

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES BULLETIN

www.whitchurchonthames.com

JANUARY 2004

Meeting of The Parish Council

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday 5th January in the Village Hall. In attendance were the Chairman Councillor Geoff Weir, together with Councillors Harry Butterworth, Nigel Grove, Matilda Oppenheimer and Kate Thatcher. Also present were the Parish Clerk Janet Holmes and District Councillor Pearl Slatter.

The Council noted with regret that Councillor David Robinson has decided to resign because of work commitments. The Clerk will initiate the process for advertising the vacancy and electing or co-opting a new Parish Councillor.

Traffic Calming

The Council discussed the progress on the actions agreed at its previous meeting in November. It was noted that progress at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), who are the highways authority and who will thus ultimately decide what works will be carried out, has been hampered by the resignation of our Area Traffic Engineer Ashad Khan. Mark Bostock has taken over in an acting capacity.

1. **Enforcement Speed Cameras.** Mark Bostock has advised us that the national criteria for these requires that at least 4 fatal/serious collisions and 8 personal injury collisions occur in a 3 year period. Further, that these have to be related to speed issues which cannot be mitigated by engineering solutions. The Council therefore decided not to pursue the installation of enforcement speed cameras in the village.
2. **Other OCC highways issues.** (ie Ferryboat narrows design/alignment, 20 mph limits, road signage, and top narrows footpath). No progress yet.
3. **Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership (TVSRP)** (ie advisory speed cameras, driver education etc). No progress yet.

It was agreed that the Clerk would press OCC and TVRSRP for action. The Council wished to see progress on the outstanding issues as soon as possible.

Manor Road Play Area

The Council was very pleased to note that work on the new play area was almost complete. It will be opened for use as soon as the contractors are off site. It was noted that the grassed areas needed some time to recover, and it was agreed that temporary paths should be put down between the hard-surfaced areas. If necessary, temporary fencing will be erected to protect the grassed areas.

Some kind of opening event will take place in due course. More details later...

High Water Pressure

Councillors have received many complaints from residents about flooding and other problems caused by high mains water pressure from Christmas Day until the following Monday. The cause was a fault with Thames Water's pressure reducing valve at the bottom of Whitchurch Hill. More details of this incident appear later in The Bulletin.

It was agreed that the Council should write to Thames Water seeking assurances that the water supply arrangements for Whitchurch will be reviewed, and that the necessary action be taken to ensure that failures of the pressure reducing equipment do not recur with such serious consequences.

The Thames Travel Bus Service

OCC is reviewing its subsidised bus services, including the 142 service which serves Whitchurch, and has asked Parish Councils for comments. The Council noted that this service was well used and a real boon to villagers without their own transport, and it was agreed to write to OCC stressing the value and importance of this service to the village.

There is a real possibility that this service may be withdrawn. Please support it, and please use it sometimes rather than driving or using the train. The timetable is published on the Noticeboard opposite The Greyhound.

The Maze

Work is progressing on the maze, and there are some pictures on the village website. Some minor damage has occurred to the centrepiece – a horseshoe imprint close by indicates the probable cause. The Council does not wish to ban horses from this area or erect warning notices, but would ask that everyone takes care when using the area around the maze, particularly during the construction phase.

Planning

New Applications

There were no planning applications for consideration.

Decision Notices

There were no decision notices from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)

Finance

The Council considered its budget for the coming financial year April 2004 – March 2005. It was agreed to precept for a total of £14,295 – the same as the current year.

The Council considered new guidelines for Councillors' expenses and allowances which had been produced by SODC in response to a Government edict. It was agreed that Parish Councillors will continue to act without any payment of allowances, and

that expenses would only be claimed as they were incurred, supported by receipts or other evidence. Payment of expenses will continue to be subject to formal approval by the Council. The Clerk will undertake the necessary administrative formalities as required by the new guidelines.

The following cheques were agreed for payment. The Clerk, for salary and expenses. Russell Leisure Ltd, for supply and installation of playground equipment (subject to a satisfactory site inspection and contract completion meeting).

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 8 pm on Monday 1st March at Whitchurch Village Hall. Residents are most welcome to attend this meeting, and to address the Council on any matter of concern to them. An agenda will be posted on the Parish Council Noticeboard opposite The Greyhound the week before the meeting.

