

TWYFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

ST MARYS CHURCH CENTRE 25th April 2018 AT 8PM

Present: Mr R Mantel (Chairman), Members of the Council – Mrs E Ashley, Mrs B Ditcham, Mrs J Duffield, Mrs L Jarvis, Mrs T Ramsden, Messrs M Boniface, J Bowley, M Bray, J Jarvis (also Borough Councillor), C Wickenden & T Winchester.

Borough Councillors: Mr L Ferris & Mr W Smith.

Members of the public – 30.

In attendance: Mrs L Moffatt, Clerk & Mrs L Povey Assistant Clerk.

Apologies – Councillors M Alder & D Fergusson.

1. Mr R Mantel presented the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 26th April 2017.

2. **Matters Arising** - none

3. **Parish Lands Report – Parish Lands Report** Mr Bowley reported on the Parish Lands committee's activities this year.

Parish Lands Report

The Parish Lands Committee is responsible for managing all 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. Throughout the year the field has hosted a number of the regular 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, but we continue to have sporadic incidents where large amounts of glass are being broken around this area. This year we undertook a project to refurbish the toddler side of the play area. This was done in consultation with local users of those facilities. It is also the home of Twyford Tennis Club, which has grown steadily over the last few years. We are currently working with the Tennis Club to try to secure LTA funding to help the club to continue to grow and improve.

Our other major outdoor facility is Stanlake Meadow. This is the home of Twyford Cricket club and Twyford Comets football club, both of which continue to go from strength to strength. It is also popular with dog walkers and families. After the departure of The Yellow Brick Nursery the Colleton After School Club began using the pavilion for their after school club for their older children. The pavilion was built a good number of years ago and has probably not adapted quite so well to its change in usage from a changing room building to a multi-use building. This year we have started a project to look at potential design changes and alterations we can undertake to the pavilion to make it more usable for its variety of users. We have taken the services of a popular Twyford based architect to work with us to understand what is desired and build plans for how we might realise this.

The Village Fete event was extremely well attended this year. This was probably down to a combination of some exiting events, and the sunny weather on the day. The motorcycle stunt show, and the classic car display were two of the popular displays. The tug of war and the "school races" were also very popular among the many, many, things taking place during the day. This coming year's event is already well under way in terms of planning, and it promises to be just as good as last year's. 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.

Both sets of allotments have had a high level of occupancy over the year. The London Road allotments, as always, have continued to be fully taken. Hurst road is now full too, but traditionally there has always been fluctuation in occupancy levels, so this was not the case throughout the year. We are very grateful to the Twyford Allotments Tenant's Association for all the work they have done with helping to improve the allotments.

The Parish Council's burial ground is filling up and whilst we have expanded the space available it will, inevitably, fill up. We have started a process to look at the possibility of introducing a columbarium. If introduced this will provide a facility for the remains of Twyford residents for many years to come.

On behalf of the Council I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Village Ranger, Park Warden, our cleaner, and the clerk for their hard work throughout the year. I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their time and contributions this year. Finally, I would like to thank all of our gardening volunteers who do a great job looking after Jubilee Corner, Bell Corner, and the Polehampton Close garden; and to Parkers for watering the raised bed on Bell Corner.

4. Planning and Amenities Report – Mrs Ditcham reported on the Planning and Amenities Committee's activities for the past year.

Good evening, I am Bridget Ditcham and have chaired the Planning and Amenities Committee during 2017/2018. Our 8 members meet on the first Tuesday of the Month and report to Full Council on the 4th Tuesday of the month. As with all council meetings, apart from confidential meetings, Twyford parishioners are welcome to attend.

Our agenda ensures that the statutory responsibility of the Committee is addressed regularly. We would like to thank Lucy Moffatt, our clerk, for her patience, efficiency and conscientious work during the last year and we welcome Lynn Povey, who has recently been appointed as Assistant Clerk with one of her responsibilities being to clerk the Planning and Amenities meetings and to carry out the requests of the committee.

This report on the work of the Planning and Amenities committee will be in 3 sections. The first being Twyford's role in Wokingham and the effects of legislation, the second section reporting on the regular ongoing work of the committee and the third section will be a brief introduction to neighbourhood planning to be presented by Charles Wickenden.

Part 1

We are all aware of the Government demand to build more homes for the rising population in South East England. Wokingham Borough Council have a Local Plan which guides development of the area up to 2036 and aims to ensure that all considerations regarding development are legal. This local plan is in the process of being updated. 260 potential sites have been identified by landowners in the Wokingham Borough area in the call for sites process.

