

# PARISH COUNCIL SPECIAL

## FUNTLEY SAYS YES, COUNCIL SAYS NO!



### What the government say ...

*"The time has come to disperse power more widely in Britain today."*

*The Prime Minister, David Cameron and Nick Clegg, the Deputy Prime Minister, Coalition Agreement 2010.*

*(source: A plain English guide to the Localism Act.)*

The Coalition Government's 2013 consultation paper on setting up new parish councils said:

*"We believe that localism is best achieved when it is led by the local communities themselves. We see town and parish councils as playing a vital role in helping local people to make this happen; it is for this reason we want to support those neighbourhoods who want to set up a parish council."*

*(source: Parish & Town Councils Guide, House of Commons Library Nov 2014.)*

### A response to Fareham Borough Council's letter to Funtley residents of May 23rd

Funtley residents received a letter from Fareham Borough Council (FBC) last week that stated in their draft recommendation, despite 74.5% of Funtley residents who responded to their own survey, expressing their support of the formation of a Funtley Village Parish or Village Council, that there should be no change to the present local government structure.

There are of course residents who genuinely object to the idea of a parish council and we respect their views. However in a democracy, the guiding principle is that if the majority express support for something, then that is the view that prevails.

We at the Society are very disappointed at not just the council's draft recommendation, but also the misleading and heavily biased slant of the presentation on the council's website.

We have written to Fareham Borough Council in response to their letter, a copy of which is posted on our website. The council has NOT given adequate reasons why they have refused the request of 74.5% of Funtley residents, as they are required to do so by the Localism Act 2011. We, the residents, have until Monday 6th June to reply to FBC - a ridiculously short response time, considering that FBC have had months to compile their conclusions. We have asked for a 2 week extension of this deadline.

There are 9,500 parish councils in England, 262 in Hampshire, most of which work successfully with local boroughs to the benefit of their residents. Some of these are local to us and have provided us with first hand experience of their successes e.g. Wickham, Whiteley & Hambledon. The council made no mention of this in their presentation.

## What our neighbours say

...

*"I am very supportive of the role of Parish Councils and have always worked closely with those within my County Division in order to establish a close working partnership. Parish Councils give voice to local communities and opens up opportunities for local people to become more involved with, and to take part, in decision making processes. That is democracy in action!"*

*County Cllr Patricia Stallard, Member for Winchester Southern Parishes (Denmead, Boarhunt, Southwick, Wickham, Knowle and Whiteley).*

*"Empowered local people coming together to take more responsibility for their community through local Councils is a tried, tested, and trusted model of grassroots democracy. By representing their local community in this way they can provide services to meet local needs and work to improve quality of life and community well being."*

*Cllr Mike Evans, Chairman of Whiteley Town Council and Vice Chair Hampshire Association of Local Councils.*

We address the key points mentioned in their summary:

- Welborne, Local Planning Applications etc - as a statutory body, a Parish Council would have to be involved in discussions surrounding future developments. The Funtley Village Society does have a seat at the table presently - but not as a statutory body as FBC mention in their summary. Experience has told us over the past few years, that public engagement regarding developments has been woefully inadequate and little more than a tick box exercise. As a statutory body, a Funtley Parish Council (FPC) would have a right to be present in discussions (as a society we do not have that right). A Parish Council's neighbourhood plan would also afford more credibility and influence than a non statutory body's neighbourhood plan would.

- Traffic calming - temporary speed limiters were requested by the Funtley Village Society. This would not have occurred otherwise. We have not received any data from these monitors as we requested and there has been no further action taken to reduce speeding in the village. It is a responsibility that as a parish, we would be able to share with Hampshire County Council (HCC) and provide some of our own funds to help this work progress.



- Improve street lighting - again FBC commit the error of assuming that because this function would be delegated to the parish, it would not have any greater influence on its timely implementation. With parish funds we can help improve lighting in a more timely manner, than would be possible if we had to wait for Hampshire County Council to put measures in place.

- Funding improvements - again the council have misled Funtley residents by implying that the only



## ***What the Hampshire Association of Local Councils say ...***

*"The three major parties support more parishing, where communities want it. The Funtley Campaign has been grant funded by government, thus indicating support from government for this work.*

*The Hampshire Association of Local Councils policy is to support community campaigns to allow the public to understand the facts about the first tier of local government, and for them to decide then whether the challenges and obstacles outweigh the positive aspects of hyper-local representation. In this Campaign they have spoken strongly in favour of paying a precept for the advantages of a local council.*

*The Hampshire ALC is therefore pleased to note that the majority of electors in Funtley Village wish to have a parish council, and call upon Fareham Borough Council to recognise this democratic will and to work positively with the Campaign to achieve the aims of this community.*

