

☞ **A Message from
the Chairman**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The past year has been a quieter time than previous years for the Parish Council and, again, I am honoured to have been elected as Chairman and to have been involved with the work of the Council during this time.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow Councillors, the Parish Clerk and our County and District Councillors for their continued support over the past year; and I hope you enjoy reading about some of the highlights of the year in the Parish Council's Annual Report.

THE PARISH COUNCIL

Local Parish and District Council elections were held on 3rd May 2007. For the eleven seats on the Parish Council, eleven people put themselves forward.

☞ **Parish
Councillors**

A special presentation was made to Tom Micklem, who stood down from local government, after some 32 years of service. On behalf of the community, the Parish Council presented Tom and his wife, Marion, with a garden bench at a small ceremony which was also attended by the Deputy Chief Executive of Chichester District Council. We are sure that you will join with the Parish Council in wishing Tom a long and happy 'retirement'.

We welcomed David Clement to the Council at his first meeting in May.

☞ **County
Councillors**

The Parish Council was saddened to hear of the resignation of County Councillor Peter Moffat, due to health reasons. Following a by-election in June Chris Duncton was elected to fill the vacancy. As a keen cyclist, Chris has become the 'champion of highways' and the Parish Council is grateful to him for the help he has given in this regard over the past months.

☞ **Staff**

In January of this year, Sue our Parish Clerk, gained a further qualification in the field of local government - the Certificate in Local Council Administration. Our congratulations to her.

☞ **Meetings**

At the end of last year, the Parish Council decided to trial a new pattern of meetings. Meetings are held bi-monthly (still at the alternate venues) and there is an increased number in the meetings of the Finance Committee. All Parish Council meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome to come along.

COMMUNICATING WITH RESIDENTS

The Parish Council is proud of the ways in which it communicates with residents and firmly believes that good communication is a solid base for the efficient working of the Parish Council.

☞ Parish Up-Date

The Parish Council Newsletter—**Parish Up-Date** continues to grow and the Parish Council has received many positive comments about the publication. Virtually all of the content is now provided by local groups and organisations; as well as individual local residents.

The introduction of advertising in 2006/2007 has proved to be a strong feature. Printing costs of **Parish Up-Date** are high (£1368 each year) because of the low numbers produced (750 copies for each edition) but the advertising revenue received continues to pay for one edition in the year. It is considered that the current level of advertising is still right for the newsletter and does not detract from the content of the newsletter.

The Parish Council is grateful to all those who deliver **Parish UpDate** to the homes in the Parish—some 95% are delivered to. Again, we would like to make a special mention of Pat Smith, who together with her small band of willing helpers, covers the whole of Ifold. Thank you Pat.

☞ Community Directory

The **Parish Community Directory**, launched in March 2006, is now in its second edition and was distributed with the last edition of **Parish Up-Date**. Again, the publication has been well received, not only in the Parish but also has been praised by both West Sussex County and Chichester District Councils. The Community Directory also forms a part of the Welcome Pack to new residents of the ecclesiastical Parish, which includes Kirdford, which is the initiative of our Vicar, Sebastian.

☞ Parish Notice Boards

Following successful legal proceedings, the Parish Council recovered the cost of the black metal notice boards at Kelsey Hall. New wooden boards were provided by a local company and after, some initial teething problems, these are fully operational.

☞ Parish Web Site

The remaining Parish notice boards (at Oak Tree Stores and outside Winterton Hall) will be replaced in this financial year.

The Parish Web Site — www.plaistowandifold.net — is currently undergoing changes to the design and layout and will be fully operational shortly.

☞ **Parish
Action Plan**

PARISH ACTION PLAN

The Parish Action Plan was launched in January 2006 and identified a number of actions to be addressed and undertaken. The primary action was the formulation and publication of a Village Design Statement, which will encompass the four settlements of the Parish. This document has now been produced and is currently with Chichester District Council, from whom a response is awaited.

On the agenda for this evening is an opportunity for us all to make arrangements for a review meeting, to gauge our current position.

☞ **Road
Safety Issues**

TRANSPORT MATTERS

Road Safety for both motorists and pedestrians using the Parish roads continues to be a major concern of the Parish Council and the Parish Council continues to support the 'Make the Commitment' Speed Campaign.

Parking at the School continues to be a major problem. The Parish Council would like to ask those parents who drive their children to Plaistow & Kirdford Primary School, to consider whether the drive is absolutely necessary and, if so, to park sensibly and with consideration for other road users.

☞ **Highway
Issues**

The lack of funding within the County Council's Highway budget for minor and unclassified rural roads; together with the constantly changing weather conditions of the past months has seen a further steady decline in the condition of our roads. Following the powerful presentation made to Steve Johnson, the local Area Highway Engineer, there have been some works carried out, but there are still areas that need attention. . It is sincerely hoped that there will be some improvements. It is hoped that the introduction of the new Highway Ranger scheme will be of benefit to the Parish. Meanwhile, the Parish Council fights on

☞ **Planning
Applications**

PLANNING MATTERS

The Parish Council again considered some 90 odd planning applications throughout the year, together with a number of other planning issues.

