

**Minutes of the Valley Park Annual Parish Meeting
held on Monday 10 June 2024 at 7.10pm
Location: Valley Park Community Centre**

Present:

Cllr Mr A Dowden (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs C Dowden
Cllr Mr S Shahi
Cllr Mr R Bryan
Cllr Mrs D Green
Cllr Mrs K Woods-Townsend

Apologies for absence: Cllr Mr S Cross, Cllr Mr C Anderson (Vice Chair), Cllr Mr J Fryer

Action

- 1 Welcome and apologies**
Councillors Cllr Mr S Cross, Cllr Mr J Fryer and Cllr Mr C Anderson (Vice Chair) sent their apologies.
- 2 Chairman's Report**
The Chairman Report was presented and attached to the minutes.
- 3 County Councillor's Report**
The County Councillor's Report was presented and attached to the minutes.
- 4 Borough Councillor's Report**
The Borough Councillor's Report was presented and attached to the minutes.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Valley Park Parish Council Chairman's Report – June 2024

- Valley Park has maintained the lowest Council Tax in Test Valley. Our neighbouring parishes, the rates are very much higher.
- This year, we have negotiated a new contract in partnership with the Winchester City Council. Our floral displays will be provided by Windowflowers, a family owned and managed horticultural nursery founded in 1947, specialising in the provision of plants and flowers to luxury hotels, offices and local authorities. They grow over one million plants each year, which they use to plant over five miles of window boxes and twenty thousand hanging baskets. Current clients include The Corinthia Hotel (over 15 years), Claridge's Hotel (over 35 years), The Houses of Parliament (over 10 years), The Ritz Hotel (over 20 years), the headquarters of The Royal Horticultural Society (over 35 years) and The Law Society (over 60 years).
- We have listened to our residents and added a new bus shelter on Skys Woods Road for the Harvest Road bus stop
- We have ordered two beautiful wooden welcome signs, which we placed in two locations in Valley Park
- Our community orchards that we planted last year with children from the local schools are now in full bloom alongside the wildflowers.
- We have started a collaboration with DragonFly Power
- I would like to thank the Friends of the Park who are volunteers who carry out various maintenance work in our woodlands.
- To commemorate Remembrance Day, our Parish displayed large poppies along Knightwood Road and Pilgrim Close during November and that will now continue because it was appreciated by many of our parishioners.
- I would like to thank my Parish councillors who are volunteering their time and work to serve the community and keep Valley Park a special place in which to live.
- I would also like to thank the Parish Clerk for supporting the Parish Council.

Cllr Alan Dowden Chairman of Valley Park Parish Council

BADDESLEY DIVISION COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT 2024

Hampshire County Council Tax will rise this year by almost 5%. Band “D” Council Tax rising to £1,533.24p, an increase of £72.99. The Council tax overall raising £826m.354k. The Adult Social Care Revenue budget will gain 2% additional funding from this Council Tax increase, although with ever increasing demands, it remains insufficient. Hampshire’s financial position is now very bleak in- deed and the Council are now embarking on a comprehensive review to attempt to find further potential service reductions, as current savings proposals will fall short of the level needed. I did forecast this outcome in my last two County Councillor’s annual reports.

The County Council held an online consultation on possible service reductions, in order to find another £132 million of savings through reductions to services. The closing of Waste Recycling Centres, further closures of Libraries, School Crossing Patrols, Passenger Transport reductions, Street Lighting and Highways Maintenance. This will also include higher Adult Social Care cost rises.

Our Highways have suffered neglect over many years and potholes have caused serious damage to vehicles. Along with flash flooding of our highways through inadequate drainage systems. At the Annual General Meeting of the Full Council I asked the question of “How, much compensation has the County Council paid out in the last twelve months to motorists using Hampshire’s roads from damage to their vehicle from pothole damage.” The response was £180K. I also asked, what percentage of those who claimed gained any compensation at all. It turns out that only 218 motorists have gained compensation out of 1597 claims and 1081 have been denied compensation and a further 298 are yet still to be decided.

I serve on the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee and was a member of a panel required to review seven Care Homes, that do not currently meet the Care Quality Commission standards. Some will be upgraded, and some closed to provide £173m of Capital Investment to build new homes to meet those with complex needs. which have significantly increased, along with our ageing population.

These Valley Park organisations have received grants from my Councillor funds: K’wood Youth Club, the Tennis Club, the Badminton Club and the Community Centre to retain the Community Engagement Coordinator, Lucy, until lottery money was successfully obtained.

After 10 years of hassling the County and Borough Council over repeat and in-creased surface water flooding on School Lane and the roundabout on Templars Way, the County have discovered root damage and collapsed drains at a very low level in the highways. These have now reached a high priority for replacement. Hopefully, this will resolve the problem.

HCC Cllr Alan Dowden Baddesley Division

Valley Park Borough Councillors Annual Report 2023/24

Borough Councillors: Alan & Celia Dowden

Ward Councillors have been working through various avenues to support the residents of Valley Park This has been achieved by sitting on Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) meetings; working with outside bodies, groups and charities.

