



Crowhurst Parish Council Business Plan

Introduction

The aim of this Business Plan is to give Crowhurst's community a clear understanding of what the Parish Council does and what it is trying to achieve over the next 3 years. The Business Plan is a living document and is subject to review annually alongside the budgeting process, at which point progress will be assessed and the next year planned in more detail.

Having an agreed business plan will provide a framework for the Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way. The development of the Business Plan has been based on community engagement and involvement, therefore ensuring the Council continues to deliver on behalf of the community that it serves.

At the same time, the Business Plan will help the Parish community to have a better understanding of what the Council does and also to clarify what it doesn't do; in other words to explain what issues fall under the responsibility of other Council bodies such as Surrey County Council or Tandridge District Council and those which fall within the responsibility of Crowhurst Parish Council.

History of Crowhurst

Crowhurst is a civil parish and dispersed village in a rural part of the Tandridge district of Surrey. The place-name 'Crowhurst', first recorded in 1189, simply means 'crow wood'.

The Anglo-Saxon administrative division of Tandridge hundred of decreasing use throughout the medieval period, used to be a forum for elders and the overlords of the parish. In 1086, the Domesday Book had no record of Crowhurst, it being part of the Oxted estate at this time.

St Georges Church is architecturally Grade II listed, mostly built from 12th to 15th centuries, has a chancel that was repaired and made plain in 1657. The spire was rebuilt after a fire in 1947. The yew tree in the churchyard is the most ancient feature of the parish, at an estimated 4000 years old.

In 2001 Crowhurst Parish had a population of 349, and in 2011 it had decreased to 281, living in 119 households. In 2015, there are 129 households in Crowhurst Parish within 9.7km².

Crowhurst Parish Council role

Crowhurst Parish Council is a corporate body with separate legal identity to that of its members. Its decisions are the responsibility of the whole body, no Councillor has authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council and the Council cannot make decisions outside of a formal meeting. Parish Councils have been granted powers by Parliament including the authority to raise money through taxation (the precept) and a range of powers to spend public money.

The Council is an elected tier of local government. Other tiers, known as principal authorities, have a legal duty to deliver services such as education, town and country planning, environmental health and social services. As a Parish Council we have the power to take action, but we have fewer duties and greater freedom to choose what action to take and therefore we play a vital role in representing the interests of our community and improve the quality of life in our local environment.

Specific duties of the Parish Council include:

- Management and oversight of Parish assets;
- Liaison with Surrey County Council in respect of public highways; including Footpaths and Roads;
- Review and oversight of planning applications.

All other facilities are provided by the County or District Councils.



The Parish Clerk role

The Parish Clerk is the proper officer of the Council and a statutory office holder. The Clerk is not an elected member, but an employee of the Council. As an officer of the Parish Council the Clerk is responsible for implementing Council's decisions. The duties, role and hours of the Parish Clerk is included in the Clerk's contract of employment.

The law requires that all Parish Councils have both a proper officer and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). The Crowhurst Parish Clerk performs both roles and is considered to be a statutory office holder and the proper officer.

The position of Parish Clerk is not that of an unpaid volunteer, it is a position defined in law as that of a statutory office holder and has legal duties and responsibilities. The Clerk is paid a salary by the Parish Council, this is based on a defined number of hours worked and is paid from the precept. As an employer Crowhurst Parish Council is registered for National Insurance and will be required to consider Pension to conform with recent legislation.

Specific duties of the clerk include:

- Maintenance of the council finances and preparation of accounts;
- Receiving correspondence and forwarding relevant matters to Councillors;
- Communication with Parish and Council;
- Managing the administration for all Parish Council meetings, including agenda, papers, attendance list and minutes;
- Implementing Council decisions.

Community Involvement in the Business Plan

To ensure that the Business Plan truly represents the best interests of Crowhurst and its current residents, the Parish Council are working towards delivery of the objectives agreed within the Neighbourhood Plan. Should Parishioners wish to make further contribution they should contact the Parish Clerk by email on clerk@crowhurstonline.co.uk

Monitoring progress against the Plan

Once agreed, the business plan will be published on the Parish Council website and will be subject to regular review. Progress will be formally checked at each Council meeting, with a specific agenda item allocated for this purpose.