Geoff Weir, Chairman

HIGH WATER PRESSURE

From Christmas Day until Monday 29th December the village experienced problems with flooding, overflowing tanks, broken water softeners etc because of abnormally high mains water pressure. This fault was reported to Thames Water by several residents on Christmas Day. The cause was a malfunction of Thames Water's pressure-reducing valve (PRV) at the bottom of Whitchurch Hill - a fault which has occurred several times before. Static water pressures of about 15 Bar (215 lb/sq. inch) were measured in the village during the 4 days the PRV was malfunctioning, more than 3 times the normal.

Thames Water said on Boxing Day that the fault would not be looked at until Sunday 28th December, despite requests from several residents that the fault be rectified earlier. The fault was finally fixed on Monday 29th December: Thames Water has said its out-of-hours emergency staff cannot deal with PRV's.

In the past, Thames Water has paid out compensation for damage resulting from high water pressure caused by a malfunction of their equipment.

If you wish to complain (or claim for damage etc), write to Thames Water, PO Box 436, Swindon, SN38 1TU, quoting Job 31228 - 622160.

Geoff Weir

COMMUNITY WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

The Council has been reviewing the Community Waste Service that it provides to residents in the district, looking at how it could be improved to meet the needs of residents and collect garden waste separately so that it can be recycled. As a result the service has been changed from June 1st 2003.

In the future there will be a weekly service, as follows:-

THURSDAY MORNINGS 8.00 TILL 11.00 AM IN GORING

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS 12.00 TILL 3.00 IN WOODCOTE.

There will be 2 vehicles provided one for household waste and one for garden refuse between April and October. There will only be one vehicle between November and March.

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Happy New Year!

Well done to all our children who performed a beautiful Nativity play last year. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all their parents and families.

This spring half term our children will be learning about toys and games, transport: land, air, sea and rail and celebrating the Chinese New Year.

With Mother's Day and Easter to come we will be looking at new life and changes in the second half of this term.

If you would like more information about our Pre-School please call 0118 9844516 and speak to Helen.

THE WHITCHURCH SOCIETY

Art and Craft Exhibition 15/16th Nov 2003

This year's Exhibition was again organised and managed by our superb sub-committee comprising Jill Bradon, Peggy Brodie, Sarah Dixon, Chris Martin and Sally Woolhouse. The Society is grateful for their competence and initiative.

The scope and expertise of the entries was as impressive as always. There were 142 entries from residents of Whitchurch and Goring Heath parishes, representing a wonderful range of skills in fine and applied arts and photography. There were nine 'first time' adult exhibitors, and also more entries in the 15-18 age group than in recent past years – both these trends are very encouraging.

The three local schools – Whitchurch Pre-School Group, Whitchurch Primary and the Oratory Preparatory – all put on enthusiastic and eye-catching displays of art and craft work, which added colour and interest to the ambience of the Hall.

The Whitchurch Cup for Craft was awarded to Chris Martin for her impressive wallhanging of Elstree School. The Orford Cup for Art was won by Gill Goodwin for a stylish drawing of a lighthouse. Brigitte Wise was awarded the CPL Cup for her atmospheric photographic composition of boats at sunset. Sue Matthews won the 7x5 Award for her evocative Malaysian photographic scenes. For the best first time entry, Adam Dawson was awarded the Butterworth Cup for his wonderful ladder-back greenwood chair. Stephen Trinder gained the Chairman's Cup for his commanding set of art and craft exhibits.

There were eight exhibits this (the second) year of the Joyce Voysey Award. It is exciting to see the enthusiasm for this 'open' class increasing! The theme was 'Allotments' and the range of media and exhibitors' ages was wide. Chris Martin won the award for her inventive interpretation of the life-cycle of brussel sprout plants.

The entries by the younger residents of the villages never fail to entertain and impress with their imagination and talent. The overall awards for best entries were won by Rory Preston (under 7 yrs), Caitlin Baty (7-10 yrs), Frances Dixon (11-14yrs) and Philip Weir (15-18yrs). The new class for Junior Photography was won by Lorna Woolhouse. For the full details of all the winners, do visit the website (www.wotarts.co.uk).

The cups and prizes were presented by Tony Voysey, President of the Society. Each of the major adult awards was accompanied by a gift kindly donated by the following local businesses – Bozedown Alpacas, Bozedown Vineyard, The Ferryboat Inn, Flint House Ltd, The Greyhound Inn, Hardwick Organic Produce, and the Modern Artists Gallery.

To add some dynamics to the static displays, we were very pleased to welcome Alex Buhagier and Marete Hawkins who demonstrated their respective artistic skills in mono-printing and textile and patchwork designing. Also, the 'Farmers Market' collage kept children busy with cutting and sticking whilst their parents enjoyed the exhibition!

