

# FUNTLEY NEWS



*Farmland between  
Funtley & Knowle*

## Working for our local community .....

The Funtley Village Society consists of local residents and volunteers, who passionately care about where we live. It has been in existence for over 25 years, representing our village on issues that affect Funtley.

Recently we have been co-ordinating village responses to Reside Development's proposal to build on the land on Funtley Road, opposite the entrance to Roebuck Avenue.

Whilst we have been prominent in the campaign against Welborne since 2005, following the approval of the Welborne Plan in May 2015, we have been constructively working to help mitigate and minimise the impact of Welborne on Funtley. In July 2015, we had a productive meeting in Funtley with Executive Leader, Cllr Seán Woodward and others re Welborne. The landowners and developers of Welborne have also approached us to meet in September/October this year to listen to our specific proposals on Welborne. Should you have any points you would like raised at this meeting, please contact us directly.

## Council say No to local democracy and reject a Funtley Parish Council

On July 28th, Fareham Borough Councillors voted 19 (18 Conservatives including our ward councillor Pam Bryant and 1 UKIP) to 5 (4 Lib Dems and 1 Independent) against the creation of a Funtley Parish Council. Whilst the decision was a disappointment, it wasn't a surprise as the leadership of the Council had clearly, looking at this in hindsight, from the outset never wanted a parish council for Funtley, irrespective of what Funtley residents wanted.

The Funtley Village Society (FVS) started this campaign in January last year with an open mind. We have at all times presented our case in a constructive and positive manner. All of our literature has been carefully researched and approved by HALC (Hampshire Association of Local Councils) and NALC (National Association of Local Councils). Whilst we acknowledge that some residents did not want a parish council, as is their democratic right, in the main survey conducted by Fareham Borough Council (FBC) in the autumn last year, **74.5% of respondents supported the formation of a Funtley Parish Council**. This fact is not in doubt and despite the council's efforts to discredit it, this is the clear indisputable conclusion from the Funtley Community Governance Review.

The council's main argument was that there was diminishing support for a Parish Council. They justified this false argument by using the number of people who attended a CAT meeting in November last year and that there were 32 respondents (in favour of a parish council) to the so called 'second consultation'. We would like to address both these points.

1) Firstly at least 164 residents had already sent their responses to the Funtley Community Governance Review (CGR) survey by the date of the CAT meeting on the 24th November 2015 (*source: email from Roy Brown at FBC dated 19.11.15*). Many residents had already



## ***Working for our local community .....***

You may have noticed around the village recently, some additional facilities. This was a result of a meeting with the Council's Operations Manager arranged in January this year by the Society & the council. In a walkabout around the village, with Cllr John Bryant in attendance, we pointed out many of the additional facilities residents would like to have in the village, following a survey we conducted during our parish council campaign.

Some of these facilities have now been provided by the council and we acknowledge this - two new park benches in Funtley Meadow and Funtley Recreation Ground, hard standing at the entrance to Funtley Meadow. Some of the others promised have not yet materialised and we are following this up.

**Unfortunately with the council's decision to deny us a parish council, some of Funtley residents' priorities re additional facilities as expressed in our village wide survey, will not materialise for the foreseeable future. For example a street light on the railway bridge walking towards Roebuck Avenue/Stag Way, specific traffic calming measures for Funtley, adult exercise equipment in the Recreation Ground etc. These facilities would have been either fully or part funded by the parish council, with additional grant funding as well.**

made up their mind and expressed their viewpoint and as a result probably felt there was no need to attend, which is the feedback we received from many residents.

2) Secondly to say that the 32 residents who responded to the '*second consultation*' against the council's recommendations i.e. to maintain the status quo and against a parish council, was evidence of diminishing support is not credible. The reasons being that the '*second consultation*' was deliberately construed, in our view, to be very ambiguous and misleading.

3) Residents were sent a letter on May 23rd by Fareham Borough Council and asked to respond by 6th June, a period of only 14 days which included the half term holiday. It was the council's intention to rush through the vote on the parish council in June, as confirmed by Cllr Pam Bryant to our chairman. The Society objected to this and asked the consultation period be extended by two further weeks to June 20th, which the council agreed to and it then confirmed in writing that the final vote would now take place on the 28th July. There should have been at least a significantly longer consultation period similar to the original and main consultation (12 weeks). This would have given residents time to weigh up all the arguments and give their response the Council's conclusions of the Funtley CGR.

