Oliver's Battery Parish Recreational Ground may be one of the social 'hotspots' of Winchester and regions beyond. Even a brief visit on any day of a weekend, bank holiday, half term or school holidays will quickly give evidence to such. It would not be hyperbole to suggest that hundreds of families make use of this beautiful recreational area on any given day. We are very proud of this space and are immensely grateful for the hours of volunteer time given to maintain the available facilities. Tree watering rotas, weekly visits by members of our Handypersons group, occasional repairs and clean ups initiated by other parishioners all provide the trusted assistance to the regular maintenance and repair done by our commercial contractor *Infinity Playgrounds*.

It is fantastic to see the impact of work done last year updating many of the sports facilities. These improvements ensure that the thousands of visitors to the space are able to enjoy an array of sporting and play options. Much of the maintenance work goes unnoticed - replacing nuts and bolts, updating fixtures, cleaning moss and debris from our tennis court and MUGA, cutting back foliage, placing protective paint on branches and play equipment and so on.

There were several vital works done during the course of the last year. These took place on a number of the foundation supports for the wooden play area structures which had begun to deteriorate. Similarly, some of the soft mat areas that surround the play equipment had to be replaced, repaired and/or cleaned. One great addition to the play area was the installation of a new cradle swing, an extremely popular feature! Our basketball hoop was replaced and significant improvements were made to our football pitch (see Recreation Ground New Works section of Chair's Report).

Our exceptional recreation ground and play area is maintained and kept in the beautiful condition we, and all our visitors, are able to enjoy on a daily basis by the work of the exceptional volunteers of this parish.

Cllr Simon Leigh-Jones



Working Groups (volunteers)

The PC has three working groups: The Events Group, The Handyperson Group and The Sustainability Group.

Events

There were 4 events organised during this period

Summer Picnic - Saturday 24th August 2024

Our Summer Picnic on the Green complete with most excellent live music from The Kasbar Saxophone Quartet, was organised Jayne Pickett. Due to the impending deluge weather wise this was rapidly relocated at the very last moment into St Marks Hall and the music and picnic continued! An excellent afternoon. Huge thanks to St Marks for Hall availability at Nil Notice.

Autumn Scarecrow Week 25th October - 3rd November 2024

Our 5th Annual Scarecrow competition, saw some very creative entries, as expected, in all the 3 categories: Junior, Senior and Group. We were very grateful to our local councillors, Adrian Brophy (& Son) and Jan Warwick who had the unenviable task of judging some most excellent entries. Held during Half Term which encompassed Halloween this gave a more sinister feel to some scarecrows.

Christmas Tree Event and Storm Darrah, 7th December 2024

Our 6th Christmas Tree event! The contracted Christmas Tree supplier had a problem supplying at the last moment and Amy Paterson managed to source another tree at incredibly short notice. Storm Darrah however then prevented the tree being put up on the day & with the poor weather the Carols and Mulled Wine were served in St Marks Hall (Thank you against marks and also OB WI) rather than outside. An excellent evening with a real party spirit. A count down with Party Poppers replaced the usual Rocket! The Christmas Tree was put up, the following Saturday (14th). This is probably the best dressed tree to date and the photos of it would make a most excellent Christmas Card (a Charity Card for 2025?)

Easter Egg Hunt 20th April 2025

EEH25 was our 4th Annual Easter Egg Hunt. It has been gaining in popularity over the years with over 550 participants this year and 14 combinations of courses. Sponsored by Eclipse Foot Clinic and again in partnership with Southampton Orienteering Club. A most truly amazing team of 30 (from all parts of our community) made this work both before and on the day. We were also very fortunate with the weather of the moment on the day! Overall, this was felt to be a very community bonding & successful event. The MapRun (Phone App, phone GPS) courses remain available until next Easter and can be accessed via oliversbattery.info/events.



A plea for NEW Volunteers, The Newsletter and Community Notice Board!

The Events Team itself is a core group of less than half a dozen people. To continue this year and beyond, with these 4 events WE NEED NEW people to help organise them.

- (1) An evening is required before the Summer (with the lure of food and wine may help) so that potential volunteers can explore the various community opportunities that are available.
- (2) We desperately need the OB Newsletter for advertising the multitude of local activities to our local community.
- (3) We desperately need an adequate Community Notice Board in a prominent position.

Amy Paterson, Marianne Foster & Colin Stride on behalf of Events Group,
oliversbatteryevents@gmail.com

Handyperson

The Handyperson Group consists of one female and 4 male local residents.

