

# TWYFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

## ST MARYS CHURCH CENTRE 24th April 2019 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 R Abeywardana, M Alder, M Boniface, J Bowley, M Bray, D Fergusson, J Jarvis (also Borough Councillor), C Wickenden & T Winchester.

Borough Councillors: Mr L Ferris & Mr W Smith.

Members of the public – 41.

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

Apologies - None.

1. Mr R Mantel presented the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

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 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 has again this year been the location for a number of annual village events. The Round Table Bonfire Carnival, the Beer Festival, the Scout Donkey Derby, to name a few. The ball court, skate park, play areas, and the youth shelter all continue to be well used, as does the field itself. We continue to have sporadic incidents with broken glass and litter, but these are not large in comparison to other areas. This year we undertook a project to replace the skate park lighting with LED lighting, just as the council has with all the street lights it looks after. This greatly reduces energy consumption, resulting in a long-term cost benefit, as well as an environmentally positive impact. We have also started the process of getting tenders to replace the CCTV system there. Technology has moved on since the current one was installed, and newer ones have much clearer images, both during the day and at night. We continue to do all we can to have a positive impact on the environment. Working with local volunteers we have started a plan to create wild flower areas within the recreation ground. This will encourage pollinating insects which are a vital part of our eco-system.

Our other major outdoor space is Stanlake Meadow. This is the home of Twyford Cricket club and Twyford Comets football club. Both these clubs are extremely popular with a wide age range of people. It is also popular with dog walkers and families. The pavilion was built a good number of years ago and is not really well suited as a multi-use building. This year our project to look at potential design changes and alterations to the pavilion has made significant steps forward. We engaged a Twyford based architect to work with both the Parish Council and the various regular user groups to understand what is desired from the building. Taking this input, she has produced some concept designs of how an extended building might look and function. We have set up a working group to further refine these plans and look at plausibility based on costs, etc.

Unfortunately, we had another unlawful encampment from travellers this year. After they had been removed, we met with both the police and a neighbouring local authority to discuss again how best to deter, and then move the travellers on as quickly as possible. Rapid dispersal minimises the cost of clean-up and lessens the impact on the regular users of the field. We now have a policy that, under common law, we will instruct bailiffs as soon as an unlawful encampment starts. This is a much quicker and less costly approach than going through the High Court, as we have done previously.

Both sets of allotments (Hurst Road and London Road) have had a high level of occupancy over the year. Traditionally there has always been fluctuation in occupancy levels, this year was no exception. Over the year we have worked with the Twyford Allotments Tenant's Association

(TATA) to co-produce an Allotment Tenants' Handbook. This sets out best practices for allotment holders not just for their own plots but for the wider allotment community. I would like to thank the members of the TATA who were instrumental in creating this handbook for all their hard work in doing so.

On behalf of the committee I would like to take this opportunity to thank the various council employees for all their hard work throughout the year. I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their time and contributions. 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. Thank you.

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

The P and A Committee would like to thank the Clerk Lucy Moffatt and the Assistant Clerk for their efficient and patient work for the Committee during the last year.

The P and A committee which is comprised of 8 councillors meets 12 times a year on the 1st Tuesday of the month and reports to the Full Council on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. The minutes of the meeting, like all meetings of the council are available on the Twyford Parish Council website after approval.

During the last year the committee has continued to endeavour to fulfil its duties, these include commenting on all Twyford planning applications submitted to WBC, reviewing all planning documents and initiatives received from W.B.C., ensuring that those street lights which are the responsibility of the TPC are fully maintained and the faulty street lights which the responsibility of WBC are reported. Highways within the parish should be fully maintained by the Borough and where the standard falls short of desirable we regularly report the defects until repairs are made! Planning applications within the Twyford are received with an average of 9 a month during the last year. Our responsibility is to comment on the application in regard of certain specified criteria, as all our committee has knowledge of the area our comments have more relevance than plans and location maps. It is usual for the committee to study the individual plans online prior to the meeting and discuss them in detail at the monthly meeting. Most plans receive no comment but there are plans which receive comments on their original application and on subsequent applications. Applications for the building of more houses on existing plots has declined in the last year. Residents often attend P and A meetings to make the committee aware of their comments on planning applications and we find this very useful.

