

# **Painswick Parish Council – Annual Report 2006-07**

Painswick Parish has had another eventful year with a mixture of benefits and losses. One of the losses which provoked most concern was the closure of the LloydsTSB branch. The closure came with the news that the Post Office building was expected to be sold and parishioners were left wondering how to conduct their financial affairs if the Post Office facility were to be lost with the bank no longer in existence. At the time of writing we are grateful that the Post Office is still functioning and the Parish Council continues to ask parishioners to use the facility at every opportunity. Another loss has been that of our butcher's shop following Alan Hale's retirement. A new business we have welcomed is the St Michaels restaurant. The event that gave rise to much interest was the threatened closure of the library and the sale of the building. Following a number of exchanges with Shire Hall, the County Council agreed to allow a group of parishioners to investigate its possible purchase. If successful this would allow the library to remain and a number of other facilities to be located in the building. The group which is called the Gateway Project is now actively engaged in seeking to purchase the building.

Another building in the Parish Council's ownership is the former Rugby Club Pavilion on the Recreation Field. In recent times the building has been used by the Youth Club but sadly the Club has had to close because of lack of support. The good news has been that the Painswick & Stroud Local Ministry Sports Minister, Tim Friend, has been very active with a large group of young people in regular attendance and the Parish Council has been pleased to make the former Rugby Club Pavilion available to Tim for the group's activities.

## **Policing**

We recently welcomed Police and Community Safety Officer Linda Dey. She replaces PCSO Des Moore. The police are seeking volunteers to join a panel of local people who would report concerns to the Safer Community Team for the Stroud District.

## **Neighbourhood Warden**

The District Council has introduced a Neighbourhood Warden scheme which the Parish Council has joined. The Warden has regular liaison meetings with the Parish Council Clerk to discuss matters of concern to residents. If you have a problem which for example could relate to anti-social behaviour, please contact the Clerk who will refer the matter to the Warden. The Warden will then follow the matter with the individual(s) concerned.

## **Parish Council Year**

Turning to the Parish Council's year, the members were very disappointed when Johnny Johnston broke the news that he and Hilary were to leave the area and Johnny would have to resign from the council. Johnny's knowledge of the business world was of great benefit to the council. His place has been taken by Gill Richards who has already shown a commendable interest in the council's affairs. Very recently we have learned of the resignation of Jeanne Berry who has been one of the two Slad representatives. Jeanne has been Chairman of the Footpaths Committee and the council has been very appreciative of her work with that committee.

## **Finance**

The Clerk to the Parish Council, Roy Balgobin, is the Council's Responsible Finance Officer working with Martin who took over the Finance & General Purposes Committee responsibilities following Johnny Johnston's departure in January. Martin reports that this year has been difficult but the finances have been kept under control. Staff costs rose sharply following the implementation of the National Agreement. More organisations have been seeking financial support. In that regard the Council was pleased to respond to the

Parochial Church Council's request for a financial contribution towards the cost of resurfacing the St Mary's Churchyard footpaths. **The Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2007 is available for inspection at the Parish Council Office.**

## **Planning**

Planning continues to be one of the most interesting areas of the Parish Council's work and Planning Committee Chairman David Hudson reports that in the past year the council dealt with 117 planning applications. This calendar year up to 20th April, of the 51 considered by the committee, 17 were opposed, 4 neither opposed nor supported with the remainder recommended for consent. The majority of the applications were for extensions. This follows the same pattern as last year. David comments that the District Council has introduced new planning regulations whereby any objection to an application has to be related to the Local Plan or other official planning guidelines.

## **Traffic**

Traffic continues to be the subject which generates most correspondence. Anne Burges Watson, Traffic Committee Chairman, reports the adequate resurfacing of Victoria Street and St Mary's Street and the resurfacing of Tibbiwell about which the council has concerns. Ann comments that the council is continuing to pursue the creation of a 20mph limit through Painswick, a pedestrian crossing by the Chemists, Vehicle Speed Activated Warning Signs, a reduction in the number of signs in Painswick, the problem of parking in Vicarage Street and a review of the speed limit on Golf Course Road.

## **Cemetery & Parish Maintenance/Town Hall**

Martin Slinger reports a busy year keeping a keen eye on the normal workings of the Parish and Town Hall maintenance. The main things, the Committee Chairman says, have been the upkeep and maintenance of the Town Hall which has had a major roof repair during the year as part of an ongoing work programme; keeping the cemetery ship shape with the removal of the scrubs around the outer wall and the repair of the small roof of the chapel. As for the Civil Parish the need has been to keep the grass cut together with general maintenance designed to keep the parish tidy. As more work is generated, the costs increase each year but so far we are keeping them under control. A major expense was the purchase of new play equipment at the Recreation Field.

## **Footpaths**

The Footpath committee normally meets twice a year. The 145 paths within the parish are inspected annually by a team of footpath inspectors who report problems to the Clerk to the Council. The Clerk liaises with the County Council's Public Rights of Way section. An example of the benefit of that liaison was the installation of a footbridge across the Painswick Stream on land at Olivers close to the Painswick/Cranham boundary.

## **Plantation**

Ann Daniels chairs the Plantation Committee. She and the committee have again been grateful for the work carried out by the British Conservation Trust Volunteers who continue to keep the Plantation in good order.

## **Edge Ward (Cllr Martin Slinger)**

Traffic movement has been the subject of much discussion with the residents expressing concerns at the Parish and County Councils' proposal to introduce a 20mph zone.

**Sheepscombe Ward (Cllrs David Harcup and Dhushy Mahendran)**

The Parish Council received a delegation from villagers protesting at the erection of a number of passing place signs along the road between Damsells Cross and the Sheepscombe Village. The villagers believed the signs to be visually intrusive and unnecessary. The signs were removed.

**Slad Ward (Cllrs Jeanne Berry and Jackie Woof)**

Traffic calming measures have been introduced to help reduce the speed of vehicles travelling through the village.

**Summary**

The Parish Council's four-year term of office ends in May 2008 when elections will be held. I wish to thank the councillors for the commitment to the council's workload they have given throughout the year on behalf of the community. That workload tends to increase each year as more responsibilities are given to parish councils. It is one of the main aims of the council to achieve "Quality" status within the next twelve months. That status will not only enhance the council's standing but also attract additional funding. Finally, the council members wish to express their appreciation to the Clerk to the Council, Roy Balgobin, the Assistant Clerk, Liz Fisher and to the Parish Handyman, George Hodder for the considerable contribution they make to the smooth running of the Parish Council.

Terry Parker

Chairman