

## Whaddon Parish Council: Annual Report from the Chairman, May 2009

Little did any of us know, who listened to Ted's Annual Report a year ago, think that that would have been his last public Parish Council Meeting. Ted's death in August 2009 was a sadness felt by all of us.

I think that it is a huge tribute to Ted that nearly everything that I shall mention in this Report was started by him. I will adhere to the format that Ted used last year. With his attention to detail, Ted mentioned that he had followed the presentation described for an Annual Report in the briefing notes set out as guidance to Parishes wishing to achieve 'Quality Status'.

That is that the Report should be in three parts:

- 1) A full list of Councillors and Addresses
- 2) A Summary of Council Accounts
- 3) An overview by the Chairman of the Council's achievements over the period

### **Part 1. List of Councillors**

Mrs Clare Byatt	Chair	01223 207429	Turpins, Church St, Whaddon
Dr Nigel Strudwick	Vice-Chair	01223 207434	3 Town Farm Close, Whaddon
Mrs Malan Peyton	Councillor	01223 207358	Ermine Fm, Dyers Green
Mr Philip Neale	Councillor	01223 207706	104 Dyers Green, Whaddon
Mr Lee Ginger	Councillor	01223 207688	99 Meldreth Road, Whaddon
Mr Chris Rose	Councillor	01223 207174	136 Church Street, Whaddon
Mr Will Burchett	Councillor	01223 208897	7 Bridge Street, Whaddon
Mrs Gabby Van Poortvliet		01223 208450	<a href="mailto:whaddonpcclerk@yahoo.co.uk">whaddonpcclerk@yahoo.co.uk</a>
	Clerk/Finance Officer		134 Bridge St, Dyers Green, Whaddon

### **Part 2. A Summary of Council Accounts**

Income	£66,209	Expenditure	£65,078
Income over expenditure	£1,131		
Current Account balance	£13,340		
Deposit Account balance	£6,330		

Income includes £46,500 funds raised for the playground equipment. Expenditure includes £49,338 for the bus shelter and play equipment. Detailed accounts can be found on the website.

### **Part 3. An Overview of the Council's Achievements**

#### **Thanks**

I would like to express thanks and admiration to all Councillors and particularly our Clerk and Financial Officer for all the work that was done to carry the Council forward during the difficult summer. I would also like to add my appreciation for the help I have received from you all, and especially from Vice Chair Nigel Strudwick, while I have been Acting Chair and Chairman.

#### **Information**

Ted, in his Report last year, added that **'to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2004, this report will be published in the Newsletter and on the Parish website and posted on all Parish noticeboards.'**

This is, therefore, an opportunity to thank Nigel Strudwick for operating the website for the benefit of the village, and Joan Pascoe for putting together the Newsletter and Phil Neale for contributing 'Parish Council News'. It is also worth noting that in January 2009, the Parish Council adopted the Model Publication Scheme, documenting what information was held and how it could be accessed by members of the public.

## **Achievements**

I think that the best way to continue this overview of the Council's achievements, is to focus and thank individual Councillors for each of their contributions. I would like to add that over the ten meetings held during the twelve month period, attendance by Councillors has been good with good support from our District and County Councillors for which we thank you.

I'll start with one of Ted's last actions, a Review of the Whaddon Parish Action Plan of 2006. He held a meeting on 28 July 2008 to consider and update the recommendations of the original plan: eight actions had not gone forward for various reasons, five are in progress and ten have been completed. The revised plan was approved at the September meeting.

## **Transport**

One of the recommendations in the Parish Plan was for improved public transport. I would like to thank Lee Ginger for exploring the introduction of a daily bus service. With the support of Linda Oliver, Lee has discussed timetabling and costs with the County and the provider of the service. On 5 February, Lee did an excellent job selling the idea to Meldreth Parish Council in the hope of getting their support but, regretfully, it appears that the Council may not have been as successful in gathering responses from their villagers of Meldreth. Plans for the bus service continue.

However the new bus shelter was erected in the summer and Ted saw this before he died. Thanks to Lee and Pete Coningsby among others. The old shelter has provided an excellent service as hardcore for mending the potholes along the bridleway from Rose Cottage.