During the last year WBC reported that Air pollution was very high in central Wokingham and in the centre of Twyford. Many people had suspected this for some time and expressed our concern 2 years ago. WBC commissioned a report on air pollution in the area. The P and A committee have met twice with representatives of the Borough to suggest and encourage remedial action. The first stage of action in the report is to measure the levels and timings of air quality in areas of the High Street and London Road we are anxious to ensure that once the base level statistics are recorded action is swift to reduce these dangerous levels. We continue to press for action and another meeting is planned for June.

On a more pleasing level we are involved with Twyford Together in improving the appearance of Twyford and making all living in our village more environmentally aware. We financially support Twyford in Bloom purchasing hanging baskets for display throughout the village. Although TPC arranged the very successful Twyford Clean up this month we are very aware that this should be an all year-round activity and are very grateful to all the regular Litter Pickers and to Chris and Gerry Wise who organize the scheme.

The P and A Committee have kept up to date with developments in the WBC Local Plan Update at present there are no plans for Twyford however any decisions for Twyford itself or neighbouring parishes will impact on Twyford.

As a Parish Council it is our responsibility to have regard not only to the present of our village but to the future and to this effect a committee has been set up to develop a Neighbourhood plan. I now hand you over to Charles who chairs this committee.

Mr C Wickenden reported on the Neighbourhood Plan working group.

The last year has seen a great deal of activity by the council and volunteers on the Neighbourhood Plan. For those who don't know, the Neighbourhood Plan is a forward-looking plan for the village encompassing the next 20 years. It covers the things that make the community sustainable, such as housing and transport, and provides our community with real benefits in terms of a greater say in what is developed in the village and gives us certain financial benefits in terms of increased Community Investment Levy or CIL payments. We kicked this off with a meeting in Loddon Hall last June and quickly attracted between 20 and 30 volunteers from the village and beyond. They have been busy with defining the scope and terms of the plan, organising meetings with the Borough Council, schools and participating in events such as the WBC day at Waitrose. Above all the team's attention has been focussed on developing, producing and delivering the questionnaire that most of you will have seen a copy of. We started delivering this at the end of March and we will be running this until the 27<sup>th</sup> May. So far uptake has been very encouraging with nearly 500 returned already. This is a response rate of around 15% so far which is very encouraging. As a side note, we also arranged a prize draw for those who responded by the 18<sup>th</sup> April and we will draw the winning entries at the end of the meeting. There will be plenty for the new council to do as the NP moves into a consultation phase with the village. The survey marks the start of this process. I would like to finish by giving the Councils thanks to all the volunteers, councillors, residents and others who have worked so hard to get us to this point. We will also be talking to those who expressed an interest in providing more feedback. I look forward to reaching out to them and the next phase of the plan. We will keep you updated of its progress through our website and notices and hope you will be able to participate in some way in the coming months.

## **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 and actual expenditure for 2018-2019 and the council's budget for 2019-2020. Please note that the headings on the left-hand side refer to the figures for 2018-19 and the headings on the right-hand side refer to the 2019-20 budget.

Our expenditure was £138,200 against a budget of £126,205 with income of £51,107 against a budget of £44,040. Our net expenditure was £87,093 against a budget of £82,165. In addition, £4,668 has been drawn from capital to fund the shortfall in the precept to upgrade street and King George V Skate Park lighting to LED lighting.

Our total budget for 2019-2020 is £133,990, with a predicted income from rents and fees of £48,370 and precept of £85,360.18.

The budget means that the owner of a band D property pays £28.34 this year. To this is added £206.28 for the Thames Valley Police, £66.28 for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services, £104.93 Adult Social Care and £1,379.00 for the Wokingham Borough Council, making a total council tax payment for a band D property this year £1,784.83.

