

2022 ANNUAL REPORT TO RESIDENTS

Free at last

Letter from Carola Brown, chairman of the parish council

After two years of on-and-off lockdowns, cancellations and other restrictions, we are finally free – and hope to stay so! For those of us who weren't partying their way through the pandemic, it's great to be planning a big joint weekend with Rogate for the 70th anniversary of the queen's coronation, and the first Trotton fete for three years, as well as a variety of First Fridays (one at Trotton vineyard), our bonfire and more!

We didn't do a parish annual report for the last two years, as home delivery would have been impossible and we only have emails for about a third of our residents; if you're one of the other 2/3, do please use the sign-on page on our website—we won't abuse it (see privacy box bottom right).

I hope you'll find this report a useful update on what the parish council has been (and will be) doing, but you'll see that we've also involved others (see pages 3 & 4) to help us provide a wider service than the 7 parish councillors could do on their own. I'd like to thank those people on your behalf and suggest that you consider whether you have skills, interests or contacts that could help us further "take back control"!

You'll see below that our income shot up last year, but that the one-off grant will be going straight back out this year, so we've still decided we have to raise the amount we charge you all (by £7 a year!) - we explain on page 2. You'll also see there that we've had a totally unexpected windfall of nearly £5k from the CIL, so we'll be seeking your ideas about how to use it.

On a less positive note, my colleagues and — and a number of residents of our own and neighbouring parishes— are concerned that we are seeing increasing restrictions on access to local paths and land that have traditionally been available to the whole community. We like to think our parish has an unusually friendly community but this is causing growing friction and pressure for us to apply to restore these as legal public rights of way. That would be a lot of work and could hurt some property prices. Wouldn't it be better if we could all be a bit more community minded?

I wish everyone a great year as we emerge from a difficult time.

Carola Brown, chairman

Coming back to life

The "What's on" page of our website is finally looking a bit less empty!

Cancelled: Unlike Boris, we'd cancelled our "First Friday" suppers and fetes until last June but we're building the calendar back up. Do keep an eye on the "What's on?" page of our website as we add them but here are three for your diary right now . . .

Trotton-Rogate Jubilee events: 4-5 June

4th June: Family fun afternoon & evening— children and adult games, pop up and food from 2-10pm, big-screen party at the palace. More to come.

5th June: 'Street party' and community big lunch (noon onwards), informal fun & games, steel band, and more.

First Friday @ Trotton Vineyard: 2 Sept



bring our own snacks!

here the Butlers have kindly offered a talk, a tour and free bubbly if we

Trotton village fete & duck race - 10th Sept

It's back! Third time lucky! We're planning to have the usual (highly popular) tea tent, games, book, plant, vintage and bric-a-brac stalls, vintage car and the famous duck race, but we'll welcome new ideas to make this a big come-back.



What are your ideas for this, and other, events?

MARK YOUR DIARY

See the "What's on" page of our website for more details

11 May 7pm Charity dinner in favour of St George's church @ Southdowns Manor

21 May 6pm: Rogate Choral Society concert @ St George's, Trotton

4-5 June: Platinum jubilee — joint Rogate / Trotton events— see box below

2 September @ 6pm First Friday at Trotton vineyard

10 September @ 2pm TROTTON VILLAGE FETE AND DUCK RACE Trotton Place

5 November @ 6pm Trotton bonfire & fireworks

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DO YOU VALUE YOUR PRIVACY? - WE DO!

On our website community menu, you'll see a "sign-on" form that allows you to add your name to our lists—to keep you informed about local issues. We have about a third of the households signed up so far, but we're not allowed to keep your email or phone details unless you opt in. If you do, please be assured that the lists are stored securely in an ICO—registered database and **we will never share your details with anyone else** without your express permission.



For more details of these - and other—events, watch the "What's on?" page of our website

WHO PAYS?

Our income last year was a one-off, as we had a grant of £31,155—see adjacent article.

Our normal income is mainly the precept: we have to work out a budget for the year ahead and tell our local district council (Chichester) how much we need. They divide this by the number of residents in our parish (currently around 270) and charge the appropriate amount as part of the rates they collect—the precept.

We had postponed our decision, reported 2 years ago, to increase the precept for the first time since 2015, but have done so for this year—see article on this page.

With the £3,000 precept and a £606 VAT refund, our total income was nearly £35k.

WHAT DID WE SPEND IT ON?