There are 3 larger sites identified as possible potential areas of development, 1. Grazeley, 2. Barkham Square 3. Around Twyford (this includes Ruscombe, Hurst) W.B.C. has commissioned consultants to carry out a detailed assessment of these 3 areas. Twyford and other villages in the Northern Parishes have responded to consultations with detailed and evidenced comments for each of the sites in our area. We are assured that this "master planning" work is not prejudging the outcome and in fact will be repeated in several cycles.

A decision will be made by WBC members whether to progress on any of the options in Summer of this year. Any development in the northern parishes will impact on Twyford which the transport and retail hub of the area is. When you view the maps of the area it is obvious that most sites are in Green Belt or Flood plain.

It is essential to stress that no sites have been accepted at present.

Twyford Parish Council believes we need to be actively and enthusiastically involved in the local planning process to date we have attended all meetings, workshops, discussions with members and commented in detail on all sites in our area.

To secure the position of the future of Twyford the council are developing a Neighbourhood Plan for our village which Charles will report on later.

Part 2

Ongoing Regular Work.

We view and comment on all planning applications made in the Parish area, residential and commercial. We see about 9 each month. When considering these we use national and local guide lines as well as our detailed local knowledge of the area.

Until last year we viewed paper plans however now all plans are online and can be viewed by all, so councillors are able to study these before the meeting and then again at the meeting.

You will be aware that all the sodium street lamps have been replaced with LED lamps, Twyford Parish Council had started this process and then joined with WBC to complete the change over as it made financial sense. We are enjoying reduced running costs and improved levels of light

pollution but are aware that the system may need adjusting in the future as there are pockets of areas which are not well lit.

We work with Twyford Together to improve our environment and support Twyford in Bloom, you will see an increase in the number of hanging baskets radiating from the centre of Twyford this year funded by Twyford Parish Council.

We continue to be very concerned regarding the high level of air pollution at the traffic lights. We have made suggestions to WBC, we have agreed to the setting up of monitoring equipment which will give times of the highest pollution rates. A report has been published by Wokingham Borough Council but it appears to only suggest monitoring and not action at the present.

Our website has been live for a year now, we have had difficulty when the company managing the site gave up but are pleased and grateful that this is being carried out by councillors and staff.

The annual litter pick occurred again this year. The worst areas were Gas Lane and around the top of Wargrave Road. We are all thankful for the work done by Chris and Gerry Wise in organising the Adopt a Street volunteers.

We continue to inform, request, advise, Wokingham Borough Council of potholes, damaged road signs, street lighting failures blocked street drains if you notice any of these you can report them to the clerk or report them directly to Wokingham Borough Council on their website.

We are hoping that new gateway signs will be in place during the summer, these will be low gateway type structures with the Twyford sign and if appropriate a speed limit sign.

I will now ask Charles to tell you about the Neighbourhood plan and your involvement.

Mr C Wickenden reported on the Neighbourhood Plan working group.

I'd like to take a few moments to address the proposed Twyford Neighbourhood Plan. As many of you will know the review of the Wokingham Local Plan which will provide a blueprint for the development of the area to 2036 is underway and as is usual when these exercises are undertaken has generated proposals from developers including significant ones in the Twyford area. This has prompted many of the local Parish Councils in the Northern Parishes to engage with their communities to understand what local residents, businesses, workers and other users really want for their area. This is not to agree or support new proposals but it is important that the local community has a voice in this process and one of the most effective ways of achieving this is through a Neighbourhood Plan which if successful, will be a statutory document that has to be taken into account by planning authorities. The Parish Council is keen to conduct a Neighbourhood Plan that could provide a better focus and more local control of things like the types and demand of housing as well as specific rights over the management of important amenities such as the conservation zone, green spaces, car parking and importantly the possibility of bringing extra funding for those village amenities. It will probably take a year or more to complete the plan which will be put to the test of residents by a referendum and it will take the support of the wider community to ensure maximum possible engagement. We are looking for volunteers to join us and some of us will be available after this meeting to discuss the sort of things we are hoping to do. We're also holding a kick-off meeting at Loddon Hall at 7:30 pm on the 23rd May to explain more to those with an interest in Twyford and to seek their help. It will require a range of skills and interests and all contributions large or small will be valuable. So please let me know and or come along in May if you feel you would like to lend a hand. This is one of the most important ways that you can influence the future of our community and ensure that we have the village we want. Thank you for your support.

