

Ampfield Parish Council

Newsletter
Spring 2024



Ampfield Parish Annual Assembly
Monday, 20th May 2024
7:30pm at Ampfield Village Hall
All parishioners are warmly invited to attend

Financial Report

The primary source of income for Ampfield Parish Council is the precept, collected by Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) through your Council Tax. The precept that we receive for 2024-25 will be £44,768.51.

The increase on the amount we receive from the previous year is 3.91%. However, the effect on your own Council Tax depends on the amount charged by the other bodies (Hampshire County Council, Test Valley Borough Council, the police and fire services), and the number of taxable properties. Find out more, including your council tax by property Band, at testvalley.gov.uk/benefitsandcounciltax/counciltax/about-council-tax/council-tax-charges (or search online 'Test Valley Borough Council tax 2024').

Our budgeted spending for 2024-25 is £67,097.

This is to be spent on administration, maintenance and running costs for our various assets such as Chapel Wood, the Burial Ground, Recreation Ground, Morleys Green and allotments. As well as the precept, we have income from grants, burial

ground fees, Ampfield and North Baddesley Cricket Club (for their use of the Recreation Ground) and the allotments.

Our accounts undergo audit by a government-appointed auditor, and the audit for the year 2023-24 has yet to be started. The audit of the accounts for 2022-23 found that there were no matters of concern, other than a small error in the reporting of a figure, which was corrected. You can view the auditor's report 'Notice Conclusion of Audit 2022-23' on the Ampfield Parish Council website under: Parish Council > Statutory Information > Governance & Audit.

These reports are posted on all noticeboards and on our website as the audit progresses.



Community SpeedWatch

At the Annual Parish Assembly in 2022, the issue of speeding vehicles on Hook Road and the A3090 was raised. The PCSO present at the meeting suggested that a SpeedWatch scheme might be an appropriate response.

SpeedWatch volunteers use equipment that measures vehicle's speed and then record the details. Vehicle checks are undertaken by the police and letters are sent to the registered keepers advising them of their speed and reminding them of why it is a community concern.

SpeedWatch is an educational scheme and is not enforcement. It is a first tier response to speeding issues.

We have managed to obtain money from Hampshire County Council Highways from funds held by them from the Morleys Green development in order to purchase the equipment and cover subsequent maintenance. The process of obtaining the money has been slow, hence the almost two year delay from the initial suggestion. We now have the SpeedWatch equipment and will shortly start using it once we have worked out how to do so!



At present, we are allowed to operate the equipment at three sites, on the A3090 at Morleys Green, on Hook Road at the Woodlea Way junction and on Baddesley Road near to the Ampfield Meadows development.

Anyone who is concerned with speeding vehicles is welcome to volunteer to join the Ampfield SpeedWatch. Sessions will likely be about one hour long. If there are enough volunteers, it may be possible to get extra sites added, which do need the approval from the police.

Recreation Ground

We are pleased to see how “our” cricket team Ampfield and North Baddesley Cricket Club (ANBCC), who play at Ampfield Recreation Ground, have built upon their successful weekly All-Stars training events for boys and girls and now will have four teams in the local Colts’ leagues this coming season.

Ampfield Parish Council is supporting the ANBCC project which aims to construct nets and an artificial surface to be used for youth training and playing.

In this we are grateful to English Developments who were able to recover over £12,000 of Section 106 (s106) funding from Test Valley Borough Council and which we can now redirect towards the project.

The Ampfield Pavilion at the Recreation Ground is available for hire and is a great location for events such as children’s birthday parties and is adjacent to the playing field and playground. Parishioners enjoy reduced hire rates.

Ampfield Messenger

The Ampfield Messenger, the Parish Magazine of St. Mark’s, went online during the Covid outbreak. Since then, it has been available to download from the Parish Council website (see back page) and the latest edition is also available from the church website (acnb-church.org). The digital version has allowed the magazine to increase in size and include colour photographs and illustrations, and now has many contributors from the surrounding area. As well as publicising events and facilities, the Messenger includes a wide range of regular articles about local history, the Friends of

Chapel Wood, quizzes, gardening, recipes and the work of the Ampfield Art Class. Occasional features include poetry, reviews, short stories, obituaries etc. New ideas and contributors are always welcome.

If you would like to receive a notification when the magazine is published, please email philb@acnb-church.org.uk. We will use your email address only to notify you of publication of the latest Ampfield Messenger and will handle your data according to our privacy policy (acnb-church.org/main/privacypolicy/).