Our expenditure last year was:

Day to day costs

* Insurance	£352
* Dues & subscriptions	£35
* Office supplies	£34
* Online services ¹	£728
* Payroll ²	£0
* Churchyard maintenance ³	£950
* Other maintenance ⁴	£293
* Donations / amenity ⁵	£1,053
* TOTAL SPENDING	£3,446

¹ To comply with public authority transparency rules and GDPR, we need fairly expensive websites and secure email / database facilities.

² As our clerk is voluntary, we don't pay him but we donate £800 to cover grass cutting at Trotton church in lieu, so we could pay a clerk if necessary.

³ As Chithurst graveyard is closed to burials, it is legally the responsibility of the parish council. Its maintenance would normally cost us £350 and we then pay for grass-cutting at Trotton churchyard (see 2 above). Due to lockdowns, both cost less last year.

⁴ Replacement defibrillator batteries

⁵ Contributions to Midhurst Yellow Bus and START Community Trust, heaters for the new meeting room in the church and a second-hand lawnmower for the wildflower meadow

As a result, we had a surplus for the year of just £160 excluding the big grant (which will go straight back out this year), leaving us comfortable "real" reserves of £4,526.

Record income—but it's an illusion!

As the column to the left shows, the parish council's income for the year was a record, at £34,762! But £31,155 of that was a grant from WSCC's Operation Watershed funds. We first applied to the fund in 2018, to find out why the road just West of Trotton bridge flooded badly whenever it rained. The fund paid almost £7,000 in 2019 for a CCTV survey of the drain pipes on that stretch of the A272, which reported multiple holes, cracks and other damage (see pic right—one of many). So we applied for a grant for repairs, and this was finally approved and last year.



Work will start soon covering the drains from the bridge up to Old Rectory Lane.



Hopefully it will cure the problem but it's bad news in two ways: First: at least one lane of the A272 will be closed for a while, if not both (with diversions)! Second: all that money will go back out in the current year—ie a different financial year, so it will distort our accounts for 3 years!

To add extra complications next time, but offering interesting opportunities, we have also just received £4,751 from the South Down National Park from Community Infrastructure Levy charges on the development of Wickwood in Chithurst Lane. This has to be spent on "infrastructure, including transport, flood defences, schools, and health and social care facilities" (see www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy) but the parish council has wide discretion on this and will be seeking residents' views.

We're putting up your council tax ☹

As we explain (see left) our main annual income comes from the precept we set which is claimed as part of your council tax. We've kept the precept the same since 2016 at £3,000, but we try to keep reserves of at least one year's precept, and our reserves had been dwindling by about £1,000 p.a. in recent years. We therefore decided to raise it by that amount this year, which should enable us to hold it level for some years again. At £4,000 it will be about £26 per household (up £7 a year) - not much over 1/3 of the national average.



My account

My Council Tax

Helping others

Midhurst Community Bus

To support its regular Friday route from Mill Lane, Dumpford to Midhurst we have been donating £250 a year. We might need to consider giving a bit more this year, as bus services have been restored but passenger numbers are still well down.

START Community Trust

Our parish council was one of the three that set up START. It won set-up funding from CDC and the National Community Land Trust Network, but has since needed help with its (moderate) running costs, and all 3 parishes agreed to pay amounts in proportion to their size—we pay £60.

Our historic churches

Like many village churches, our two are both very expensive to maintain and are expected to contribute not only to their own parish costs (including the rector) but also to diocese and C of E funds. If we want to keep these wonderful landmarks, we

need to do what we can to help support them—paying for the churchyards to be kept up, our amenity programme to improve the community facilities at St George's (eg buying meeting room heaters last year), organising the Trotton fete, etc.

Charity dinner makes up for pandemic

Mainly on the initiative of Amanda Townsend, churchwarden at Trotton, and the kind support of the Southdowns Manor, a charity dinner and auction on 11th May is expected to more than make up for the loss of income from two lost Trotton fetes.

Concert should help too

A concert by Rogate Choral Society on 21st May in St George's will also help this year.

It's not enough though . . .

We still need more good ideas for events that can be held in the churches to raise funds—and maybe for other facilities in the church that would offer wider benefits to our community.

REPRESENTING YOUR VIEWS

We may be a small community but we still want to make our views known . .

Whether it's maintaining rights of way or responding to new policies and strategies from the SDNPA, WSCC, etc, the complaints and consultation papers pour in and it's our job to see if we can put things right and represent our communities views to others who affect our lives.

