



Background Information

What are Parish Councils?

Parish Councils are the first tier of Government operating close to the population they serve. They sit below district/borough and county councils.

Parish Councillors are elected and can help on local issues, such as providing:

- allotments
- bus shelters
- community centres
- play areas and play equipment
- grants to help local organisations
- consultation on planning.

Parish councils have been granted powers by Parliament including the important authority to raise money through taxation (the precept) and a range of powers to spend public money. They can play a vital part in representing the interests of the communities they serve and improving the quality of life and the local environment. Furthermore, they influence other decision makers and can, in many cases, deliver services to meet local needs. In other words, they can make a difference.

Parish Councils appoint officers - clerk, financial and assistants – to advise them on their statutory responsibilities and to carry out the decisions of the Council.

Grayshott Parish Council

Grayshott Parish Council was established in 1902 and looks after the interests of the businesses and population (approx 2,800) of Grayshott. It sits beneath East Hampshire District Council and Hampshire County Council. The Council has places for 10 councillors with elections in May of this year. Our budget for 2024/25 is £140k. We work in a new purpose built office.

The Parish Council's mission or purpose is:

To enhance the quality of life for the community of Grayshott, maintain the village identity and encourage a community spirit.

Each year we set out a plan of how we are going to deliver and improve services and forward our mission. Attachment 1 contains the Chairman's report for 2022/23 that explains our activities and successes during the past year. Grayshott Parish Council came out on top of all parish and town councils to win the 2022 'Best Council' award. The Council was also runner up in the 'Best Website' category.

In 2023/24 our priorities are:

- To ensure residents can live safe, healthy, and independent lives
- To support a strong and sustainable economic centre
- To protect Grayshott's heritage, character, and facilities

- To build awareness of GPC (its role, responsibilities and relevance to individuals) and to encourage local community engagement
- To use best practice in community governance, community leadership and performance management.

The Parish Council own and operate the following open spaces and facilities:

- The Square
- Lyndon Green, the War Memorial and garden
- 3 playgrounds
- Village Green
- Eccott Green
- Stoney Bottom Allotments
- Recreation Ground, sports pavilion and storage garages
- Applegarth Meadow
- skate park
- 3 tennis courts (2 courts are for the use of the tennis club, 1 court is for public use)
- Beech Allotments and the associated grazing land.

Grayshott

Grayshott is a bustling village situated in East Hampshire on the border with Surrey and not far from West Sussex. It has amassed a good collection of Village awards and has excellent road and rail links. It's on the A3 providing routes to London and Portsmouth and Haslemere Station is 4 miles away where you can reach London Waterloo in as little as 52 minutes.

The Village boasts a good range of shops as well as the Village pub and a few cafés and restaurants. It is home to the Grayshott Pottery and Applegarth Farm and is surrounded by beautiful countryside.

Please look at www.grayshott-pc.gov.uk

GRAYSHOTT PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT – CLLR RICHARD LYON – APRIL 2023

This annual report covers the work of your Parish Council in the fourth and final year of the four year term of the Council. We entered the Council year with 7 Councillors and ended the year with a full complement of 10 councillors. Being the end of the Council term, all councillors depart their positions at the beginning of May and 5 existing Councillors plus 3 new Councillors have been elected to represent you in an uncontested election. 2 Council vacancies remain.

I would like to thank the departing Councillors; Jas Dhaliwal, Tom Hanrahan, Graham Harvey-Browne and Chris Jones for volunteering their time for the benefit of residents and for their contribution of ideas and opinions which have added significantly to the quality of the Council decision making. Cllr Chris Jones, in particular, has devoted 21 years to his role as a Parish Councillor. I will also be leaving the Council having spent the last 4 years as your Chairman. It has been a privilege to hold the position and I look forward to supporting the new Council as a volunteer helping in the village as and when required.

I am delighted to advise that the newly elected Parish Councillors are: Councillors Julie Beeston, Richard DuPont, Steve Georgii, Nigel Harrison, Dennis Homer, Rachel McCartney, Dami Sogbesan and Sean Weir.

I wish the new Council well and I know they are determined to work together for the benefit of all residents and to continue to make Grayshott the green and pleasant place it is to live.