The average council tax for a band D property across the borough is higher at £1,818.89. This puts Twyford at position no.15 with the highest council tax for a band D property being Woodley at £1,863.20 and the lowest Swallowfield at £1,775.68. (Looking at our total precept of £85,360.18 this is in position no. 10 with the highest precept of £1,123,528 in Woodley at no. 1 and the lowest precept of £20,530 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 in Reading and Wokingham, Berkshire MS, ARC and Twyford & District Youth & Community Centre (D of E). A total of £2,285 was given in grants this past financial year.

## **6. Fête Report.** Mr Fergusson reported.

The Village Fete event was well attended again this year, with the sunny weather on the day certainly helping. The BMX stunt show was a popular attraction along with the classic car display and the live music. Once again, we had many activities for young and old alike with the inflatable obstacle course and climbing wall still favourites. We have seen an increasing number of stalls at the fete as well as a variety of refreshment and food stalls.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Clerk and members of the Fete Committee, Wokingham Borough Council, Barnes Fitness and Castle Royal as well as members of the Parish Council and community who helped on the day for their support in making the Fete a success. Money raised from the village fete car parking was shared with the Henley Lions and the Parish Council share was split equally and donated to the Twyford Snooker Club and Twyford & District Youth & Community Centre

This year's fete is already well under way in terms of planning, and it promises to be just as good as last years. I encourage you all to come along on Saturday 17 August and bring your friends and family with you. Once again there will be a main attraction, live music as well as lots of ongoing entertainment during the afternoon.

## **7. Borough Council matters –**

**Reported by Borough Cllr Lindsay Ferris.** After a period where WBC has had a number of interim/temporary staff at senior level, the Council has now managed to fill three important posts on a permanent basis.

The new Chief Executive is Susan Parsonage. She was Chief Exec of City of Lancaster Council and joined WBC on 25th March.

The new Director for Social Services is to be Matt Pope. He has only just been appointed and will be starting shortly.

The new Director for Children's Services is Carol Cammiss, she has now been in post for several months.

This should now provide a much-needed level of stability within the Council.

Within Twyford, commuter parking continues to cause a significant problem across many parts of our village. I have been working with residents in Broad Hinton and with Cllr Wayne Smith to find a suitable solution to the parking problems caused throughout the whole of Broad Hinton. This is currently with Highways Officers at WBC. Recently a TRO to cover parking issues in Weavers Way/Old Silk Mill area has been approved, although that finally proposed by WBC does not, I feel fully resolve the problem in that location. It is however an improvement.

It has been recognised that parking in Twyford and across the Borough as a whole needs a major rethink and over the next 12 months the Council will be working on developing updated Car Parking proposals in an attempt to resolve the problems that have been caused.

A new Highways Contract came into force on 1st April. It is joint between Volker Highways (who will do the highways work) & WSP (the designs). This replaces the arrangement the council had with Balfour Beatty & WSP.

Twyford will receive a number of road repairs over the coming 12 months. A section of Wargrave Road from Hermitage Drive junction to the cross-roads and beyond into Church Street is scheduled to be resurfaced as will be a section of London Road from Ruscombe Road junction to the border of Twyford Parish just after Loddon Hall Road. I also believe that Hermitage Drive, Lincoln Gardens & Sycamore Drive should also be resurfaced.

The Local Plan covering 2016 - 2036 is currently underway. It has reached the stage where the 280+ sites submitted to the Council are in the process of being assessed. A recent consultation on the Local Plan took place in Twyford and across the Borough. The responses to this consultation

are in the process of being assessed. At this stage there is still a requirement for WBC to accommodate a figure of 894 properties a year over this 20-year period. It is possible that this figure may change. There is still in my view a serious threat to the Green Belt land in Ruscombe and the subsequent impact this would have on Twyford and its residents.

**Reported by Borough Cllr John Jarvis.** Due to being up for election and this Parish meeting falling within the purdah period, Cllr John Jarvis is unable to submit a report.