5. Financial Report- Mr Winchester 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 2017-2018, the actual expenditure for 2017-2018 and the council's budget for 2018-2019. Please note that the headings on the left-hand side refer to the figures for 2017-18 and the headings on the right-hand side refer to the 2018-19 budget.

Our expenditure was £109,895 against a budget of £121,765 with income of £47,177 against a budget of £43,065. Our net expenditure was £62,718 against a budget of £78,700. In addition,

£42,655 has been spent on refurbishing the King George V toddler playground, £983 on temporary allotment fencing and £885 to purchase a new office photocopier. These are capital works and Civil Infrastructure Levey works carried out over the year.

Our total budget for 2018-2019 is £126,205, we have a predicted income from rents and fees of £44,040 and are precepting for £81,645.

The budget means that the owner of a band D property pays £27.17 this year. To this is added £182.28 for the Thames Valley Police, £64.36 for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services, £97.76 Adult Social Care and £1,336.13 for the Wokingham Borough Council, making a total council tax payment for a band D property this year £1,707.70.

The average council tax for a band D property across the borough is higher at £1,741.03.

This puts Twyford at position no.10 with the highest council tax for a band D property being Woodley at £1,787.24 and the lowest Swallowfield at £1699.72.

(Looking at our total precept of £81,645 this is in position no. 10 with the highest precept of £1,101,119 in Woodley at no. 1 and the lowest precept of £19,984 in Swallowfield 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 Citizens Advice, Twyford Comets – Dutch Exchange, Twyford Twinning Association, Twyford Youth & Community Centre (Youth Worker contribution & D of E) and ARC. A total of £3,400 was given in grants this past year.

Mr Winchester introduced Mr J Jarvis, Chairman of the Twinning Association who reported on Twinning.

In May/June 2017 Twyford Parish Council called a meeting for the purpose of exploring whether Twyford residents and clubs would be interested in Twinning with a Town in Northern France called Cuincy. These meetings unanimously endorsed this suggestion.

In September/October the Twyford Twinning Association was formed and began discussions with the Cuincy Twinning Association.

Gordon Holmes, Deputy Chairman, and I visited Cuincy in early November 2017 to discuss the Twinning of Twyford with Cuincy and we were met by the Marie of Cuincy and a full team of promoters. We went through what would be required and we found Cuincy most receptive to our suggestions. We were entertained by the team in Cuincy and visited so many places of interest that we felt overwhelmed by their generosity and vigour. We agreed to finalise the terms of the agreement and charter between our two villages and arrange for a meeting in Twyford in March to sign an accord between us.

Gordon Holmes progressed the details of this visit by Cuincy and a date for signing was fixed for the 24th March 2018. This was agreed by all parties and we sent out appropriate invitations and arranged an itinerary to match that given to Gordon and I on our visit in November.

The team from Cuincy arrived on the 23rd March 2018 and we proceeded to welcome them into our homes and to entertain them with the various clubs and associations in Twyford. This culminated in the signing of the Twinning Charter at the Twyford Youth Centre on Saturday morning where all agreed that the ceremony went without a hitch. We are now officially twinned with Cuincy.

We now have a further meeting arranged for June in Cuincy to sign the accord in their village and I understand a full team will be visiting from Twyford.

We have further arranged for a Twyford Twinning Association visit in November 2018 to celebrate the 100 year Anniversary of the ending of the First World War. This will be held at the British War Graves Cemetery in Cuincy.

We have now handed over the baton to the various clubs and associations in Twyford to arrange exchange meetings to further foster this twinning.

Finally I would like to give my especial thanks to Gordon Holmes who put in a large amount of administrative work in ensuring that the whole weekend went without any glitches or disasters.

6. Parking Advisory Committee Report Mr Bowley read Mr Fergusson's report.

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

The Parking Advisory Committee was set up to investigate parking issues in Twyford and report back to the Full Council with any recommendations on improvements to parking in the village.

During 2017 a number of surveys of parking around Twyford were undertaken by both members of the committee and members of the public to gain an understanding of the potential parking issues.

The results of these surveys were collated into a draft report.

The Parish Council has now redirected its attention to the preparation of a Local Plan for the Parish in order to provide the Parish guidance on the management of potential increase in housing in the Northern Parishes.