The Council employs two part time staff – our Clerk and Finance Officer, Katie Weir and an Assistant Clerk. We are fortunate in Grayshott in having such able and dedicated staff and, on behalf of my colleagues, my thanks go to our officers for their guidance to Councillors and their help in ensuring the Council remained compliant from a statutory and financial perspective and their excellent support in progressing a variety of initiatives in the village. Our Assistant Clerk, Jo Littletree, has departed her role in the last few days to spend more time on her other interests. I thank Jo for her valuable support to the Council.

The Council has faced challenges during its four year term, not least maintaining day to day working and remote Council meetings during Covid. Nevertheless, initiatives have been progressed and delivered with a conscious focus in the last year on those in our community who are young or of advancing age. Having resumed some sort of normality of life post-Covid it is apparent that the community spirit present in Grayshott prior to and, especially, during the pandemic is still present today. Community spirit takes many forms. It may be joining in with a community activity, volunteering to organise and help at village events or checking in on a neighbour who may live alone or require that extra bit of help from time to time, but 'doesn't like to ask'. Kindness and selflessness are a feature of our village community – long may that last!

The Council has organised a number of events during the year aimed at bringing the community together. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations throughout the village were joyful and fun followed all too soon in September by the passing of the late Queen Elizabeth and the moment of reflection in The Square where Grayshott residents joined with communities around the country in pausing to reflect on the life and work of our late Queen. Christmas is a time for celebration and the official switch on of our village lights with accompanying fairground rides for our youngsters and mulled wine and mince pies for those a little too old for the fairground couldn't help but uplift spirits. So many of our residents and visitors enjoy the views of the centre of the village with the lights and illuminated church beyond in the darker days of winter. This event was closely following by the Christmas Market and Late Night Shopping evening. Residents will be pleased to know that the Council intends to continue its programme of maintaining and renewing Christmas lights in the village. We now look forward to the Coronation celebrations with music, food and children's games from 12pm-9pm, Sunday 7 May on the greens in the centre of the village. Mark in your diary and come along.

The Council's mission is **'to enhance the quality of life for the community of Grayshott, maintain the village identity and encourage a community spirit'**.

Each year an Action Plan is developed which sets out the key objectives, projects and activities which the Council commits to deliver in the subsequent 12 months in support of our mission. I want to share with you our progress in delivering our key aims over the last year.

1. To ensure residents can live safe, healthy and independent lives.

Grayshott – a dementia friendly community

A key initiative for the Council in the last year has been to consider those of our residents who may suffer from, or care for someone living with, dementia and for Grayshott Council to take actions so that the village can be viewed as a dementia friendly community.

It is very much a longer term objective to increase understanding and awareness across all sections of the community of the challenges presented by dementia and we are grateful to the support offered to us by the Hunter Centre, Haslemere and the management team at Moorhouse Nursing Home in Hindhead. With the generous support of Grayshott Pottery, the Council launched a dementia drop in café on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month at the Kiln Café. This informal get together for those suffering from dementia, their family and carers or anyone wishing to join in has proven to be welcomed, enjoyed and an opportunity to have a get together in an everyday café environment. Please spread the word and come along for a coffee, a sweet treat and a friendly chat about anything and everything.

Community Transport

The Council believes that the ability of our residents to access some form of public transport is important at different stages of life for both practical needs and for well-being - to avoid a sense of isolation and social exclusion. We undertook two consultations with all households to understand transport needs and to gauge the appetite for a door to door community transport scheme. Residents told us a service would be very well used.

The Council, with financial support from our County Councillor, introduced a 6 month pilot service in conjunction with Haslemere Hoppa. The service operated from May to October last year. Whilst the number of residents registering to use the service was encouraging, actual usage of the bus was minimal and way below the levels indicated in our survey. The Council discontinued the service at the end of October 2022 due to lack of use. Various alternatives for a scheduled Hoppa service complementing Stagecoach services were subsequently considered but the financial commitment on Council funds without any guarantee of residents using the services suggested that our residents' funds could be put to more effective use. Whilst this chapter of the book has closed, the Council remains open minded about introducing future services if residents will use the services.

Grayshott – a bright and cheerful place to live

As mentioned earlier in this report, one unifying aspect of our village is the Christmas lights. Your Council has a rolling programme of maintaining and replacing Christmas lights each year. Using professional contractors, the lights have an average life of 4-5 years and are checked and replaced, if necessary, each year. Our public enemy no 1 are Grayshott (grey?shott) squirrels who delight on nibbling the light strings. These are rather expensive snacks but the council puts aside several thousand pounds each year to create a fund for ongoing maintenance and replacement. The Council is environmentally aware but we believe the cost of supplying power to the LED Christmas lights is far outweighed by the benefits of enjoyment and well-being they give to our residents and visitors to the village.