*The ALC believes that a Funtley Council would offer villagers a stronger voice, an improved local environment, and a forum for better community conversations about the future for the village."*

*Cllr Steven Lugg, Chief Executive of Hampshire Association of Local Councils.*

funds available to us would be those collected via the precept. This is incorrect. As a parish council, Funtley would be able to apply for many more grants than we would be able to as a Society. In fact as a result of talking to other local parishes, it is apparent that this is where the bulk of parish funding comes from. To include the benches and the notice board as mentioned in FBC's letter is misleading, as they have not yet appeared and we have had no guarantee that they will. When fully discussing a precept with Funtley residents, by far the majority were more than happy to pay the extra for the community benefits it would bring. The council also failed to mention that our neighbours Whiteley Town Council and Wickham Parish Council received almost £1 million in grant funding over the last ten years, despite receiving this information last year. Local parish and town councils can also apply for grants up to £10,000 each and every year from the National Lottery, which is not available to local district councils such as Fareham.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was set by Fareham Borough Council at zero for the Welborne development, thus affording our local community no funding for local improvement. As a parish council we would be entitled to these monies for future developments near our village.

The Parliament and Constitution Centre states: (Statutory Note SN/PC/04827)

'On 10 January 2013, the Department for Communities and Local Government announced that in areas where there is a neighbourhood development plan in place, the Parish Council will be able to receive 25% of the revenues from the CIL arising from the development they have chosen to accept'.

- Manage the local area - the Funtley Village Society has never suggested that as a parish we would be responsible for completely upgrading the play area at Funtley to the sum that FBC suggest. These functions cannot be delegated by the principal authority (FBC), unless a Funtley Parish Council agrees to it. A Parish Council would, however, be able to provide additional equipment such as adult exercise machines and have a management plan in place for the upkeep of the area. This they would be able to manage alongside Fareham Borough Council. The mini makeover FBC refer to in 2015 was not communicated to the Funtley Village Society and we cannot see what has been completed as part of this work. Again, the nature of the total refurbishment



## Do you play cricket?

Knowle Village Cricket Club and Wickham Cricket Club are looking for new members.

Wickham play at Rookesbury Park, Wickham (several Funtley residents are playing members) and Knowle play at Botley. If you are interested in playing, please contact Peter Gwynn (Wickham) on 07919 574925, email:

[pistol4pete@hotmail.com](mailto:pistol4pete@hotmail.com) or Sam Rogan (Knowle) email: [knowlevillagecricket@gmail.com](mailto:knowlevillagecricket@gmail.com).

## St Francis Church Funtley, Saturday 11th June 12 noon - 4.00pm

St Francis Church will be hosting a fête. Cream teas, raffles, activities for children etc will held. All are welcome to attend.

## 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)

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## Newsletter details

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although promised (not yet delivered), has not been communicated with the Funtley Village Society or residents and therefore should not have been put into the council's presentation as a reason why the Parish Council should not be formed.

- Bringing the community closer together - FBC imply that the Funtley Village Society has the same ability to do this as a Parish Council would. We disagree. A Parish Council would have the funds, through grants, to hold local fêtes and many more events than we are able to do at present. As volunteers, the Funtley Village Society presently have little time to organise such events ourselves - on the other hand a Parish Council clerk would be employed to do much of this work regarding fund applications and communications.

It is disingenuous for Fareham Borough Council to focus on comments in its presentation from the 25.5% of residents who argued against a Parish Council, while ignoring the opinions of the majority 74.5%. Of course, in any consultation there will be people who dissent from the majority view. But this is how democracy works. You may remember that those who fought against the Welborne development were in the minority (according to FBC's survey) but were not given the same influence as FBC are affording those in the village who oppose a Parish Council. Where would we be if FBC had given those who opposed Welborne the same privilege?

Finally up and down the country, local communities have successfully set up parish & town councils despite the opposition of their local councils. Andover, here in Hampshire, were bitterly opposed by Test Valley District Council, but after two referendums they relented. Queens Park in London were opposed at every stage by Westminster City Council. Again a local referendum was won and a new parish council set up, the first in London. Sutton Coldfield campaigners had opposition from their own MP (Cons), 12 out of 13 of their Birmingham City Councillors (Cons) and Birmingham City Council (Lab). However Sutton Coldfield residents thought otherwise and voted so in a referendum for a new town council. In Birmingham both the ruling Labour group & the Conservative opposition NOW support parishing where local communities support it and that's the key.

**Funtley residents support the principle of setting up a new parish council. Fareham Borough Council should listen and act now or let us have our say in a binding referendum.**