2022 Vision and beyond

Crowhurst Parish Council represents Crowhurst parishioners and as such aims to work with the parishioners, to give a voice to the whole community and to maintain that community voice with the District and County authorities.

We will implement policies and initiatives which will help encourage a greater sense of community for all who live in Crowhurst and to encourage involvement and pride in the Parish of Crowhurst, whilst complying with the rules and obligations of a Parish Council.

The Parish Council will conduct its business by means that are transparent, sustainable, environmentally friendly, and that present the best value in achieving the actions laid out in this Council Business Plan.



3 Year Business Plan

This three year Business Plan aims to meet the Parish Council's vision:

2022/23 Plan:

- We will complete the Neighbourhood Plan;
- We will deliver the objectives set for the Council within the approved Neighbourhood Plan;
- We will focus on matters identified within the Neighbourhood Plan which deliver positive outcomes for all Crowhurst residents;
- We will work with landowners to improve accessibility to footpaths;
- We will continue to develop our knowledge of planning law and work to ensure compliance within the Parish, providing local insight and knowledge to Tandridge in response to planning applications;
- We will continue to develop and maintain the Crowhurst website for use by the Council and extend its use to other village organisations and Parishioners;
- We will improve communication between the Council and members of the community via Crowhurstonline.uk and by holding regular open meetings to gather community feedback;
- We will maintain proactive oversight of our roads and ditches, working with Surrey County Council to ensure that road repairs are prioritised and ditch owners accept their responsibility for clearance and flooding is reduced;
- We will look at ways to improve road safety throughout the village for all road users;
- We will continue to increase our voice as a Parish Council and ensure that the District Council (Tandridge) and County Council (Surrey) listen to our views, through engaging with the Tandridge Planning Team and attending TDC events and meetings, and regular communication with TDC planners, where necessary.
- We will ensure that the Council has appropriate resources in order to fulfil its obligations to the Parish;
- We will comply with all relevant regulations within the defined timescale, investing resources as necessary to do so;
- We will maintain Parish Assets for use by the community;
- We will work with the Police and Parish Watch to reduce the Crime within the Parish;
- We will work with the Community to reduce litter in the Parish;
- We will gain grants, where possible, to assist with Council funding of our major objectives;
- We will work with other village organisations (Church, Village Hall and Events) in order to achieve the best outcome for the community;

2023-2024

- We will complete all matters previously implemented and not yet finished.
- We will continue to deliver all matters that are continuous.

2024 -25

- We will continue to deliver all matters that are continuous objectives.
- We will complete all matters previously implemented and not yet finished.



Budget for 2022-23

Income 2022-23		Expenditure	£
Precept	15600	Clerk - Salary, NI and Pens	9500
Fishing Club	1950	Clerk - Mileage 26 miles rtn x 0.45 x 13	155
Interest	10	Clerk - Office Expenses and Phone	600
Income Planned	£17560	Clerk - IT Equipment	300
		Clerk – SLCC subscription	160
Prev years unspent – earmarked reserves – 2021/22 and prior.			
Contingency	600	Training – Clerk and Councillors	300
Neighbourhood Plan	250		
Maintenance	875	Bank charges	10
IT Equipment	1000		
Legal fund	3950	Hall hire	250
Election	850		
Highways & Infrastructure	2274	Council subscriptions - NALC & SALC	120
Defib	815		
Bowerland Corner	2120	Contingency	500
Grants	80		
Total earmarked reserves	12814	Neighbourhood Plan finalisation inc Hall hire	750
General reserves	30011	Insurance	600
		Maintenance of parish assets	1500
Inc unspent 21-22	?	Auditor (Internal & External)	350
		Donations / Remembrance	100
		Infrastructure improvements & Highways	4000
		Website	400
		Village celebrations - Christmas / Jubilee	650
Total including	£60385	Total	20245



Allowances and time

Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties. Councillors volunteer their time for the benefit of the Parish and the delivery of the Parish Business Plan. The time given varies according to role, but is considered to be on average 4 hours a week per Councillor.

The clerk is employed to work 6 hours per week, although some weeks would require less, several require more, therefore balancing to the appropriate annual hours. Moving to develop a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to require additional hours from the Parish Clerk as Councillors are unlikely to be able to dedicate much more time than they do currently.

The Chairman is allowed an allowance, but does not claim for such.