Just a sample of the complaints / issues we dealt with last year:

- Increasing restrictions of access to paths and open land
- Overhanging hedges
- Motorbike noise (again!)
- Litter (particularly around Trotton bridge)
- Flooded paths
- Unauthorised property development
- Foul water seepage (Terwick Lane)

• Raw sewage dumping in the river Rother
We are not the planning authority for the area but the South Downs National Park Authority planners are legally required to take our views into account.

The planning committee dealt with 9 applications last year, from simple tree felling / trimming, through extensions and alterations.

Two of these applications are still in progress but, of the others, the planning authority eventually made the decision we recommended in all but one. The only exception was an application for a new garage which has so far been refused on technical grounds.



ERA has had a busy year including some very well received talks on topics such as regenerative farming, ethical finance, and plastics. We have worked with Trotton parish council on the wildflower meadow, with Milland PC on their Green Fare (some 600 visitors) and with Rogate PC to develop another wildflower meadow on a large verge of the A272, and on a wildflower area on Rogate Rec. A new initiative for ERA is the setting up of a Freshwater Watch Group which should begin to monitor the health of the River Rother from June onwards.

Finally we have a new website:

www.ecorotheraction.org



START has had another frustrating year of trying to find suitable sites for affordable housing—but has at least had encouragement from the head of planning at the SDNPA, who now seems to accept that more flexibility might be necessary to give land-owners in this area a fair return without making sites too expensive. If you know of any potential sites, do contact our “man” on the board—vice-chair Charlotte Homan. START spent a lot of time on efforts to save the White Horse in Rogate but has still not managed to meet the owners. It also tried to save the East Lodge protected homes being given away but the process was too far advanced. Neil Ryder has handed over as chairman to Lucy Petrie of Stedham. Visit START at www.start-ct.org.uk

EXTENDING OUR REACH

With only seven parish council members, it's hard for us to try to deal with the hundreds of emails every month and dozens of meetings every year, so we are trying to extend our “reach” with volunteers covering some areas—such as:

Co-operation with neighbouring parish councils: We've teamed up more with Elsted, Harting, Rogate and Stedham this year and are starting to share the load of attending meetings as well as joining forces to deal with problems with planners etc.

Wildflower meadow: many of us admired the wild flowers that finally demonstrated the work Dave Dawtrey and his team have been doing. Some rain would help but it's all starting to flower again. The VE75 plaque is in place and they plan to extend the area by another 30% this year. Dave has also planted 3 baby trees to replace the diseased ash in Chithurst graveyard.

Trotton Common: Stuart Webster has taken over liaison with Sussex Wildlife Trust. He has discussed sensitivity to local views and commoners' rights, vandalism of the gates and signs, false warnings of cattle on the common, etc but he is still waiting for an official meeting of their liaison committee!

Motorcycle noise group: Pete Upfold has been liaising with Rogate and Stedham PC and with inspector Nick Bowman, who appears to be co-operative. Allowing for sparse resources, he is doing what he can to make police presence felt by bikers and liaising with Hampshire police to see if they have lessons for him.

Public transport group: Barry Cooper, of ERA, is to help out by keeping an eye on public transport issues—including net zero strategies by both central government and WSCC. The special needs of rural areas are recognised in both but costed plans are still to be developed.

River Rother liaison group: Tim Palmer agreed to form a group of riverside property owners, and act as liaison between them, the parish council, adjacent parishes and the Environment Agency.

If you have an interest / skill and could extend our reach further, do let us know!

GIVE YOUR VIEWS . .

. . to the county council,
WSCC runs a lot of surveys and



consultations to collect residents' views on things . Look for them at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/have-your-say/>

. . . You can also use this page to make complaints or even to join the “People's panel” and volunteer to be consulted regularly about important local issues.

Current consultations include one on the ‘Children and Young People Plan’ (closes 26 June).

. . the district council

Chichester DC also does surveys to check local views, although not so often. They are at:

<http://chichester.gov.uk/letstalksurveys>

. . our neighbours

Both Rogate and Stedham parishes had their neighbourhood plans

“made” (ie approved) last year—you can get to all of them (and lots of other planning information) from here:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/community-planning/>

On litter

How about adopting the area around your home as part of CDC's “against litter” campaign here:

www.chichester.gov.uk/adoptanarea

. . OR TELL US!

We are your local council, and we'd love to know what you think about our services (or anything else relevant to our work), so give us your views at any time and we'll try to pass them on, do something about them or at least ask you to tell us more . .