***Funtley Recreation Ground***



4) If you look at the request on page 2 of the letter sent by FBC on May 23rd 2016, it states '*please do let us know what you think of our recommendation by emailing us at [cgr.funtley@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:cgr.funtley@fareham.gov.uk), writing to us by Monday 6th June, or you can call me on 01329 824553*'. Nowhere does it state that if you fail to respond, FBC will assume that you no longer support a Parish Council. In the original survey sent out in September 2015 Funtley residents were giving clear options on the choices available. In the letter dated May 23rd 2016 to Funtley residents, there was no clear choice or option given. If the letter had included the question 'do you still support a parish council option for Funtley or do you prefer to maintain the status quo (cont'd p7)



Professor Colin Copus, Chairman of the Councillors Commission, acknowledged as one of the UK's preeminent experts on local government governance and an adviser to both the Government and Parliament, kindly gave his thoughts on the Funtley Parish Council campaign in the letter below. He clearly, from an independent expert's point of view, reiterates the overwhelming case for a Funtley Parish Council. We thank Professor Copus for taking the time to review the whole campaign and sharing his considered view with us. **Regrettably Fareham Borough Council, decided not only to ignore the majority view of Funtley residents but independent, expert opinion. Plus ça change!**



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22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016

#### Proposal for Funtley Parish Council

The proposal to form a parish council in Funtley is a timely one given the Government's continued policy of devolution from central to local government, as there is a need to ensure that any powers devolved from the centre are matched by further devolution from principal authorities to communities and neighbourhoods. There is no better way to continue the process of devolution than through a legitimised and authoritative body such as a parish council.

A parish and town council, as a statutory body, provides a degree of cohesion and certainty to communities and to community action that cannot be provided by voluntary organisations, alone. Indeed, a parish council, with its electoral mandate, or using its position of authority, can legitimately stimulate community action, bring communities together, provide a channel for communities into other elected and non-elected bodies and act as the centre of community activity. Non-statutory bodies and voluntary organisations, while having a valuable role to play in communities cannot act with the authority of a parish council.

A parish council provides the principal authority with a single and legitimised point of contact and a body, through which it can explore how to encourage, facilitate and sustain community engagement with both the parish and the borough council, to mutual benefit. Moreover, parish councils can actively stimulate greater public engagement with local democracy and local decision-making and provide extended opportunities for citizens to take up public office. Thus, a parish council for Funtley will fulfil a vital role in enhancing and improving local engagement and local democracy and should therefore be welcomed.

It is wholly wrong that a decision as to whether or not a parish council should be formed rests with another elected body, rather than with the body of electors themselves, through a local referendum. The formation of parish councils does need to be addressed, yet again, by the government and a change in the procedures introduced.

I would urge the borough council, in this case, to respond positively to the consultation, which shows strong support for a parish council for Funtley.





# Around the village.....



*Funtley's version of Monet's Garden at Giverny*



*The cake table at the St Francis Church Fête*



*Justin from Titchfield uses his tractor to cut the grass at St Francis Church*



*The new park bench at Funtley Meadow*



*The new hard standing path from Roebuck Avenue to Funtley Meadow*



*Funtley Village Society stall at the church fête*



# Around the village.....



*Adrian, Ed, Jason & young George (l to r) cutting the grass at St Francis Church*



*Job done!*



*Jo, the landlady, at the Miners Arms*



*The new park bench in the Funtley Recreation Ground*



*The view from Roebuck Avenue and Stag Way, looking up towards the horse paddocks and beyond*



## What's on in Funtley?

Did you know that Fareham Bridge Club meet every Wednesday at the Funtley Social Club. For further details contact Ian Fraser on 07814 305971 or email [ianfraser3@sky.com](mailto:ianfraser3@sky.com)

Tai Chi classes, the internal Chinese martial art, are held every Tuesday and Thursday at the Funtley Social Club from 7pm to 9pm. We'll post contact details on our website and Facebook page. Alternatively please go to the Social Club on the designated days.

(cont'd from p2) and there was the option to tick the appropriate box as in the original survey letter, then the council's assertion that there was declining support may have some validity. However this was not the case and to extrapolate that there was declining support based on a very ambiguous letter and phrasing is flawed at the very least. We have spoken to many residents since the vote and all of them have informed us, that as far as they are concerned they had already indicated their support or otherwise for a parish council in the original survey of September 2015 and that the letter of May 23<sup>rd</sup> was extremely misleading, deliberately so, if it was intended to show continuing support or otherwise for a Funtley Parish Council.

**5) Finally the council could have clearly shown whether there was a diminishing support for a Funtley Parish Council by calling a referendum. Councils up and down the country have done so, but Fareham Borough Council declined to do so. What are they afraid of? A democratic vote would have put the argument to bed.**

The council further justified their decision by claiming that community cohesion would be affected and that the proposed precept was not justified. We reject these arguments as clearly explained in all our previous literature and in a letter (copy enclosed) from local government expert, Professor Colin Copus.