Special thanks to our volunteer gardeners who keep the flower beds at our car parks, millennium sculpture, memorial garden and Square colourful, neat and tidy. Hidden Gardens of Grayshott continue to provide a grant to the Parish Council to help facilitate the wonderful hanging basket display in our village centre. We all look forward to the next

fantastic Hidden Gardens weekend extravaganza at the end of May 2023. A thank you also to our residents, scouts and the RRTglobal rapid relief team who volunteer to help keep our village tidy by attending our periodic Sunday morning litter picking events in such numbers. Your collective efforts are very much appreciated.

Finally, thank you to all the other Grayshott community groups and societies, too many to mention individually, providing cultural, social, pastoral, sporting or simply feel good activities all of which contribute to making Grayshott a safe, healthy and friendly place to live.

Traffic in the village

Traffic volumes, speed and parking bays continue to generate comment amongst residents and to the Parish Council. The Council continues to analyse Speed Limit Reminder (SLR) data to assess the year on year trends in traffic speeds. We are always pleased to show residents the detailed data of traffic flows and speeds and publish summary data from time to time.

We understand some residents have concerns about the traffic calming measures in the village (pinch points, speed bumps) introduced some years ago alongside the 20mph speed zone. Our consultation with residents about the impact of the pinch point near the village hall resulted in 65 responses with very many well considered comments. However, the outcome was inconclusive with many residents as happy with the current speed calming measures as those advocating changes to varying degrees. The County Traffic Safety Officer believes the traffic calming measures have been successful in achieving their purpose of reducing average speeds through the village. I suggest that it is not the traffic calming measures themselves but driver behaviour which is the fundamental issue. How do we all react in certain traffic situations? The HCC traffic safety officer is preparing designs for new village entry gates/road markings at our request in response to the concerns of some residents. We await the design and costings. We anticipate that any new works by HCC will be chargeable directly to Grayshott residents so we need to ensure that changes are effective and are likely to result in improved driver behaviour.

The Council is naturally concerned when there are any Road Traffic Accidents but particularly those resulting in personal injury. The Hampshire County Council Traffic safety team are made aware of the outcome of police investigations into the cause of every personal injury accident. The Council have heard reports from residents that accidents are caused by pinch points or traffic calming measures but residents may be assured that it is the actual police evidence that is considered in assessing the cause of an accident in the village.

2. To protect Grayshott's heritage, character and facilities.

The Council is keen to ensure that Grayshott is a vibrant place to live with well-maintained and additional facilities to satisfy the needs of all sections of our community yet respecting the character and heritage of the village in which we live.

The Grayshott Village Design Statement assists residents, planners, architects and builders to ensure that changes to buildings in and adjacent to the village centre respect the traditional characteristics of our buildings.

The Council produced and delivered a communication to all business and homes in the Grayshott Conservation Area highlighting the Village Design Statement and providing pointers to the East Hampshire District Council website which provides essential guidance on planning considerations for those residents or businesses within our Conservation Area. If in doubt about what you can or cannot do in a Conservation Area (or immediately adjacent to a Conservation Area) then refer to the Planning Team at East Hampshire District Council.

The Council monitors development related payments due to the Parish Council such as Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and ensures those funds are used on eligible projects

for the benefit of residents. £28740 was awarded in the year for 3 separate projects to support the refurbishment of the skate park (£20000), support the Grayshott Cricket Club's recreation field irrigation project (£7500), and to provide new deer fencing at Beech Allotments (£1240).

The Sports Pavilion is a resource which has potential for wider use by the community. Whilst mainly for the use of our sports clubs, of course, we are encouraged to see the excellent initiative to introduce the Grayshott Community library in the Pavilion. The Council were delighted to support the Sports Field Committee in the upgrade of the Pavilion lounge with redecoration and the purchase of new carpets, furniture and more effective, energy efficient heating. For those residents that have not visited the pavilion lounge or parish council office recently, do drop in and look at the facilities.

To enhance and protect the natural environment and to encourage its enjoyment

Preserving and enhancing the green spaces of Grayshott is of great importance. The beauty of the area in which we live is a particular joy, not only for amenity but for mental well-being.