Ampfield Village Hall

The Village Hall continues to be the main community hub of the parish, providing a variety of activities throughout the week including yoga, pilates, bridge, brownies and a weekly art class. The Trustees of the Hall, who are all volunteers, work very hard to maintain the hall to a very high standard and provide special events including popular quiz nights and, in October, an evening of music performed by the Empty Frets.

The highlight of each month is the very popular Market (see image) which is now in its 24th successful year.

Volunteers generously provide their help and support and all the proceeds go directly to the hall providing up to £3,000 annually for its upkeep. More importantly, the Market provides the perfect meeting place for everyone to get together on a regular basis. Sales tables can be hired and we regularly sell fruit, vegetables, bread, cakes and a wide variety of crafts, plants, books, etc. The refreshment table is always laden with delicious seasonal cakes freshly baked by the team. Coffee and tea are served all morning.

Late last year the Village Hall website went live and can be accessed via ampfieldvillagehall.org.uk. Here



you can make enquiries about booking the hall – the perfect venue for a special occasion – and find out more about hall events (including those mentioned above) and take part in a virtual tour.

We are always looking to welcome new members to the Committee – if you are interested, please get in touch with the hall secretary via julie@ampfield.org.uk.

Market dates for 2024:

4 May, 1 June, 6 July,
7 September, 5 October,
2 November and 7 December.

Burial Ground

Originally, the land, which today hosts the Ampfield Burial Ground, was very much a part of the woodland in which it sits. It was always clear that, in order to create additional useable space, it would be necessary to remove a large proportion of this surrounding



vegetation. In 2023, Ampfield Parish Council recognised that the time had come to make a start.

Following a successful competitive tender, contractors have been appointed to clear the surplus rhododendron bushes from the back and sides of the area, together with some other unwanted material. Once this is completed, the ground will be prepared, and grass seed will be sown to allow the enlarged area to blend seamlessly with the current plot. At completion, the original burial area will have virtually doubled in size. The plan is to complete the whole exercise by the end of 2024.

Also, in the burial ground, readers may recall that the cruciform area was delineated by an attractive box hedge.

Unfortunately, last year this totally succumbed to box blight. As a result, the area has been cleared, the ground dug over and fresh compost added. It is hoped that a new hedge can be planted over the coming months. This time, however, we will use traditional yew and, once it is established, keep it trimmed regularly.

At the entrance to the cruciform, we need to replace the two cherry trees. One has developed a large split in its main stem and could become unstable. The second has simply never been happy where it is. We have not yet decided upon suitable replacements but plan to do so by the summer, ready for autumn planting.

The Telephone Kiosk

For many years the red telephone kiosk was located next to the post box on the A3090. Due to its deteriorating state the door had become detached and the box was damp and neglected. The Parish Council decided to move it to a drier, brighter and more accessible location where it could begin the next phase of its life with a new purpose.

Just before Christmas the kiosk was moved from its old site to an ideal spot just outside the Village Hall. The Mens Shed in Romsey very kindly agreed to refurbish the door for us

separately. A Councillor Community grant has generously provided the funding for the purchase of the spare parts for the project.

Once the work on the door has been completed then the work on the main part of the kiosk will proceed. The completed phone box will then hopefully become a library/book swap and it is hoped that we may be able to use this resource to raise money for a variety of worthwhile charities.



