

TWYFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

ST MARYS CHURCH CENTRE 26th April 2017 AT 8PM

Present: Mr R Mantel (Chairman), Members of the Council – Mrs E Ashley, Mrs T Ramsden, Messrs J Bowley, M Bray, D Fergusson, C Smith, C Wickenden, T Winchester & D White.
Members of the public – 19.

In attendance: Mrs L Moffatt, Clerk.

Apologies – Councillors Mrs B Ditcham, Mrs L Jarvis, Messrs M Boniface, J Jarvis, R Morris & Borough Councillor Mr L Ferris.

1. Mr R Mantel presented the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 27th April 2016.

2. **Matters Arising** - none

3. **Parish Lands Report – Parish Lands Report** Mr Bowley reported on the Parish Lands committee's activities this year. The Parish Lands Committee is responsible for managing all of the council's land and property. This includes Stanlake Meadow, King George V Recreation Ground, Jubilee Corner, Bell Corner, the Burial Ground, and the two sets of allotments. The Committee also oversees the work of the Village Ranger and Park Warden.

The King George V Recreation Ground continues to be popular with a wide variety of people. From dog walkers to families. Throughout the year the field has hosted a number of village events. The Youth Centre Colour Run, the Bonfire Carnival, the Beer Festival, the Scout Donkey Derby, Happy Hours Pre-School fete, Twyford Together Fun Run; to name a few. The ball court, skate park and play areas continue to be well used. However we have had more incidents than we would have liked where glass has been broken around this area. At the request of representatives from the Youth Centre we installed a new bin. This helped the situation but unfortunately it was recently vandalised. On a brighter note this year we instigated a project to refurbish the toddler side of the play area. This was done in consultation with local users of those facilities. I am pleased to report that the order has been placed for the replacement equipment and this will be installed over the coming months.

Our other major outdoor facility is Stanlake Meadow. This is the home of Twyford Cricket club and Twyford Comets football club. It is also popular with dog walkers and families. As was reported last year after many years of occupying the pavilion the Yellow Brick Nursery decided to close this location. We took the opportunity to redecorate and refurbish the kitchen area. This refurbishment was probably long overdue. The building has now been taken up by the Colleton After School Club for use with their older children. We have unfortunately had some instances of vandalism, which we have not had for a number of years. These were though only isolated instances.

The Family Picnic event was probably slightly less well attended this year, but not by much, if at all. This was probably down to the weather on the day. After feedback from the community we have decided to change the name of the event. It is now called the Twyford Village Fete. This is to reflect that fact that it is open to all, not just families, and you don't have to bring food. This year's event is already well under way in terms of planning, and it promises to be bigger and better than ever. I urge you all to come along, and bring your friends and family with you. Entrance is free and many of the attractions are free too, including the main event of a motor cycle stunt display.

This year we have decided to try to rejuvenate the wild flower area in the corner of Stanlake Meadow. We are grateful to all those involved for their time and effort.

Both sets of allotments have a reasonably high occupancy. The London Road allotments, as always, have continued to be fully taken. Hurst road has a number of empty plots, but traditionally there has always been fluctuation in occupancy levels. We are very grateful to the Twyford Allotments Tenant's Association for all the work they have done on improving the allotments. Mainly at Hurst Road. They have done an amazing job of clearing the hazel copse at the bottom of the Hurst Road allotments. They have also had great success with setting up some "taster" allotment plots to try to encourage people to take up allotment holding, by having a much smaller

area to work. They have offered help and advice to encourage people to become interested. Which will hopefully lead to them taking up plots of their own.

We had a short lived issue with a few commuters using the parking area at the Hurst Road allotment site, but this soon ended. We now have a better lock on the gate which should help prevent this from happening again. It would be remis of me not to mention the hot topic of parking in general and how this relates to the allotments but other than mention it I won't go into more detail as this will be covered by a separate report.