It is expected once the outcomes of the Local Plan and the WBC future land supply for housing in the Northern Parishes are better understood then the Parking Advisory Committee will resume its investigation into parking needs in Twyford.

7. Borough Council matters –

Reported by Borough Cllr Lindsay Ferris. There have been two issues in Twyford that have caused more concerns than any others over the past 12 months.

The first is the real threat from the potential development of up to 3500 houses on Green Belt land in Ruscombe. The CPRW petition with over 2000 signatures was presented at the 22nd March Wokingham Borough Council Meeting. The size of this petition means that there will now be a public debate on this topic. It has been suggested to the Council that the debate should be held in the Northern Parishes area, for example at Loddon Hall. We await a response from the Council on this.

In addition to land in Ruscombe there are a number of areas within Twyford Parish that are also under threat from development. This includes Loddon & Bridge Farms, Stanlake Meadow, the Allotment area in Hurst Road and some others. The Council has set up a Master Planning activity for three sites including Ruscombe. It is my understanding that the various options being proposed within this Master Planning exercise will be out for public comment somewhere around June time.

The second area relates to the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement last October. Whilst the concept is appropriate, there have been a number of serious issues that have come to light since its launch. We have issues relating to Resident Parking Permit areas and how to deal with visitors and local businesses who come to a property in such an area and other related issues. A number of local residents have had parking tickets and so have local businesses.

In addition we still have the problem of commuter parking and inconsiderate parking in general to deal with. On that front I have registered 14 roads in Twyford with the Council as having continued commuter parking problems. The roads include Broad Hinton, Wessex Gardens, Hermitage Drive, Colleton Drive and others.

I understand there is to be a paper presented at the June WBC Executive Meeting relating to issues arising from the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement. I have as yet not seen any of the proposals, but have provided a number of suggestions."

Reported by Cllr John Jarvis.

Wokingham Borough Council has built one new Secondary School and is in the process of building seven new Primary Schools. These schools will take the additional children from the new housing being built in the four number Strategic Development Locations currently under construction. In the last year Wokingham Borough Council have seen over 500 Number affordable homes being built for our residents of which 120 Number were built by Wokingham Housing Ltd. which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Wokingham Borough Council. The current requirement for over 800 homes being built every year from now until 2036 will see the need for further schools in the Borough and these will be built into the infrastructure requirements of the Local Plan Update.

Wokingham Borough Council has successfully defended 74% of all Planning Appeals which were deemed either unsuitable or unsustainable some of which were in Twyford. This shows that the decisions taken by the Planning Committee to maintain a rural Wokingham can be defended at appeal. Most of those that were lost were due to the problem over a Five Year Housing supply. This has now been rectified and Wokingham currently has a 6.8 year housing supply.

Wokingham Borough Council has built two new roads and two new railway bridges. We are also going to build four new by-passes in the next 3-4 years costing some £124M. This amount is being for out of either Section 106 or CIL monies from the developers with no cost to Council Tax payers in Wokingham. Wokingham Borough Council have recognised that parking around the four railway stations is causing residents parking problems with the roads around Twyford Station being the worst affected and they are investing £4.5M in new Park and Ride schemes to ease these concerns. The introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement last October has seen a large increase in the number of Penalty Tickets being issued for illegal parking which is benefitting local residents. In September we will be reviewing the effect of CPE and altering and adjusting local Traffic Regulation Orders.

With respect to adult social care I am pleased to confirm that Wokingham Borough Council have an effective and unique convalescent programme for those of our residents who are unable to be discharged from hospital direct into their own homes. We are able to look after these vulnerable residents until they are able to return to their own home thus reducing bed blocking. We outperform our neighbouring authorities in this regard. I am also able to confirm that not one family requiring council accommodation has been housed in temporary accommodation for more than 12 months with most being permanently re-housed within 6 months.

Wokingham Borough Council has decided to maintain weekly reuse collections for the foreseeable future. We are also introducing collection of food waste from next year which will see us re-cycling around 50% of the waste in Wokingham thus both reaching our target and avoiding the £500M potential fine for not recycling a minimum of 50% of all waste in the Borough.

Currently the Regeneration of Wokingham is proceeding and will be completed during 2019. We are currently estimating that the income from the redevelopment of the Town Centre and Elms Field will exceed the cost by around £1M per annum. This amount will be used to fund services in the Borough thus reducing the Council Tax to all residents. I would note that the cost of this work is being funded by income from Section 106, CIL monies and government loans with the loans being repaid from sales and rental income. The Council Tax payers in the Borough are not paying for any of these works.

