Looking back, 2013 was a busy year in West Parley... the District Council finally submitted their building plans for consideration - including 520 houses in W.P.’s Green Belt - and the Independent Inspector continues her ongoing Public Inquiry into their suitability. The Travellers invaded W.P. for the first time in years, and another first was that we entered W.P. into the South in Bloom competition in July. More focus and attention was given to W.P.’s long Heritage and we launched many new community events and assistance programmes too... so please read on for more on all of this here.

New Housing Plans. These were examined by the Planning Inspector at an Inquiry which began in September and is still ongoing. The Inspector has already told E.D.D.C. to do more work on them and some modified plans are now out which show substantially reduced housing on the Dudsbury field, much of which is now planned to be a public park. The New Road field is unchanged as yet. The Parish Council together with other local organisations continue to fight and effectively protest and oppose the insensitive nature of these plans from EDDC. The Parish Council is closely monitoring their progress and potential impact on our village and expect the Inspector may report in mid 2014 – the Government may decide about end 2014 – the planning application phase would last until about end of 2015. However National and District Council elections in May 2015, may well affect all of this?
For the first houses – if they were to come – think 2017 and beyond. As ever, we will keep you informed and thank you for your tremendous support so far.

Travellers. They forced the gate and occupied the Rec Ground last July. It was a difficult time, especially for local residents and families trying to use the playground and facilities. Working with the police and local councillors, we had them out after a week, and the Rec Ground was cleaned and re-opened just 24 hours after their departure. We learned a number of useful lessons and managed to successfully evict them much more quickly than many other councils have done.
Physical barriers have been improved and we will be installing cameras and other counter measures, and we now have a good liaison and support from the Police as a result.

PTO...
The South in Bloom Competition
W.P. entered this for the first time in July and got a Silver award! Residents cooperated marvellously in keeping W.P. litter free with gardens and verges trimmed and tidy. Parley First School did especially well and helped us tremendously. This year we plan to do even better, and will add a front gardens competition sponsored by Golden Acres. Details of our ideas for the 2014 competition will be available soon.

West Parley’s Heritage  W.P. has a far longer history than any of our neighbours and we have been working to make this better known. For the first time there was a Heritage Day Exhibition, held at Parley Sports Club in June which was well attended. Also a new Heritage Walk will take you round all our ancient sites with new village information signs explaining a little of their history and helping explore our village.

Parley Wood  This ancient wood – some of the trees are over 400 years old – belongs to the residents of W.P. For the first time in many years major improvements are underway. Parish volunteers are clearing and widening pathways. Invasive holly is being removed. Drainage is being worked on, signs are in place to explain where the paths go and what to see, and some benches have been put up for the weary walker. If you haven’t been there lately, do take a look.

Parley Country Club  A new name for the Sports Club building off Christchurch Road, reflecting the recent major overhaul that has greatly improved the facilities and made the Club much more attractive. There is now a continuous flow of events – bonfire nights, the Big Run, fetes and fairs are among the outside attractions – and affordable quality meals and refreshments are available inside. The Club is also host to many community gatherings and events.

Community activities  As a result of your feedback last year a very successful Walkers Group and a Lunch club have been added to the long established coffee club on Wednesdays, all meeting at Parley Country Club. Numbers are increasing steadily, drawn by good food and drink at very reasonable prices.

Volunteer Driver Scheme  again, something else you asked for, is proving very popular and much appreciated. It is well run by a very professional group of keen volunteers.

Ever keen  to get our youngsters involved in community events there are new Family Days at Parley Country Club, two ‘Nuts for Nature’ activity days were held in Parley Wood and a ‘Sting in the Tale’ story telling event at the Memorial Hall. We hope to repeat these events in 2014.

Don’t forget  we offer cash grants to support local groups and we are keen to support any local group that will strengthen and encourage community spirit and involvement.

Community Assets  You will have seen more trees and benches around the village. Next year we plan to put a fence around the play area at the Recreation Ground and are looking at putting in cycle racks where needed. We hope to tarmac the well-used car park by the Rec.

Do tell us what you think?  The Parish Council is here to serve our residents. If you have a question, a need, a problem – we would like to hear about it. Write, email or phone the Clerk, the Chairman, or any of the Councillors - all of whose contact details can be found on the notice boards at Parley Cross or Glenmoor Road shopping area, or on the Parish Council website at: www.westparley-pc.gov.uk