Plans for next year are already in hand – we hope to have an Archive Corner for as many winning exhibits from past years' shows as we can track down. We shall be publicising this in future Bulletins of course, so watch this space! Also, the theme for the Joyce Voysey Award is to be 'Birds' – plenty of scope for some great entries we hope.

The Society is grateful to the judges, the exhibitors, the demonstrators and to the many residents who helped to set up and dismantle the exhibition.

Future Events

On Friday 30th January 2004, Graham Morfey (who has lived in the village for many years) will give an illustrated talk entitled 'Polynesia and Beyond' – an account of his voyage of 8,000 miles in a small yacht across the Pacific Ocean, the islands visited and the people he met. Wine and coffee will be available from 7.30pm and the talk will commence at about 8pm.

*Nigel Grove
Chairman*

Edgar Thompson

The following is a letter received by Janet Holmes the Parish Clerk, if anyone knows anything about the gentleman Edgar Thompson, perhaps you could let me or Janet know and we can pass on the information. Ed

My name is Stephen Thompson, of English descent, but now living in Ireland.
I am trying to research my Thompson family tree.

My Thompson grand-father and his 6 brothers hailed from Balne and Upper Poppleton, in Yorkshire.

As part of my searches, I have found that one of my grand-uncles, named Edgar Thompson, in 1954/5 was living in "Paddock Lodge", Whitchurch, Reading.

At that stage, he would have been 80/81 years old (born 1874).

His working career had been in Burma, setting up the communications systems.

I have no more information about him.

Any descendants of him would be my cousins.

I would be most grateful for any information which anyone can give me.

Yours sincerely,
Stephen Thompson

WHITCHURCH VILLAGE HALL & THE VILLAGE FETE 2004

Our Village Hall is run by a committee of volunteers from the village. The proceeds of the Village Fete, held in September each year, are needed to help run the hall.

I know a lot of people would like to see improvements to the Hall and I couldn't agree more. I also think that the Village Fete is a great social event for our village community. There are however, far too few people on the committee of the Hall to make ANY major improvements and too few on the Fete committee for the Fete to run AT ALL this coming September.

If you can spare a few evenings each year to be on either of these committees, please either telephone me or come to the next Village Hall meeting which is at the Hall, 8.15pm on Monday 19th January 2004. If you have ever thought that the Hall needed "something", or you enjoyed the Fete and don't want to loose it, please help.

Thankyou!

Kate Thatcher 0118 984 4656.

Pangbourne Choral Society Celebrates 30 Years

Pangbourne Choral Society will be celebrating their 30th Anniversary with a special concert in the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne College on Sunday February 8th at 7:30pm.

They will be welcoming back their two previous Directors of Music to join them in a programme of three works with three conductors to celebrate their three decades. Hopefully there will be more than just Three Tenors!!

Their founder Ralph Allwood will conduct the choirs and soloists in Fauré's beautiful *Requiem*; Robert Barsby will conduct his *Cantata 2000* (A Ring of Change); first performed at his retirement concert in May 2000; and their current Director Darren Everhart will round off the evening by conducting *Feel the Spirit*, John Rutter's arrangement of seven well known American Spirituals. Truly something for everyone.

The Choral Society will be joined by the Pangbourne College Choir, professional soloists and the Philomel Orchestra in what should be a very entertaining and memorable evening with almost 200 performers.

The Choral Society, originally named the Pangbourne College Choral Society, now boasts over 130 active members, and although it includes staff and parents of students of the college the majority, the young and the not so young, hail from the general community over a wide area.

Tickets (£8 adults, £2 U-18s) are available from Premier Pet Store, Pangbourne, by calling 01491 873152, or by e-mail pcs@musician.org. Last February's concert sold out in advance so early booking is advised for what should prove a popular event.

Goring Heath Parish Charity

The Christmas Mini Market on the 6th December brought lots of visitors to Goring Heath Parish Hall and raised over £520 for the Hall's funds. A very big 'thank you' to everyone who helped either by producing goods for us to sell or helping on the day. We couldn't manage without you all!