The following activities have been completed by the Group during the previous 12 months:

New Trees in the Recreation Ground:

The Group undertook responsibility for care of the 11 new trees planted earlier in the year in the Recreation Ground. The Group organised a watering roster amongst local residents to ensure that throughout the summer the trees were kept in good condition. The immediate area around each tree was weeded to bare earth and then mulched with bark to retain moisture. The trees have been inspected regularly throughout the winter and early Spring to ensure security and healthy growth. The Group has recommenced watering during the dry spell this April.

The bowser purchased for the watering task has been maintained until its release to the allotment holder. The tap and bowser padlocks have been serviced during the winter.

Benches:

The 3 new bare wood benches positioned in the Recreation Ground were given 3 coats of stain/varnish during August.

Recreation Ground Play Equipment:

The Group has applied non-slip stain to the appropriate play equipment in July and November.



Speed Warning Device:

The Group has the responsibility for maintaining this equipment – currently fitted in Old Kennels Lane – which requires battery changing every 8-12 days and regular cleaning. Although a new battery has extended the life of this equipment it must be noted that it will shortly become unserviceable because of corrosion and wear.

Miscellaneous:

The Group is available for ad hoc tasking for maintenance and safety. During the year it has been necessary to fence off benches and equipment from time to time allow repairs

The most recent activity has been to fit the new Public Rights of Way signage at the Recreation Ground.

David Warren, Brian Michener, Gary Spring, Jacqueline Warren and Adrian Poole

Sustainability

Sustainable Oliver's Battery have been running for just over four years, we are a volunteer led action group, our aim is to inspire the community to take action on the climate and biodiversity emergencies.

Here is a list of what Sustainable Oliver's Battery have been up to this past year:

- We had a stall at the Oliver's Battery School fete in the Summer.
- We held a Climate Fresk workshop in July with a follow up community meeting in the Autumn.
- We trained two more thermal surveyors to use and interpret the thermal cameras.
- We have carried out approximately 15 thermal surveys.
- We have organised two Outdoor SWAP events, the last being the most popular yet, with over 30 households taking part.
- We held our first SWISH event in November.
- We have contributed to the Community News and Parish Newsletters.
- We distribute our own newsletter to approx 70 people who have signed up to receive them directly from Sust. OB
- We have engaged with the local Brownies group. Together we have done a litter pick, and this spring we hosted a sustainable fashion show.
- We support the local bike bus and are promoting and supporting Winchester's Mass Bike ride organised by Cycle Winchester.
- We are part of WeCAN (Winchester Climate Action Network) and have attended meetings and training opportunities this year.



What's next, plans for 2025-2026:

- Continued collaboration with Winacc, promoting "My Home Made Better" a new and free Home Energy Advice project in Hampshire. We plan to have an article in the next community newsletter which will explain the project in more detail.
- We will continue to share and promote the thermal imaging surveys (we have already linked in with local scouts' group with the idea that they can use the cameras on a night activity, whilst we encourage parents to take up the offer of a survey!)
- Sustainable Oliver's Battery will attend and hold a stall at the 'Wildlife and Environmental Fayre' on Saturday 27th September (fayre is being organised by Martin Keys and Helen Short OBCG)
- Autumn Outdoor SWAP.

It has been our priority to connect with the residents of Oliver's Battery, but as with other volunteer led groups in this community, we are struggling with low numbers and as a result we are questioning how sustainable is Sustainable Oliver's Battery?! Most of the events listed above have been organised by one or two people. We would really welcome more input, without any pressure to commit. We are more than happy to hear ideas for how we can inspire Oliver's Battery to become even more sustainable.

Cllr Eve Almond on behalf of Sustainability Group, obsustainability@gmail.com

Tree Warden

The only area of concern has been overhanging branches by Oliver's Battery Road South and the Battery. The work was postponed from February and done in April. However, although parking was suspended, one car was there all day preventing the work being finished.

Cllr Tony Gaster

Environment

The Lengthsman Scheme provides a valuable resource to undertake regular work around the parish, as directed by the PC, such as clearing paths and cutting back vegetation.

Cllr David Kirkby



Finance

Attached to a budget control report, which is a summary of the receipts and payments of the PC for the year ended 31 March 2025, showing a comparison with the budget for the financial year. The main income is the Precept, which forms a component of your council tax.

Cllr David Kirkby

Conclusion

The PC is the first tier of local governance and will continue to seek to represent the interests of the community as a whole.

Cllr David Kirkby
Chair Oliver's Battery Parish Council