**Reported by Borough Cllr Wayne Smith.** Homes for the Future – 9 events were held with 1,500 responses of which a third of those responses were by RG10 residents which is a fantastic response rate. Having looked at the information from the events which indicated congestion as the biggest issue, WBC had initially planned to declare the proposed sites in the Autumn of this year however, 10,000 residents signed a petition saying, 'enough is enough'.

Currently in the borough there are 8,167 houses that have been approved but have not yet been built and 100 small developments. A proposal is to freeze developments until 2022 until major infrastructure is built and at that point consider what options are available. Booklets have been issued by large developers indicating build sites and their plans for these sites, however, please note that NO sites have been decided on nor approved.

The new library/Hub – Between Polehampton Charities and WBC, 1.8 million has been made available on a loan-based system.

Commuter Parking – It is a huge problem and Cllr L Ferris and I have been working together on this to try to come up with some resolution.

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

Last June we co-opted Mr. Abeywardana to fill our last vacancy.

The Community Hub meetings are not proceeding at the moment, although local fundraising is taken place. Polehampton Trust, as owners of the old Polehampton School by the Polehampton car Park are working on plans for its future. So far, the Parish Council is not involved.

A polling station review has again not resulted in residents in Boadwater Road, Hurst Park Road and part of Broad Hinton being able to vote in Stanlake Pavilion. They still have to go to Hurst village Hall. WBC still says there is not enough room. Older residents will remember that they used to vote in Stanlake Pavilion.

Representatives from Twyford Parish Council joined with members of the Twyford-Cuincy Twinning Association and the High Voltage Singers from Twyford last November in a visit to our twin town Cuincy in France. The Choir gave a concert and a wreath was laid at a memorial in a First World War Cemetery near Cuincy. Parish Councillor Bridget Ditcham read out the names of the fallen from Twyford. The deputy Mayor from Cuincy came to Twyford and laid a wreath at our War Memorial and joined the service afterwards, where he read out the names of the fallen from Cuincy during both World Wars.

**9. Questions from the floor.** Due to the Annual Parish Meeting being held within the Pre-Election (purdah) period, no questions were to be asked verbally. The Clerks provided a note pad for any questions to be raised and will answer these following the Annual Parish Meeting in writing. The questions are as follows:

- Helen Turner – Cllr Smith said that it is not possible for a multi storey carpark to be built. Please can you explain why and what the alternative options for parking are?
- Barbara Reid – Stanlake Meadow Parking; There is currently an empty area where Cross Rail workers worked. This could be used immediately for at least 50 cars. Why not build a multi storey there?
- David Fergusson – For next year, please invite the Twinning Committee to report.

- M. Yeates – May I ask Cllr L Jarvis and Cllr J Jarvis why they are standing in the Twyford elections when they have moved to Hurst? They may if elected, influence decisions on Twyford Council which will affect the residents of the Parish whilst having no effect on their residence in Hurst.
- Hazel Evans – We need signs to indicate that we are twinned with Quincy in France. These do not need to be expensive and have found online that you can add aluminium signs to be fixed under the existing Twyford signs for around £65. We have been twinned for nearly a year now so this needs to be done asap!
- Mr G Wise
  1. Congratulations on this year's litter pick. There was a good turnout for the community litter pick, at over 50. It may have been given extra publicity in RG10 magazine and on Facebook.
  2. A couple of places where heavy littering still occurs is the foot of the A4 Piggott foot bridge and Hurst Road. Both locations could be helped by the provision of some large barrel litter bins.
  3. Fly posting on lamp posts. This appears to be an increasing problem. What can be done to discourage (especially commercial) perpetrators?
  4. Footway access problems – shrubs encroaching passage of pedestrians, sometimes on Council main roads. What can be done to cut back or encourage residents to cut back overhanging foliage etc?

The Parish Council would like to thank you for your questions. These will be given to the relevant committees and you will receive a written response following the June meetings.

**The meeting  
closed at 8.42 pm.**