

ANNUAL REPORT FOR HOE & WORTHING CIVIL PARISH MEETING Financial Year 2023 to 2024

During the year, the following local groups, all volunteers has served us well and later this evening you shall receive their individual reports. At this point, I would like to express our sincere thanks for all their advice, help and support which is greatly appreciated. My personal congratulations to you all for your tremendous work over the past twelve month or so, and my best wishes for a successful forthcoming year.

Administration & Financial Services – Parish Clerk & Treasurer

Since the previous Parish Treasurer stepping down officially in May 2023 and with no success to appoint a Minute Taker, both functions voluntary for which we have been extremely grateful, with agreement from this Parish and BDC – General Purposes Committee, Grizelda Hubbard has been in post sub-contractually to provide both functions. Since 2001, Grizelda became a qualified Parish Clerk / Responsible Finance Officer and achieved the CiLCA qualification in 2009 and the General Power of Competence module to compliment the CiLCA. At the time of appointing to Hoe & Worthing Parish, Grizelda also provides a similar service to four Parish Councils.

The Parish initially banked with HSBC. Given the above change, review of signatories and to no longer incur bank charges, effective November 2023, the Parish moved its finances Lloyds Bank.

Reports from Local Groups – these will be uploaded onto the Parish website

- a) Highways – Carl Watling Hoe Village & Mick Dunn, Worthing Village
- b) Worthing Flood update, Graham Lewis
- c) Hoe Common – Dick Malt
- d) St Andrew’s Church & Village Hall – James Keith, Churchwarden Hoe PCC
- e) St Margaret’s Church – Miranda Smith & Celia Daniel, Churchwardens Worthing PCC

PLANNING – The Planning Committee met on 4 separate occasions, the last being 4th May 2024. So summarise, this parish has dealt with 8 Planning applications, some with variation orders and refusals, 3 Tree Preservation Orders granted but excluding the current Breckland Local Plan. Of these applications, decisions were: 5 granted, 1 withdrawn, 2 pending subject to Nutrient Neutrality Worthing Barn & Home Farm. Parishioners may search and view all detailed documents on the Breckland Planning portal under this Parish Name.

POLICIES – In addition to the Parish Planning Policy and Procedure which is currently being reviewed, other policy reviews will be undertaken in the coming year, for example: Data protection and sharing of information.

PARISH MEETINGS – 2022/2023 the parish held 7 meetings, of which 2 were financial and 1 which remains unpublished. However, following the Parish wishes, these meetings have been reduced to 2 per annum. The Meetings are conducted on rotation, using the Village Hall - Hoe and also, St Margaret’s Church – Worthing as venues. This has enabled an increase in attendance and participation.

The Parish agreed to try out an informal group discussion planned in February this year to supplement the formal Parish Meetings in the hope it would generate more interest and allow for developmental work, regrettably it gave a no show.

In addition to using parish noticeboards and website, it is encouraging that across the parish electorate, communication continues to improve ensuring we reach all households by distributing agenda’s, minutes of meetings and any related documents.

Overall, having a 2nd venue for parish meetings coupled with email contact details and each household receiving up to date information, this has developed into a more inclusive informed parish on all matters.

Currently, The Parish Meeting has some “freedom” when reviewing and making decisions on most parish matters. However, the Local Government Act 1972, various sections of the act for e.g. Part 111 item 18.1 electoral votes – one vote only, decisions are reached with a show of hands in the room. A majority on decisions is required.

From time to time, individual parishioners raise their concerns around service delivery and the lack of providing equitable opportunities which in the past prompted examining how a Local Governance Review could help. Voting on whether to remain as a Parish Meeting or become a Parish Council could possibly address this. However, the Parish determined not to change its current status. As we go forward, this will be kept under review.

And finally, please be assured, if you do not receive the information you are seeking, further advice and clarification may be obtained from the National Authority for Local Councils and/or Breckland District Council. Our aim is to find the right answer and reach for the most equitable and reasonable solution to all queries and concerns.

Celia Daniel – Chairman / Date: 30th May 2024