## **Environment**

While on the subject of footpaths, I'd like to thank Phil Neale for overseeing the Parish Paths Partnership scheme – this is an opportunity for a small grant to be spent on improving village footpaths. Last year we received a new kissing gate for the boundary fence between the Recreation Ground and the church (yet to be erected) and all the footpath signs were repainted.

Thinking of signage, I'd like to thank Dave Chappell for renovating the Village Sign. Another village landmark is the phone box at the top of Bridge Street. This is now, minus the telephone equipment, the property of the Parish Council.

Other changes around the village: I'd like to thank Chris Rose, whom we were pleased to welcome as a Councillor in May 2008, for his research and presentations on the effect of bleeding canker disease in horse chestnut trees. Sadly we have lost the beautiful trees along the Recreation Ground but with our Tree Warden, Malan Peyton's, guidance and the support of Roz Richardson, Tree Officer from SCDC, the horse chestnuts have been replaced with a row of hardy trees, a type of Sobus/Whitebeam cross. They appear to be thriving. Meanwhile the verges have benefited from Chris' daffodil planting on behalf of the Parish Council and we are also grateful to members of the village for adding their own bulbs for everyone to enjoy.

Further attention has been paid to Whaddon's verges. We have held two litterpicks during the year. Thanks to all who helped.

## **Projects**

The most exciting project of the year has been the Whaddon Playground Project. Thank you Will Burchett and Neil Gallery for a really successful completion to two and a half year's hard work and fundraising. It was a great opening ceremony on 25 April. We were delighted to welcome Will onto the Council in November.

The newest project in progress is the creation of a Design Statement for the village. I would like to thank David Grech and Claire Sime for leading the team and Phil for representing the Parish Council. We look forward to the first draft.

Whaddon's biggest project is the refurbishment of the Village Hall. We are grateful to Nigel for chairing the Village Hall Committee and to Nigel and Lee for overseeing the appointment of an Architect to work with the Quantity Surveyor. The plans are now approved by SCDC. The Mechanical and Electrical Engineer's report has been received and first estimate of costs. Ahead of the village now, is the formation of a Trust, registration of the land and fundraising.

### **Affordable Housing**

Undoubtedly the most complex project in progress is the plans for Affordable Housing. Discussion about this has been going on for over five years.

During this last year members of the Parish Council continued to pledge their support for the Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association scheme in the knowledge that Cambridgeshire County Council has said that the Church Corner site is the only land it wishes to sell (June 2008). The Parish Council is aware that the site is controversial due to the proximity of a listed cottage. In August it was a disappointment to learn that SCDC Planning Officer was unlikely to give support to the scheme. Despite this, the Parish Council encouraged BPHA to continue with planning for this site even though it makes getting the project through Planning Committee that much more difficult. At the same time the PC wondered again about Pickering Farm but over the summer, the PC and BPHA attempts to contact the owner of Pickering Farm site failed completely.

By Autumn BPHA had taken on a Planning Consultant to support their plans for Church Corner. In November BPHA reported that they had had an approach from John Cooper, developer of Pickering Farm. However by January 2009, the PC learnt that Cambridgeshire County Council intends to invoke the clause that they set in place when CCC sold the land to Mr Capon (the previous owner) to share in any additional monies gained by future development of back land excepting previously agreed commercial use. BPHA has reported that, since then, once again they have been unable to make any further contact with Mr Cooper.

In April BPHA came to give the Council a presentation of their revised scheme. Improved variety and use of materials is of benefit to the visual appeal of the houses (now all destined for rented accommodation). Whaddon needs this scheme. I would like to see the proximity to Rose Cottage and the Church in this prime position as force for good. This is "good-value" land so there should be financial scope for making this site a stunning contribution to the village: houses of exceedingly good design, good quality, eco-friendly homes with good integration into the village.

### **Neighbourhood Watch**

I will conclude my report very speedily by referring to the success of Speedwatch and thanking Mike Monks and Malan for leading Neighbourhood Watch. Thank you, Nigel, for swiftly and successfully taking up the offer of Speedwatch training and getting the scheme set up with Neighbourhood Watch and Parish Council helpers.

Clare Byatt 11 May 2009