The Councillors sit on the following meetings:

Full Council Meetings, where motions and questions can be made to the council. This has included, Questions on Recycling, Planning Enforcement and ground maintenance.

Southern Area Planning (SAP), has an important role in reviewing planning applications. The meetings are held routinely at Crosfield Hall, Romsey. The purpose is to either approve or reject planning applications brought to the council for review.

General Purposes Committee deals with those matters relating to the Council's staff.

The Local Plan 2040

TVBC Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Stage 2 was presented to Full Council in January for approval to go out for **Public consultation**.

The Council have identified the **preferred site of Velmore Farm for an allocation of 1,070 homes and 2.2 hectares for employment use**. The land adjoins Valley Park and breaches the local gap, between Valley Park and Chilworth. If this Draft Local Plan is adopted and this land developed, it would have a significant impact on Valley Park residents in a number of ways.

The **Valley Park Borough Councillors did not support this Local Plan** - Citing a number of issues: Lack of active involvement of councillors to the production of the draft local plan; Equity of allocation of housing; Village Vitality; Infrastructure. **On the Velmore Farm site - Traffic; Flooding; Local Services; Local Gaps Policy; Ecology; Overdevelopment; Economic Impact.**

The consultation ran from 6th February to 2nd April 2024 and the **comments will be reviewed before Regulation Stage 19, the final draft, is produced and sent out for consultation, likely later in 2024.**

Cost of Living

Through the winter of 2022/23, many households in Test Valley faced significant challenges in making ends meet. Romsey & Andover food banks reported demand as much as **40% higher** than the previous year and Citizen's Advice Test Valley were experiencing increasing numbers seeking support with debt and money advice. **There is a consistently high level of need compared to historical levels.** The Borough Council has supported the sector financially through the **Cost-of-Living grant scheme, and through the support of the Community Team.** Organisations are looking to plan for how to provide sustainable support to households in the longer term.

Test Valley Borough Council also supports residents directly, in particular through

the work of the Benefits Team and Housing Team.

Councillors are working with TVBC Community Officers to help support local groups and charities in their efforts to support the local community. This has involved two mechanisms. The first being through **Community Workshop** meetings to help identify means of improving our ward. The second is through a **new Asset-based scheme** where applicants can apply for up to 50% of the total cost of a project to provide new or to enhance existing community assets and facilities.

Our Councillors' Community grant funding has been used to support the following organisations:

Valley Park Parish Council - £1,000

St Francis School Association - £1,000

St Francis Church - £1,000

Valley Park Community Association - £491.78

Climate Emergency

The Government is now less ambitious, scaling back on the timing of their proposals. The **Transitions need the support from residents/ businesses**. There is a Cost to change – It is, how we heat homes, transport systems, the industrial emissions, farming.

Since the climate emergency declaration in 2018, some of the things the Council have done include:

- Moved to a **greener electricity tariff**, replaced some fleet vehicles to **electric and switched to hydrotreated vegetable oil**. Moved a number of tools to **battery powered versions**.
- Planted over **22,800 trees** with **support from volunteers**
- Implemented three years of our **urban meadow initiative**, allowing to grow as '**pollinator rest stops**' throughout May and beyond.
- Enabled fuel poor households living in energy inefficient homes to access grants to **improve the energy performance of their homes** and promoted initiatives such as **Solar Together Hampshire**. Launched a two-year community energy programme being led by **Community Energy South** on behalf of the Council and working with **Dragonfly Power**.

Waste Collections

Following the government's **Environment Act 2021**, plans were discussed and approved to roll out a new waste and recycling system across Test Valley.

Since then, we have regularly urged the administration to not delay on the commitment, to investigate and adopt other council's best practice to improve recycling, with kerbside collection of food waste, glass and improved plastics. These were not followed up.

May 2023 Conservative election literature claimed they would implement kerb collection of food waste and glass waste in 2024.

In October 2023, the Government changed their position to a 'simpler recycling' strategy, which would allow co-mingled recycling. The implications of this are now being considered by partners across Hampshire, and it will be another delay of any changes to the waste and recycling service.

Southern Water

Councillors have been working hard to hold Southern Water to account for their persistent polluting of our rivers and waterways, poor service to customers and issues around leaks and flooding. There have been numerous stories in local press, highlighting various issues with the company, including high profile protests at Southern Water's Fullerton site.

Councillors secured Southern Water's attendance at a Test Valley OSCOM round table, that was also attended by the Environment Agency and members of the Pan Parish River Pollution Forum.

Ward Environment improvements.

*The replacement of trees, affected by dutch elm disease, has continued this year.

*A number of Fruit Trees have been planted in the landscaped area along Katrine Crescent.

*Following a burst water main, Southern Water removed an area of trees in landscaping on the side of Knightwood Road. Ward councillors insisted on the reinstatement of trees to the area.

Southern Water have now completed the planting.

Cllr Celia Dowden
TVB Cllr - Valley Park