

LIGHTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL Review 2003

Welcome to our third annual review. We've kept it quite similar to last year's, since you seem to like it this way, but first we need to get some bad news out of the way...

We're still here!

It was the end of your Parish Councillors' four-year term of office this May. Each of us stood again for re-election. No-one stood against us, so we have all been re-elected unopposed. Therefore there will be no poll for the Parish Council.

There will still be a poll for the District Council Ward, however. This will be on Thursday, 1st May if you vote in person, or from Thursday 24 April to Tuesday 29 April if you vote over the internet. Please note that, because of District Council Ward boundary changes which were implemented last year, we are now in Kinton Ward, not Harbury Ward.

So why is this bad news? Because we didn't expect to still be here as Lighthorne Parish Council!

The split of the Parish has been delayed

Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) reviewed parish boundaries. In January they recommended to central government that the Parish of Lighthorne should be split into two new parishes. That had been a major goal of the Parish Council for eight years and we were very pleased.

Then we were told that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) had decided to delay it. Every one of your parish councillors was very disappointed and a little angry. We wrote to the ODPM to protest. We now have more information about what happened.

There is a Periodic Electoral Review of Warwickshire going on at the moment. That review also looks at boundaries. It could, in theory, recommend boundary changes that might affect us. That is why the ODPM wanted to wait. An official Order has to be issued to implement any changes. It is not a simple process, and they didn't want to have to do things twice.

So what's next?

The Warwickshire review is expected to be completed by October this year. After that, it usually takes about six months for the results to be looked at by the ODPM. Then an Order is drawn up for the Minister to sign: this is the document which makes the changes legal. Finally, elections can be held for the new parish councils.

The ODPM has said that they expect the Order to be ready in time for elections to be held next year, in May 2004. We are now waiting for SDC to agree that they can run those elections.

The elections will be for the two new parish councils of Lighthorne Heath and (a smaller parish of) Lighthorne. We have already explained the effects of the split in some detail, but we will tell you more next year, closer to the time of the elections. If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please talk to one of us. (Contact details are on the last page.)

What did the Parish Council do for me last year?

The Government kept us quite busy last year with changed procedures and new responsibilities. For example, the audit of our accounts was carried out quite differently (and at lower cost than the year before). We have also adopted a publication scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This means that you now have a legal right to expect us to be able to provide certain information to you about what we do. (We hope you'll agree that, in reality, nothing has changed; but it was a useful exercise and has caused us to write a few things down.) That scheme, this review, last year's report and the full minutes of the Council for the year gone by have all been made available on the [Parish Council page](#) of the Lighthorne Online website.

Let us look at how we did against the targets that we set ourselves last year:

Rights of Way: The final work programme which was part of the Parish Paths Partnership with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is now complete: future problems can be reported directly to WCC. We have had verbal agreement for the creation of a permissive path over farmland from Lighthorne to the sports ground, but we still await the completion of the legal process.

Highways: We have continued to lobby WCC to make improvements and press for speed reductions on the B4100, and have taken an active part in consultations about the road changes required as a result of the Aston Martin (AML) factory. We succeeded in getting new village name / speed restriction signs in Lighthorne, but we declined to replace one other sign due to cost.

Planning: We responded to all 51 planning notifications we received within the required time. We continue to monitor progress at AML and other development on the Gaydon site to minimise impact on the electorate, including participating in meetings with Ford (AML's parent company).

We were successful in opposing inappropriate housing development in Lighthorne Heath by South Warwickshire Housing Association (SWHA). We then initiated a partnership with SWHA, SDC and the Countryside Commission to further the aim of replacing the shop and doctor's surgery at Lighthorne Heath with modern facilities. This partnership won some initial funding, but other funding has unfortunately been withdrawn. We are still actively working with SDC. The Village Appraisal for Lighthorne Heath which was developed in step with this work is now complete and the full document is to be given to SDC. Residents are to receive a summary version.