Wokingham Borough Council have borrowed £100M from the government loan board to invest in local property and businesses generating an expected income of £2M to £3M per annum which will be used to keep the Council Tax levels down for all our residents.

Finally I am able to confirm that a Partnership has been set up between Wokingham Borough Council, Twyford Parish Council and the Polehampton Charities to progress the building of a Twyford Community Hub at The Old Boys School and I am confident that this project will now commence.

Reported by Borough Cllr Wayne Smith. It has been a very challenging year with the need to update our WBC "local plan" regarding future development- 2026-2036.

Local councillors were united in forming "CPRW" "Protect Rural Wokingham Campaign" and went on to have a number of events in Twyford to highlight the potential new developments in Ruscombe which would have a serious knock on effect on Twyford.

A number of key stakeholders along with myself from Ruscombe/Twyford attended an all day session on March 10th, this was part of the "master" planning process to discuss the proposed developments and understand local views/concerns etc, Output from the morning session was very clear, building on our " Green Belt" would not be supported and it should be protected for the future generations.

We are expecting a formal update from the session on April 30th. Its always been clear to me the only way forward for Twyford and Ruscombe is to develop their own "Neighbourhood Plans" they can then help shape the future of 2 very important villages. Ruscombe and Hurst have already started the process, I would urge Twyford to do the same, it's important we hear from as many residents in Twyford as possible. Neighbourhood plans need to consider various aspects not just house building...for example

Business

Schools

Transport- rail, buses, cars- how do we deal with Station parking?

Shopping- does Twyford need a modernisation programme

Protecting our "green spaces"

Building the right type of housing

I'm already leading on the plan for Hurst and would be more than happy to help TPC with theirs.

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

We are now starting the last year of this council, which was elected in 2015. New elections will take place in May 2019.

During the year 3 Parish councillors resigned, namely Mr David White, Mr Charles Smith and Mr Richard Morris. I thank them all for their work on the council, Mr Richard Morris for his work as chairman of the Parking Advisory committee, Mr. Charles Smith for his work on the Neighbourhood Action group and Mr David White for his work as the Twinning representative. I am pleased to say that Mr Smith will continue as a member of the Neighbourhood Action Group.

The council co-opted 2 new member, Mrs Jo Duffield and Mr Martin Alder. I hope they will find their work on the council rewarding and enjoyable. There exists 1 vacancy on the council, which will be filled by co-option.

We also welcomed our new Deputy Clerk this year, who is settling in well.

I enjoyed meeting the Mayor of Cuincy, during a recent visit by 5 representatives of Cuincy and look forward to visiting Cuincy next month.

For some years our vice-chairman, John Bowley, has attended a Community hub working group. This dealt with the refurbishment and extension of the old Polehampton Boys School in Polehampton Close. It would incorporate a new library. Lack of funding meant slow progress.

Separately a month ago the chief Executive called a meeting in Twyford. She wants to draw up a report on the project and a further meeting is planned for next month. Twyford Parish council will attend and we shall see the outcome of her report in due course.

I would like to thank our clerk Mrs. Lucy Moffatt and Assistant clerk Lynn Povey for their help to me and all councillors during the year.

Now we come to our last agenda item.

Item 9

9. Questions from the floor.

Mo Elderfield from Chaseside Avenue asked Cllr Wayne Smith what sites are being considered for development in the Local Plan. Cllr Wayne Smith directed Mo Elderfield to the map on display showing the sites.

Margaret Smith of New Road complained about Malvern Way grass cutting and the Borough Councillors agreed to raise this with WBC.

Darren Street of Hurst Park Road commented that the green areas at Wessex Gardens / Hurst Park have been cut too low and will struggle to recover. The Borough Councillors agreed to look at this and report to WBC.

Ray Sunley of Mallard Close asked about the pollution at the cross roads. Mrs Ditcham reported that monitoring stations are situated at the cross roads however WBC have not promised any action with the results. The Council have suggested moving the lights out from the centre and erecting signs 'switch off engines' at the lights.

Cllr Ferris reported that WBC have recently carried out a lot of works at the lights and improvements should be seen.

Cllr Jarvis offered copies of the WBC Air Quality Action Plan.

**The meeting
closed at 8:56 pm.**