Congratulations to the winners of the raffles who were:- Mrs Aldridge who won the Turkey and a box of crackers. Mrs Bruce & Mrs Hollinghurst, a bottle of wine each (donated by Bozdown Vineyard & Mrs Tarsnane) & Mrs Yaldron a box of biscuits (given by Mrs Dreawett) all of them from Whitchurch. Chris Bergman won the Christmas tree (donated by Rogers Fencing), Mr Hearn the Meal for Two, (given by the Sun Pub) & Martin Lisk the litre of Whiskey, all from Whitchurch Hill. Mrs Ireson of Goring drew a box of pansies (donated by Waterfields Nurseries).

All the tickets for the Nutcracker & the Mouse King were very quickly sold; but don't despair, the next production is not that far off.

On Saturday 21st February we have the Circus Bezercus, "A Komedy of Errors" visiting Goring Heath Parish Hall. In the afternoon there will be a "work shop" for children aged 9 & over (a little younger if accompanied by an adult) & in the evening Ben Cornish & Steve Eldridge will present their show, "packed with comedy, dazzling juggling, circus skills, unicycling & daftness" which is suitable for children of 3 years and over. Not one to be missed I have been told.

Tickets & full details available now from Mike Holland 0118 984 3748/4867.

The date for the Spring Gardening Show is Saturday April 3rd. So that everyone can get "snapping", here are the titles for the photographic section:-

1. "Memories."
2. "The Pleasure of Winter".
3. "Elegance">

NSPCC

Diana Wingfield and Jane MacCaw are retiring from running the Whitchurch NSPCC, having done 15 and 10 years respectively. Is there anyone in the village who would be interested in taking this on? We really need 2 or 3 ladies with enthusiasm to raise money for the very worthwhile charity.

Please contact 984 3682 or 984 5755 Thank you.

Relaunch of Solarsavers

Solarsavers, a scheme promoting domestic solar water heating systems, has been relaunched. The scheme set up by Councils across the Thames Valley, offers independent advice and discounted prices to householders wishing to install solar hot water systems.

Further information is available by calling the Solarsavers hotline on 0800 107 0044 or by visiting their website at www.solarsavers.co.uk . The Solarsavers scheme will also give advice on applying for a £500 ClearSkies grant (www.clear-skies.org) from the government for new installations and on energy efficiency measures. Solar hot water systems work by converting the sun's energy into heat energy and use it to heat water for use in homes. This is done using a heat collector usually situated on the roof. Even when the sunshine is diffused through clouds, the energy can still be collected and used by a solar water heating system. In summer months the system can provide a massive 90% of your hot water. Annually the system can provide up to 60% of your hot water requirements.

Solar thermal systems can be fitted in a day or less, can save money on your energy bills, can work in any climate, are extremely low maintenance, have a very long functional lifetime of 20-30 years or more and reduce greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to climate change. For further details contact Beatrice Rose, Sustainable Development Team, South Oxfordshire District Council on 01491 823036 or at beatrice.rose@southoxon.gov.uk

WOODCOTE LIBRARY

A landmark step on our steady progress towards full computerisation was achieved recently when the catalogue for Oxfordshire libraries was put on the internet. It is now accessible at home or on our free computers at www.libcat.oxfordshire.gov.uk and you can search by author, title, class number or keyword. If you click on "more details" you will find where copies are located and whether they are available for loan. If you are using our computers there is a link from the Oxfordshire County Council site. At present you will still have to visit or ring the library to make your request, but in future it will be possible to reserve items on line. On a more mundane level - and it isn't April 1st - our lost property includes several children's toys and a pair of black trousers! They were left on a Saturday before Christmas - any offers? Our audio-visual offer for February is free requests on travel videos and rent one, second one free.

GALAXY SYSTEM

An online catalogue of almost a million items in Oxfordshire's libraries will soon be available for the first time thanks to the introduction by the County Council of a new generation of computer equipment. The Galaxy system, one of the leading library applications in Britain, will be installed in some areas from this month. It will manage book issuing, reservations and borrower's records and will also deliver a web catalogue of all the county's book and audio visual stock. This will be accessible not only from the People's Network Terminals in all libraries but also to internet users in schools and from home.

'STAGS & HENS' at Langtree

Willy Russell's play, "Stags and Hens" provided superb entertainment for large audiences at Langtree School on Wednesday and Thursday 10th and 11th December. "Stags and Hens" is a comedy of wedding-eve nerves, set in the "Gents" and "Ladies" toilets at a tacky Liverpool club where Dave and Linda, unbeknownst to each other, are holding their respective stag and hen parties.

Of course, the play provides opportunities galore for comic, but entirely believable situations and the actors exploited them to the full, showing maturity and acting ability well beyond their years. The audience also rose to the occasion inspiring the cast to reach even greater heights in the second half than in the first.