The three-weekly Planning Committee meetings held at Winterton Hall, Plaistow continue to be very successful, with both the Parish Council and local residents. Plans are available to view for 15 minutes before each meeting, which also gives residents an opportunity to engage with Councillors.

☞ **Environment Matters**

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

The Parish Council again participated in the Annual Spring Clean Day, which is a District Council initiative. Working parties were also held for pond clearance work at Coxes Pond which have continued to be popular with residents. That said, however, there is always room for another pair of willing hands.

Incidents of minor vandalism and flytipping in the Parish continue to occur. Both are forms of anti-social behaviour and in a small rural community it is particularly noticeable when this happens.

Vigorous exchanges took place between the Parish Council and Southern Water during the summer regarding a number of water leaks that were left unattended. The Parish Council are also, once engaged with Southern Water regarding the discharge of sewage in Ifold.

SOCIAL ISSUES

The most significant event for the Parish was the threat of the loss of the Post Office. A packed public meeting gave support for the retention of the Post Office at the current level of service but despite the best efforts of the community, the decision was made by Post Office Counters Ltd., to make the Post Office an 'out reach' branch with much reduced opening times to 7 hours each week over two mornings.

It is currently unclear just what the future of the Post Office in Plaistow will be, as this is still in the process of negotiation but the reduction of this vital service will be a blow to the community.

☞ **Social Issues**

In May 2007 the Parish Council hosted a public meeting to discuss a proposed development of five residential units in Ashfield at Plaistow. One of the biggest concerns was that of parking and an increased pressure on an already difficult area for traffic movements..

The Parish Council later met with Martlet Homes and West Sussex County Council and successfully negotiated the provision of a layby in that part of Nell Ball leading to Ashfield. This will involve the removal of part of the grass strip and will enable a better flow of traffic to and from the new development and other homes in that local area.

The Parish Council has continued to support local groups and organisations by way of donations and also by way of grants from the Council's Community Reserve Fund.

☞ **Money Matters**

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The Parish Council's main source of income is the precept which raised from the residents of the Parish through the Council Tax; and was set at £26,400 for the 2006/2007 financial year. An additional form of income is from advertising in Parish Up-Date but this money is used to offset printing costs. At the time of setting the Precept we budgeted for a deficit, as our reserves were healthy, due to less expenditure in the previous year than we anticipated. In fact, our expenditure this year has only been £24,469 as we have not spent the money on new notice boards or office equipment, as planned. The Parish Council decided, when setting the Budget for 2008/2009, to budget once again for a deficit as we have sufficient reserves.

How is your money spent?.....

Expenditure in 2007/2008 was only 79% of that budgeted.

The Council continues to make donations and grants to local organisations including, Winterton Hall, Kelsey Hall, Little Acorns and Plaistow PreSchools, plus the Community Minibus and Billingshurst Community Bus Services. Payments were also made in respect of Hall hire fees incurred by the two Afternoon Tea Clubs in the Parish. These payments totalled £4200.

Two donations totalling £250 were made under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972, to the Friends of Chichester Hospitals and Petworth Cottage Hospital.

Village maintenance equated to just over £2533. The main area of expenditure is the grass cutting of The Green at £1840 a year.

A one-off donation of £1500, was made from the Community Reserve Fund towards the cost of the new School Pavilion.

Our major Capital expenditure was £1554 on new notice boards for Kelsey Hall. The original ones were found not to be fit for the purpose and we successfully sued the manufacturer through the Small Claims Court and obtained just under £1490 in settlement. Until this matter was resolved, we did not want to replace the remaining notice boards in the Parish. This will now be done in the 2008/2009 financial year.

A full overview of the 2006/2007 Budget and the provisions for the current year will be in the next edition of Parish Update, due out in the middle of May.

 **Your Parish Councillors**

PARISH COUNCILLORS

*John Kirby (Chairman)
7, Oakfield, Plaistow (871310)*

*Brian Gravestock (Vice Chairman)
Jesmond Dene, The Ride, Ifold (752789)*

*David Clement, Clements Cottage, Rickmans Lane, Plaistow
(871246)*

*Stuart East, Foxdale, Plaistow Road, Ifold (753795)
Vivien Forwood, Tipplers Retreat, New House Farm, Shillinglee
(01428 707717)*

Tom Laidlaw, Dunham Gate, Hogwood Road, Ifold (753640)

David Lugton, Owlswood, The Close, Ifold (751712)

Ronnie Perrin, Berrylands, The Lane, Ifold (752591)

David Ribbens, Green Shadows, Durfold Wood (01483 200688)

Pauline Ryder, Old Red Hatch, Back Lane, Plaistow (871321)

*Dean Wheeler, The Old Chapel, Rickmans Lane, Plaistow
(871129)*

 **How to get in touch with us**

HOW TO CONTACT US

By contacting any Councillor directly

By contacting us through the Web Site

www.plaistowandifold.net

By writing to the Parish Clerk -

Sue Kemp, 28, Cornwood, Kirdford, West Sussex, RH14 ONP

Tel. 01403 820617

By Email—plaistowclerk@aol.com

 **Tell us what you think**

FEEDBACK

The Parish Council would welcome any comments on the content of this Report and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Please contact any of the Parish Councillors or the Parish Clerk.