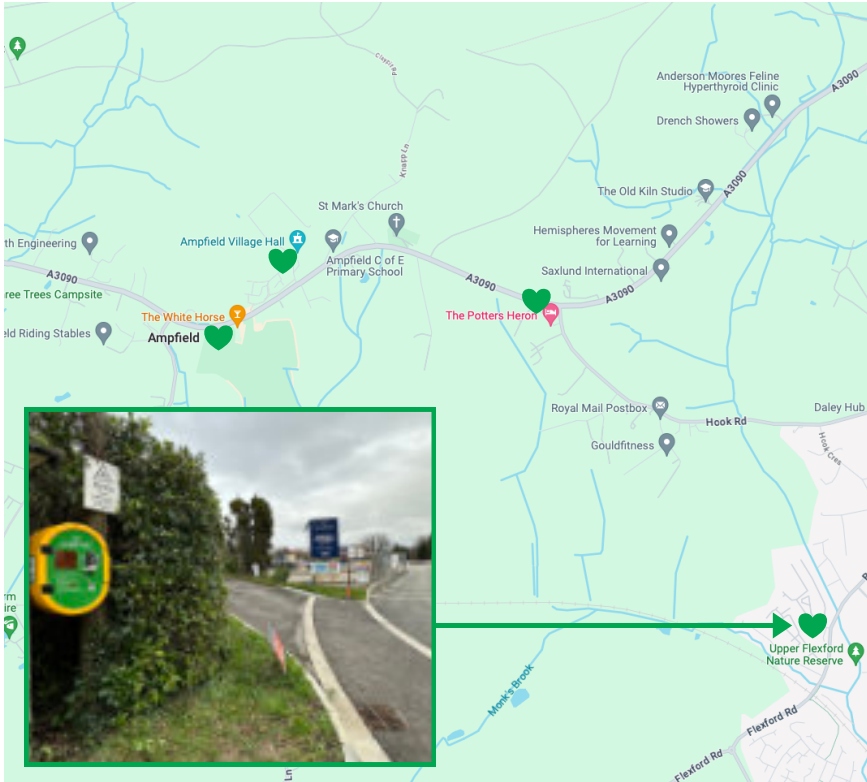
Defibrillators in Ampfield

A fourth defibrillator has kindly been gifted to the Parish Council by Inspired Villages. It is located on the left of the main entrance from Baddesley Road to Ampfield Meadows, the new care village. A sum of money has also been provided for the future maintenance of this defibrillator.

The other defibrillators are situated around the parish:

- at the entrance to the Village Hall,
- at the Pavilion, and
- outside the Potters Heron Hotel.

They are all regularly checked and maintained by the Parish Council and are a very important emergency resource for the community.



Friends of Chapel Wood

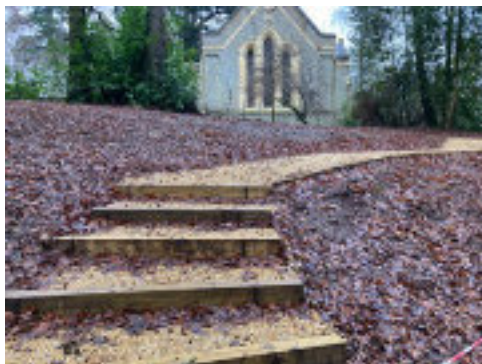


The Friends of Chapel Wood have enjoyed another good year, despite the best efforts of the weather, which from time to time has made life in the woodland really quite challenging. The quadrennial health and safety survey of the trees was completed successfully, with somewhat fewer observations than received in the past. The war of attrition against the ever-intrusive *Rhododendron ponticum* continued unabated, and the coppicing of the holly remains a regular feature. We even managed our annual bonfire, the first time for a few years.

However, perhaps, the most exciting event of the year has been the construction of a path, with steps at the bottom, in the

area adjacent to the west end of St Mark's church. The plan is to create an area for quiet contemplation and relaxation. Over the next few months, this area will be planted with native woodland understory plants and woodland flowers, such as blackthorn, wild rose and honeysuckle together with snow drops, foxgloves and primroses. There will be seating to better enjoy the views over the wood and the pond.

The Friends of Chapel Wood is a group of keen volunteers who look after Chapel Wood, the Ampfield community wood that surrounds St Mark's church. New recruits are always welcomed, so if you fancy the idea of joining some like-minded neighbours for a few hours once a month, just turn up in the St Mark's car park at 9:45am on the second Saturday of every month.



County Councillor: Alan Dowden

Hampshire County Council Tax will rise this year by almost 5%. Band "D" Council Tax rising to £1,533.24, an increase of £72.99.

The Council tax overall raising £826,354. The Adult Social Care Revenue budget will gain 2% additional funding from this Council Tax increase, although with ever increasing demands, it remains insufficient.

Hampshire's financial position is now very bleak indeed and the Council is currently embarking on a comprehensive review to attempt to find further potential service reductions, as current savings proposals will fall short of the level needed. I did forecast this outcome in my last two County Councillor's annual reports.

The County Council is holding a consultation on possible service reductions, to find another £132 million of savings through reductions to services. The closing of Waste Recycling Centres, further closures of Libraries, School Crossing Patrols, Passenger Transport reductions, Street Lighting and Highways Maintenance. This will also include Adult Social Care cost rises.