The Parish Council now owns the land known as Applegarth Meadow (in front of the houses at Applegarth). In 2023 the council will be engaging with residents of Applegarth to look at ways to encourage use of the site as a destination, creation of more paths (formal or informal), wildlife initiatives, trails etc. Suggestions are welcomed.

The Council is delighted that a number of residents have joined together to form the Grayshott Community Orchard Project (GCOP), a formally constituted organisation created to take the tenancy of the newly created Community Allotment immediately to the north of the existing Beech Allotments. Look out for their exciting plans for the planting of fruit trees, edible hedge, berries and pollinators over the coming year. This is a community resource and volunteers/new members of GCOP are welcomed. Not only will this provide an attractive community orchard for the village but it will be a place for education, quietness and mental well-being for our residents.

Congratulations to Grayshott's Green Spaces Group for their work to enhance Eccott Green with new tree planting.

For residents who may be unfamiliar with the Village Boundary walks, these are a fantastic series of walks, each around 3.5 miles/90 mins or so, focused on one part of the village boundary. 3 guided walks packed full of maps and interesting historical information are available to date from the Parish Office or Grayshott Heritage. The quality of information and presentation is superb. Congratulations to John Childs and all involved in their development and publication

3. Parish Council Engagement with the Community.

A Parish Council is the most local level of government. In Grayshott we are non-political and your councillors are volunteers who wish to represent the broadest possible views of residents and businesses. We have the common aim of trying to improve the quality of life for our residents and opportunities for our businesses.

We not only have a statutory duty, but a desire, to be transparent in everything we do. We know that the work of the Parish Council is not of interest to 'all of the people, all of the time'. We do, though, have an objective of being more visible so residents have an awareness of what we do, how we spend the tax you pay and how we may engage with each other. We always welcome your thoughts and ideas. Please also let us know if you would like to volunteer to help us with village activities and projects from time to time.

- We encourage all of our residents to check the Grayshott Parish Council website www.grayshott-pc.co.uk regularly for news of events in the village and as a single point of contact to report problems with 20 different services (eg flooding, pot holes, missing bin etc). Our website will automatically connect you with the appropriate authority.

- We are issuing a weekly 'News' bulletin to keep residents updated on matters of local interest.
Go to www.grayshott-pc.gov.uk and scroll to the foot of the first page to sign up to 'news updates'. Over 200 households now receive our Friday newsletter – we would like it to be more.
- Look out for Parish Council posts on selective social media channels e.g. Nextdoor and our valued local publication, Grayshott Today.

Finance

Financial controls, processes, tax and risk management are strong. I am pleased to advise that our annual audit for 2021/22 and our interim audit for 2022/23 were completed with no recommendations for change to existing practices. A separate summary financial report for 2022/23 is available for residents on request from the Parish Office and is posted on our website.

Planning

The Parish Council Planning Committee meets monthly in public. It acts as a statutory consultee of East Hampshire District Council and aims to provide a reasoned discussion and recommendation on planning applications within, and impacting, Grayshott. The Committee considered 41 applications typically from minor tree works and residential extensions. Additionally the Committee reviews applications from Waverley Borough Council where plans may impact on the residents or services of Grayshott.

Awards

In its final year of the current Council term, Grayshott councillors were delighted to be recognised for their work on behalf of residents with the following awards:

- **Winner - Best Town and Parish Council in Hampshire and Isle of Wight 2022 (awarded by Hampshire Association of Local Councils)**
- **Runner Up – Best Town and Parish Council website in Hampshire and Isle of Wight 2022 (awarded by Hampshire Association of Local Councils)**
- **Foundation Award – (awarded by National Association of Local Councils) in recognition of governance and standards in delivering effective services to the residents of Grayshott.**

In conclusion, I would like to thank Debbie Curnow-Ford - Grayshott's County Councillor, and Tom Hanrahan who is our EHDC District Councillor (as well as a member of Grayshott Parish Council). Both Debbie and Tom have the best interests of Grayshott at heart and represent the village with endeavour and passion. It is much appreciated as are the grants which both provide to worthy causes in our village.

Your Parish Councillors look forward to meeting as many residents as possible at the Village Assembly in the Village Hall from 6.30pm on Friday 28 April.

Richard Lyon
Chairman
Grayshott Parish Council
April 2023.