

## **Flying the Flag**

I am sure you will have noticed that the village Flagpole has been moved from the grounds of the Wathen Bartlett Club to a more visible position in the triangle in the centre of the village. The move has been sponsored by the Burley Branch of the Royal British Legion and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Wathen Bartlett Committee for hosting the Flagpole in recent years and to thank Major Carter for all his efforts in facilitating and funding the move.

As is common in the New Forest, there are several steps which need to be taken to facilitate changes of this nature. A license from the Forestry Commission has been received for the positioning of the Flagpole however, they have applied certain conditions which need to be reviewed. Primarily, when the Flagpole is not in use, it needs to be removed. Clearly this is not a practical solution and the Parish Council at their Meeting back in November, agreed that the preferred option is for the Flagpole to remain in place on a permanent basis and the Forestry Commission to be re-approached with a view to changing the conditions of the license.

There has also been a discussion in respect to when the Union or other flags should be flown, one view is that the flag should always remain in place and alternatively, flags should only be raised to mark special occasions on the official calendar and special events in the village. Should it be decided that the flag should always be flown, official guidelines stipulate that the flags should normally be flown from sunrise to sunset. Spare flags will be needed to ensure the flags do not get tattered, which is disrespectful and the flags can be cleaned on a regular basis. Flags may be flown by night as well as by day as long as they are always properly illuminated, preferably by spotlight. It could be argued that flying the flag all the time makes it commonplace rather than marking a special occasion.

Clearly there are emotional issues and logistical challenges with both these options which need to be resolved and very strong views in the village in respect to which options we should follow. As is invariably the case, these issues are never straight forward, and all the respective compliance issues need to be considered and agreed. In the interim, it has been agreed by the Parish Council that we fully investigate the feasibility of all the options, with a view to the Parish Council making a final decision early in the New Year.

**Burley Parish Council**