Write to us at: Steps, Trotton, West Sussex, GU31 5EP

Or email us at:

clerk@trotton-with-chithurst.org.uk





PC MEMBERS: WHO ARE WE?

Carola Brown: has lived in Trotton since her family moved to Gatehouse Lane in 1955. Retired this year after nearly 40 years running the local brewery.

Chris Cullen: moved to Trotton in 2018 from Surrey. He is an accountant who specialises in risk control and worked for Swiss bank UBS for 25 years. He is the treasurer of a City guild and has a wife and 3 children.

Dave Dawtrey: has lived in Trotton all his life. He works in an engineering firm and is a volunteer at the Hollycombe steam collection.

Colleen Homan: moved to Trotton to marry a local lad in the local church in 1993. Her 2 children had left home and she manages compliance, inspection and audit functions for a national mental health / substance misuse charity.

Katherine MacKellar: has lived in Chithurst since 2006 and practises hypnotherapy and 'personal and spiritual growth'.

Neil Ryder: retired to Trotton nearly 5 years ago. He is clerk to the PC and treasurer of R&T News on a voluntary (unpaid) basis and is also chair of governors for a federation of 3 local primary schools (Rake, Rogate & Compton).

Anne Stephens: visited her grandfather's farm here as a child and moved down with her parents in 2002. She had a career in social work ending as a trainer for WSCC.

WHO DOES WHAT?

(All voluntary, unpaid)

Chairman: Carola **Deputy:** Dave
Responsible finance officer: Chris
Clerk : Neil

Amenity plans: Neil & Anne

Churchyards & maintenance: Dave

Events - bonfire: Dave;

- community: Anne, Colleen, Kathryn

Emergency plans: Colleen

Finance: Chris, Carola & Neil

Planning: All councillors

Rights of way & open spaces: Chris

Website / data protection: Neil

YOUR COUNCILLORS ARE . . . Unpaid local volunteers elected by you!



HOW ARE WE ELECTED?

Parish council elections are part of the local government elections every 4 years — next due here in 2023. If there are more volunteers than the seven council members we are required to have, there is a proper election—which we have to pay for! Otherwise, those who put themselves forward (current councillors, if they agree to stay on, and any volunteers for vacancies) are elected unopposed.

AIDED AND ABETTED BY . . .

The elected councillors are all shown in the left column of this page but they try to get more done for the parish by working closely with other local parishes—particularly Rogate, Harting and Stedham, who have to cover much of the same ground. They also increasingly try to find other volunteers from the community with

WHEN AND WHERE DO WE MEET?

The full council meets every other month, starting in January with the dates shown on the website and a notice and agenda posted on the website and noticeboards at least 3 clear days ahead of each meeting (usually earlier). Residents are welcome to all of our meetings. The planning committee meets whenever it has applications to consider and the finance committee works mainly by email.

specific skills and interests, who are willing to monitor and liaise in these areas and report back—for example:

- **Veronica Carter** on environmental issues
- **Barry Cooper** on public transport
- **Tim Palmer** on river maintenance
- **Pete Upfold** on motorbike noise
- **Stuart Webster** on Trotton Common

WHAT DO PARISH COUNCILS DO?

They look after community events and services, and most have city, town or village halls—we don't, so we are working with the local church council to develop community facilities in St George's church.

Larger parish councils look after many public buildings and land, allotments, toilets, cemeteries, etc. We have just the bus shelter on the A272 at Chithurst, the closed churchyard at Chithurst, the defibrillator in Mill Lane, Dumpford, and a few others.

Like bigger councils, though, we have a wide range of information and consultation duties—our county council (West Sussex CC) and district council (Chichester DC), as well as the South Downs National Park Authority and many other bodies are legally obliged to inform and/or consult us on a wide range of issues—including planning applications, changes in school provisions, and much more—so we are an important part of your democratic representation.

This leaflet describes some of our recent and planned activities and there's a fuller description of the powers and duties of each tier of local government at: <https://www.gov.uk/understand-how-your-council-works>

WHAT DON'T WE DO ?

Civil parishes are sometimes confused with church parishes, but the two were separated by the Local Government Act of 1894. Church parishes are now run by parochial church councils (PCCs) while civil parishes are run by parish councils (PCs) like ours.

We also don't make road and right of way or planning decisions (although the planning authority must consult us on every application). See a fuller description of the powers and duties of each tier of local government at:

<https://www.gov.uk/understand-how-your-council-works>