On behalf of the Council I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Village Ranger, Park Warden, and our cleaner for their hard work throughout the year. I would also like to thank the Clerk, and all the members of the committee for their time and contributions this year.

I will end my report on a sad note and that is to mention the unfortunate passing of a member of the Parish Lands committee. Mike Bedford was a lively member of the committee and a valued one. His untimely death was of great sadness to the committee and the council in general. Our thoughts are still with his family and friends.

4. Planning and Amenities Report – Written by Mrs Ditcham and read by Mr C Smith. Mr Smith reported on the Planning and Amenities Committee's activities for the past year.

The Planning and Amenities Committee of 8 council members meet on the first Tuesday of the month every month. Our agenda ensures that the responsibilities of the committee are addressed regularly.

We continue to view and comment to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) on all planning application in the village at the rate of approximately 9 monthly. We believe that our detailed local knowledge of Twyford is a very important part in the planning process.

You will be aware that the council took the initiative to replace sodium lamps with LED lamps on all Twyford Parish Council (TPC) street lampposts. More recently WBC made a similar decision, we have joined their scheme as we obtained a more financial attractive deal due to economies of scale.

The Planning and Amenities committee has the responsibility for reporting faults with road and footpath surfaces, litter bins and signage. We are in regular communication with WBC on these matters. In summer 2016 TPC raised concerns on behalf of residents re. grass cutting. Residents, TPC council and WBC councillor showed officers the areas we were dissatisfied with. We reached an agreement on what was required and the new contract which has been set up appears to be satisfactory.

More recently we have met with officers to discuss the rural footpath on Stanlake Lane which has become very narrow due to ground level vegetation and ingress of soil. It has been agreed that the full width of the footpath will be reinstated.

We are supporting "Twyford Together" Twyford in Bloom initiative again this year. If residents wish to purchase a basket for lamppost near their home contact Twyford Together for more details. The Council organised a Litter Pick earlier this year which augments the excellent work done by the Adopt a Street group.

We have provided 2 defibrillators one on each of our recreation grounds to add to the number fitted around Twyford by other organizations. The Planning and Amenities committee are investigating the provision of "gateways" at the entrances to the village, at present there is a Twyford sign on the reverse of the gateway provided by Hurst Parish Council we are considering smaller structures than many seen around the borough.

The traffic lights at the centre of the village cause a problem even when working properly! The queues of vehicles with their engine running are causing a very high level of air pollution – the 2nd highest in the borough. Councillors attended a workshop session where we put forward suggestions, both simple and radical, to alleviate this problem. These ideas are to be included in a plan which will be published next month by WBC.

You will all be aware of the need for additional dwellings in the South East of England and that all local government areas have been issued with a quota of homes to be built annually. WBC has developed a Local Plan to manage growth and development across the Borough. It is an extensive collection of planning documents drawn up following consultations. It is a very complex issue and I advise you to view this on the Wokingham website. Four local authorities are undertaking cross boundary work, Bracknell, West Berkshire, Wokingham, and Reading. WBC a "Call for Sites" inviting developers to identify possible, potential sites for development across the borough. Each

Parish Council was then asked to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of developing these sites according to hard criteria. Although the possible sites in Twyford are few and small when compared with other parishes we made a detail reply. However, we are very aware that any development in the surrounding area will have a profound effect on Twyford as we are an important and developing transport hub. Therefore we called and hosted 2 meetings for representatives from all the Northern Parishes and WBC councillors to make a unified response to WBC to possible development in the area in addition to the individual parish council responses. To conclude on a high note, the Parish Council website is alive. It is being managed by Councillor Richard Morris and our Clerk Mrs Moffatt.

I would like to thank Mrs Moffatt for her conscientious and efficient work on behalf of the P and A Committee.

5. Financial Report- Mr Fergusson reported.

May I start with my thanks to the clerk and Finance Committee members for their hard work during the year.