We responded to several consultations this year. Of most local significance was the latest [District Local Plan Review 1996-2011 – Revised deposit draft – January 2003](#). We sent detailed responses at each stage of consultation. We are generally pleased with progress, but continue to be concerned about policies regarding the Gaydon site. At national level, the possibility of a huge new airport at Rugby suggested in the DfT's [Future Development of Air Transport in the UK – Midlands](#) caused us great concern and the idea was strongly opposed.

Assets: *(For historical reasons the assets of the Council all relate to the village of Lighthorne.)* The Broadwell paving has been re-laid and the fencing repainted. Work has been carried out nearby to redirect water from the spring. We have done further work (in partnership with the community) to maintain Baker's Hill as a wildlife refuge and as a visual amenity. We sought, and gratefully acknowledge, the help of Land Rover to re-roof and maintain the clubhouse on the sports field.

New Village Greens: After a long battle we are about to sign 84-year leases with SDC for three areas of land at Lighthorne Heath. Although there is legal expense involved, this will enable us to meet our goal of protecting these areas for the enjoyment of the community.

What are your Targets for the year ahead?

We had not been especially concerned with this as we were expecting the parish split to take place and we knew that each of the new councils would need to meet to debate and set their own agendas for the year ahead. Clearly we will continue to move forward in each of the areas covered above, but we do have some specific short-term goals:

Lighthorne Sports Association: The support from Land Rover helped us to attract a cricket team to join Lighthorne Sports Association and use Lighthorne as their base. We are supporting a Fun Day on the sports field this summer for the enjoyment of both Lighthorne and Lighthorne Heath and to promote the facilities there. The occasion will also be used by many groups within the parish to promote their activities. We are now in the process of developing a landscaping and planting scheme for the area behind the pavilion which we hope will further improve the look of the facilities and attract new users.

Lighthorne Heath play facilities: A further addition to the skate board park has recently been constructed and is proving popular with teenage residents. We have been successful with a grant for a climbing frame for ages 6-12 years to go on the land at the back of the village hall and we await the result of a grant application for a youth shelter. Ideas are now under discussion for the design of a BMX area, hopefully to be implemented by Aston Martin.

Summary of Finances

Our 2001/02 accounts passed audit without qualification. Arrangements for viewing the 2002/03 accounts will be posted on notice boards as usual. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact the Treasurer or talk to any of your Parish Councillors (see the last page for details).

Lighthorne Parish Council's annual precept for 2002/03 was £11,000, which amounted to £23.75 for a band D household. This extract from the draft accounts show how it was spent:

Our income (from the precept - Council Tax):	<u>£11,000</u>
We spent:	
Administration	£3,300
Use of Lighthorne Village Hall as a Post Office	£545
Insurance	£1,300
Electricity	£400
Repairs / Maintenance	£2,800
Grants / Donations	£800
Sports Association	£215
	<u>£9,360</u>
Underspend (carried forward to reserves):	<u>£1,640</u>

In January, Council decided to leave the precept for the coming year (2003/04) unchanged at £11,000 or £23.37 for a band D household.

A word from the Chairman

There has also been great disappointment at the amount of time it has taken to implement the split, something that our communities have wanted for many years. Members have shown their dedication by agreeing to stand for re-election in order to see the process through and, even though we may only be here for one more year, we will not stop pushing forward with other activities.

I want to take this opportunity to say thank-you. Thank you to all those who acted as Councillors or Officers over the past four years, and a very special thank-you to all those within our communities who have worked for the benefit of all of us. We have done a lot over those four years. Community spirit has been to the fore in both Lighthorne and Lighthorne Heath. I'm very proud of that.

Once the split has finally happened, and let's hope that's next year, we will be looking for more community-minded folk to sit on the new councils. It would be great if we had enough people put themselves forward for election that there had to be a poll this time. That really would demonstrate that we have the kind of vibrant communities that we all know we have!

Finally, please keep talking to us. We need your input to help us to help you. Send us your comments and views. Write or e-mail the Clerk to the Council, the Chairman, or talk to any of your Parish Councillors (see below for details).



CLlr Mike Rigby, Chairman.

16 April 2003.

Who are the Parish Council?

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For Parish Council information on the web go to <http://www.lighthorneonline.com/PCHome.htm>

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