Society members attended the full council meeting on July 28th.

Our thanks go to Chris Nixon of Inform Fareham, who recorded the whole proceedings on Inform Fareham's Youtube channel. **Please go to our website or our Facebook page for a direct link to view the proceedings with a summary, compiled by FVS committee member Jason Mudge.**

We leave residents and readers of this newsletter to make up their own mind on how the council conducted the vote and the arguments made. Our view was that this was clearly a pre-meditated and co-ordinated attack on our whole campaign. Some of the arguments made were clearly wrong, inaccurate and deliberately misleading. **It saddens us that the majority party, should sink to such depths to discredit our campaign. They only discredit themselves and local democracy and do a disservice to Funtley residents, who expressed majority support for a parish council.** They have also acted in clear contravention of the spirit and intention of the Localism Act 2011 and Conservative Party Policy. Prime Minister Theresa May, on her election as Tory Party Leader, said in a statement to party members that **".. we are going to give people more control over their lives. That's how we intend to build a better Britain."** Clearly Cllr Woodward and his colleagues ignored her message!

The Society were not happy with the conduct of the meeting and unsubstantiated allegations made by the Deputy Mayor and we have made an official complaint to the council. We have also been made aware by residents, that some complaints made to council re this whole process have either been lost or not been responded to. This is regrettable, as we would expect our local authority to act at all times in a proper and professional manner.

**HALC, NALC and Hampshire County Council (HCC) have expressed continued support for a Funtley Parish Council despite the decision of the council.**



## Hampshire & IOW Village of the Year 2016?

Once again the Society has entered Funtley into the Hampshire & IOW Village of the Year 2016, sponsored by Fuller's Brewery. Last year we won 3 awards. The finals presentation will take place at Enham Alamein (2 1/2 miles north of Andover & last year's joint winners) on 28th September.

## St Francis Church, Funtley

St Francis Church held a successful church fête on the 11th June, raising over £600. Members of the Society cleared all the brambles, cut the grass and have been maintaining the grounds prior to the fête and since.

## How to contact us or become a volunteer

Write to The Funtley Village Society, c/o 100 Funtley Road, Funtley, Fareham, PO17 5EE.

Email [info@funtlevillagesociety.org.uk](mailto:info@funtlevillagesociety.org.uk)

Visit our website:

[www.funtlevillagesociety.org.uk](http://www.funtlevillagesociety.org.uk)

Join us on Facebook via:

[www.facebook.com/funtlevillagesociety](http://www.facebook.com/funtlevillagesociety)

## Newsletter details

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Where do we go from here? Under the current legislation we will not be able to launch another parish council campaign for another two years, unless Fareham Borough Council allow it. We are taking stock, will reflect on our campaign, consult our members, Funtley residents, Hampshire Association of Local Councils, National Association of Local Councils, Hampshire County Council and others before making any decision.

## The future of local government in Hampshire

Are you aware that there is major consultation currently taking place about the future of local government in Hampshire? Hampshire County Council (HCC) has appointed independent researchers, Ipsos MORI to run the consultation. **Why this consultation?** Central Government is currently discussing devolving powers from Westminster to local government, as well as the whole funding of local government from central government. As a result, the current structure of local government in Hampshire could change. To take part in this consultation online go to [www3.hants.gov.uk/servinghampshire](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/servinghampshire) or request a paper copy by emailing [servinghampshire@ipsos-mori.com](mailto:servinghampshire@ipsos-mori.com) or call 0808 2024 970. The consultation ends at 11.59pm on 20th September 2016.

### How will this affect us in Funtley?

Currently we have a two tier system of local government, Hampshire County Council (HCC) & Fareham Borough Council (FBC). There are various options on the table briefly summed up:

- 1) **Keep the status quo;**
- 2) **Create either one or two super combined authorities;**
- 3) **Create a unitary authority with Hampshire County Council taking on all the local government responsibilities. Local district councils such as Fareham would be abolished. Parish and town councils would be encouraged to take on some of these responsibilities and if there is no parish or town council, HCC would support their creation where local communities want them.**

Cllr Woodward has publicly supported the creation of a Solent Combined Authority made up of Eastleigh, East Hants, Fareham, Gosport & Havant district councils and the councils of Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. This would create an extra tier of government with a directly elected mayor. However FBC have not consulted any Fareham residents and this is the preferred option of the local council leaders.

**This is why it is very important that local residents and community organisations make their views known, so that we the people can have an influence and say on how we want to be governed locally.**