I refer you to the sheet of paper circulated showing the Council's budget for 2016-2017, the actual expenditure for 2016-2017 and the council's budget for 2017-2018. Please note that the headings on the left-hand side refer to the figures for 2016-17 and the headings on the right-hand side refer to the 2017-18 budget.

Our expenditure was £107,926 against a budget of £112,532 with income of £46,608 against a budget of £38,695. Our net expenditure was £62,357 against a budget of £73,837. In addition, £6,996 has been spent on capital works over the year.

Our total budget for 2017-2018 is £121,765, we have a predicted income from rents and fees of £43,065 and are precepting for £77,920.55. This precept is an increase on the previous financial year primarily due to the recruitment of an assistant clerk and an increased budget for the Twyford Village Fete.

The budget means that the owner of a band D property pays £26.02 this year. To this is added £170.28 for the Thames Valley Police, £62.49 for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services, £63.78 Adult Social Care and £1,295.49 for the Wokingham Borough Council, making a total council tax payment for a band D property this year £1,618.06.

The average council tax for a band D property across the borough is higher at £1,650.35.

This puts Twyford at position no.10 with the highest council tax for a band D property being Woodley at £1,698.75 and the lowest Swallowfield at £1,611.23.

(Looking at our total precept of £77,920.55 this is in position no. 10 with the highest precept of £1,081,303 in Woodley at no. 1 and the lowest precept of £10,266 in Ruscombe at no. 17.)

The Parish Council continues to use the income from its investments to assist local groups with grants. This year the council has made grants to Berkshire MS Therapy Centre, Citizens Advice, Keep Mobile, ARC and Readibus. A total of £1,400 was given in grants this past year.

Our assistant clerk has been recruited and will commence with the Parish Council next week supporting the Clerk with her duties. The reason for recruiting an assistant clerk is that the Parish Council has become busier including additional services in the community, such as the village fete, and also additional sub committees and advisory committees.

Just over a year ago we were contacted by Quincy in North East France about our interest in forming a twinning relationship. We have been in regular communication whilst considering the benefits of pursuing twinning. In March, the Parish Council approached a number of the community associations in Twyford to determine if there is an interest to form a twinning relationship. Additionally, we invited the Sonning Twinning Association to talk to us regarding their twinning experience. Last week we held a second meeting and will be holding a third meeting on 25 May at 7:45pm to form the Twyford Twinning Association Committee that will act as the focal point for the twinning relationship with support from the Parish Council.

6. Parking Advisory Committee Report Written by Mr Morris and read by Mr Fergusson.

A new committee has been formed within the Twyford Parish Council, this Spring, to collate and review all available current views and data, as well as future projections, regarding the emotive issues of parking within the village. The committee is chaired by Cllr Richard Morris who, unfortunately, cannot attend this evening.

The electrification enhancements, due for implementation late 2017, Crossrail implementation, due December 2018 and the anticipated new link to Heathrow Airport will collectively have a very significant impact on Twyford Station.

The programmes of house building in the Bracknell/Binfield and North Wokingham/Emmbrook areas, together with possible future approvals closer to the village, mean that more traffic and rail commuters can be expected. Unfortunately, Wokingham Borough Council has not undertaken volume growth analysis or any traffic survey since 2011.

The crossroads centre of Twyford already records the second highest air pollution in the Borough. The current station car park is routinely full Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and almost full on Mondays. It's condition and access maintenance has been poor, to date. 38 additional spaces are due for introduction in the former coal yard to supplement the facility but a similar number of spaces are currently lost for rail contractor materials and access for electrification works. The Parish Council has offered to provide some temporary replacement parking facilities if the station car park is upgraded. However, GWR currently reject proposals to build a modular two storey replacement on the existing site on the grounds of its shape and access.

Wokingham Borough Council plan to introduce Civil Parking Enforcement for parking management of our borough, this Autumn, taking responsibility away from the Police. Many residents have raised issues with both Borough and Parish Councillors regarding on-street parking by commuters. However, no revisions will be considered by Wokingham until CPE is introduced.