Our Highways have suffered neglect over many years and potholes have caused serious damage to vehicles. Along with flash flooding of our highways through inadequate drainage systems. At the Annual General Meeting of the Full Council, I asked the question of "*How, much compensation has the County*

Council paid out in the last twelve months to motorists using Hampshire's roads from damage to their vehicle from potholes?"

The response was £180,000. I also asked what percentage of those who claimed gained any compensation at all. It turns out that only 218 motorists have gained compensation out of 1,597 claims and 1,081 have been denied compensation and a further 298 are yet to be decided.

On a more positive note, I was successful in gaining funding in Ampfield for improvements for highway works on Baddesley Road, and the extension of the street lighting scheme. The funding was gained from the Ampfield Meadows Care Complex planning application that was demanded by myself after being lobbied to seek lighting of this area by a large number of residents.

I serve on the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee and was selected to be a member of a panel required to review seven Care Homes that do not currently meet the Care Quality Commission standards. After visiting the homes to satisfy the justification for such action. This was not an easy task, some now will be upgraded, and some closed to provide £173 million of Capital Investment to build new homes to meet those with far more complex needs that have increased, along with our aging population.

alan.dowden@hants.gov.uk

Borough Councillor: Sally Yalden

It's been a busy year for me as I settle into my new role as your local Borough Councillor. I am enjoying the position and feel privileged to be working on your behalf. Ampfield is fortunate to have an active parish council, and I am grateful to the hardworking local parish councillors who have warmly welcomed me.

I regularly provide updates to the Parish Council and also submit a monthly written report on my activities as your Borough Councillor. You can find more information on the Ampfield Parish Council's website (see back page).

Together with the support of TVBC's Community Engagement team and the Parish Council, we have been exploring ideas on what makes a thriving local community. We are discussing how the community functions, what aspects you value the most, and why. Additionally, we aim to identify any gaps that need attention and determine how to provide further support for the different areas in Ampfield.

Although the responsibility lies with Hampshire County Council and your County Councillor, I have been advocating for improved road safety at the junction of Hook Road, Hursley Road, and Hocombe Road. I plan to present this issue at a future full council meeting at County.

I would like to express my gratitude to Parish Cllr Graham Roads and his brilliant team of

volunteers at Chapel Wood (Friends of Chapel Wood). I have assisted them with tidying on a few occasions and I am impressed by their tireless efforts to maintain and enhance this woodland amenity. If you are interested, they are always looking for volunteers to join them. It's an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, the woodland and meet like-minded individuals.

Speaking of community involvement, I am an active community litter picker in Braishfield. In addition, I organise litter picks in the spring and autumn for the community. If you are interested in becoming a Community Litter Picker, please email environmentalservice@testvalley.gov.uk or contact Customer Services on 01264 368000. TVBC will provide you with bags and a litter picker.

I have also been involved in other campaigns this year, such as raising awareness of the proposed closure of the recycling centre on Bunny Lane in Romsey and exploring ways to save it through further investment. I have also been listening to residents' concerns regarding the draft Local Plan and the challenges faced by our local communities when developers start to push for large housing estates in rural areas.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you need advice or support. You can contact me at CllrSYalden@testvalley.gov.uk.

Ampfield Parish Annual Assembly

Meeting for all Ampfield electors.

Location: Ampfield Village Hall

Date: Monday 20th May 2024

Time: 7:30pm

The agenda will be published online and on noticeboards nearer to the time.

Your Representatives

Parish Councillors:

- Cllr Bryan Nanson (Chair)
- Cllr Chris Ling (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Martin Hatley
- Cllr Julian Jones
- Cllr Kate McCallum
- Cllr Jason Reeves
- Cllr Graham Roads
- Cllr Julie Trotter

The Parish Council is supported by the Clerk, Kate Orange.

Borough Councillor:

Cllr Sally Yalden
CllrSYalden@testvalley.gov.uk

County Councillor:

Cllr Alan Dowden
alan.dowden@hants.gov.uk

Member of Parliament:

Caroline Nokes MP
caroline.nokes.mp@parliament.uk

More Information

For more information about the Parish Council, please visit the website:

www.ampfield.org.uk

If you are interested to know more about the role of a Parish Councillor, please contact the Clerk (clerk@ampfield.org.uk).

Parishioners may also be interested in the independent Facebook group Ampfield Residents Forum:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/881821122219056>