The committee will also consider cycling scope, pedestrian access, bus and park & ride possibilities to alleviate parking issues for the village.

It is too early in the Parking Advisory Committee's deliberations for findings and recommendations to be put forward, although the Council recognises how emotive the issues of traffic and parking options are becoming.

7. Borough Council matters – Reported by email from Mr Lindsay Ferris.

8. Chairman's Review of the Year–Mr Mantel reported-

When I look back over the last year I should mention that last June one of our councillors proposed that we consider developing part of our allotment land near the station to provide parking. Both the Planning Committee and Parish Lands committee discussed this at their subsequent meetings.

At the July meeting the proposal was withdrawn. But the Council then decided a few months later to set up an Advisory committee on Parking, reports on which you heard earlier this evening.

During the year sadly Cllr Mike Bedford passed away. Although Mr Bedford was not on the Council for a long time he was a resident of the village for many years and helped especially with the organisation of last years Family Picnic, this year to be called the Village Fête. Don't forget the date, Saturday, August 19th, Stanlake Meadow, 1-5 pm

The council welcomed three new members during the year:

Mrs Theresa Ramsen, Mr Malcolm Bray and Mr David White. I hope they will find their work on the Council rewarding and enjoyable.

As you heard tonight the Council has somewhat expanded from 3 committees by adding a Parking Advisory committee and the Fête committee has now become well established. Also during the year a Website committee was set up to launch the website. This meant more clerics assistance was needed for the extra meetings. A new part-time deputy clerk will start next month.

I would like to thank our clerk Mrs Lucy Moffatt. Lucy had to cope last year with a lot of extra work and it is to her credit that the council kept functioning remarkably well. I am deeply indebted to her for her dedication and steadfastness.

9. Questions from the floor.

Linda Spicer of Mallard Close reported that WBC have said that 700-1000 parking spaces are to be made available in Twyford. What is the timeframe and are there any plans to cope with that number?

Mr Mantel responded that the Parish Council have not been given any figures from WBC. The Parish Council provide parking in the Wargrave Road car park however parking for commuters is required. He is not confident that WBC are taking action to meet that need.

Merriam Jones of Heron Drive suggested that WBC should talk with Maidenhead about solving the commuter problems together. Can the Parish Council make a suggestion to WBC to talk to Maidenhead?

Mick Yeates of Hurst Road reported that Cllr David Sleight was on record as having said that WBC will compulsory purchase the allotment land for a car park. He urged residents to write to Rt Hon Theresa May to object to this.

Ian Stafford of Station Road asked if the Parish Council were looking at other locations to relocate the recycling facilities removed from the Waitrose car park. The clerk reported that WBC are emptying the Polehampton close facilities more regularly and the Parish Council are monitoring and reviewing the situation.

Paul Minton of Amberley Drive asked what protection our parks have. Mr Bowley responded that King George V is in trust and Stanlake Meadow is protected by a covenant.

Ray Sunley had previously suggested a 'Twyford Parkway Station' and he asked what consideration was given to these plans. Mr Bowley reported that the Council were in full support of these ideas however GWR have ruled them out as too expensive.

Malcolm George of Wargrave Road suggested moving the traffic lights back to provide a one way section from north to south such as Wargrave.

Mr Bowley responded that the issue is greater pollution as this caused an increased lagging time.

Barbara Smith of New Road reported the parking on verges at Pennfields. This is an issue that Ruscombe Parish Council have been reporting to WBC. She reported that the gate at the Longfield Road entrance of King George V does not spring back closed. She also praised the Council for the least number of potholes outstanding!

Joanne Duffield of Paddock Heights praised the work of TATA in tidying up the allotments.

Wendy Stafford of Station Road asked for an update on the Community Hub. Mr Bowley, the Councils representative, has not been notified of any meetings recently. He reported that the group are yet to come up with a viable financial model for the project. Some discussion took place on this subject.

**The meeting
closed at 9:08 pm.**