It is difficult to single out individuals in such an outstanding production, but Sam Faulkner as the dominant and domineering Eddy descended wonderfully into drunken belligerence, while Hannah Smithson as Linda, portrayed beautifully the mood swings of the bride to be. Anna Davis was totally in character as the blousy, brash Bernadette.

Strong performances were given by all the other cast members particularly Elliott Baker as the wide-boy, know-it all Robbie and Alex Waltham as the intellectually challenged Billy, taking full advantage of the comic opportunities presented to them. Nicola Barefield, Sam Vousden and Lily McMullen were all entirely credible as the rest of the "hen" entourage and Dean Oliver gave a good account of himself as the "artistic stag" Kav.

Stephen Burnip, as the husband to be, Dave, uttered not a word, but managed to portray the paralytic drunk to perfection. Shaun Russell as Peter, the successful pop musician and former boyfriend of Linda and Jordie Roberts (Wednesday) and Drew Ford (Thursday) as his Roadie did well with their "straight" parts.

At the end, the cast were greeted with rapturous applause. Sam Peates, the Deputy Head praised the performance, describing the acting as the best seen in a Langtree production. Head of Drama, Tony Dickens, who directed the play, was given an enthusiastic ovation by audience and actors.

Whitchurch and Goring Heath History Society

Our Members' Evening on January 15th in Whitchurch Village Hall features Dalby Landen who will speak on "Some Thoughts about the Translation of the Bible". In the same place on February 19th we will be having our AGM, and then John Dolby will finish the History of St Mary's that he began a year or so ago! Non-members are welcome, and meetings start at 8pm.

PANGBOURNE TENNIS CLUB

We hope that anyone new to the village who enjoys tennis will find time to come down and use the courts this year, as well as our established players. The next issue of the Bulletin will give more details of the Spring/Summer programme, but in the meantime, here is a taster. Club sessions are on Sunday afternoons at the Recreation Ground, Pangbourne, and Tuesday evenings at Bradfield Indoor Tennis Centre. Contact Brian on 9845650 for more details. There are off-peak sessions available on Wednesday mornings for those who find it difficult to manage weekends or evenings. Contact Jenny on 9843588 if you are interested. If you want to hire a court, the charge is still only £4 per hour, money to be left in an envelope at 36 Thames Avenue please. The junior coaching programme will begin in April, dates to be confirmed. If you would like more information, phone me on 9842581. All details are on our website; www.pangbournetennis.org, as well as match fixtures and results.

Lesley Crimp

WHITCHURCH HILL CAMERA CLUB

Our meetings this month include, on Wednesday, 21st January, an evening of digital photography when our Vice-Chairman, Jim Gracey presents part 2 of “The Digirarti Experience.”

The following week sees the welcome return of Dr Peter Brandham from Kew Gardens with a presentation called “Pattern in Plants.”

The meetings in February include, on the 4th February, a light hearted Mix and Match Slide Battle under the watchful eye of Marilyn Ward LRPS from Sutton Courtenay and our annual Enprint Competition, one week later, which, once again, is kindly sponsored by Jessops.

We meet every Wednesday evening at the Village Hall, Whitchurch-on-Thames starting at 8pm.

All aspects of photography are covered including digital cameras and imaging and we have recently set up a special Digital Group which meets once a month. Membership of this group is free to existing Camera Club members.

Further information and a copy of our full Programme are available on our website: www.whitchurchhillcc.co.uk or from Alan Copeland on (01491) 681471. Copies are also available at Pangbourne Library.

CONTACTING YOUR POLICE FORCE, for non-emergency calls.

The Police are introducing a new single number for non-emergency calls on January 1, 2004. The number 0845 8 505 505, will run in parallel with our other non-emergency numbers for a year, and should make it easier for you to contact us. The number goes straight through to the Police Enquiry Centres which are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Some local police stations are not open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and calls direct to them cannot always be answered. Calls to the new single number will be charged at local rate.

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

A.G.M.

The 26th Annual General Meeting will be held in the Purley Memorial Hall on Wednesday, 18th February, commencing at 7.45 p.m. It will be followed by a talk by Mr. D. Penny on "Year-round colour and interest in your garden". Members are reminded that any nomination for election as an Officer or Committee Member must be made in writing to the Secretary, Mrs. P. Brightwell, 99 Devonshire Gardens, Tilehurst, RG31 6FF by 11th February.

Talk

On Wednesday, 17th March, Mrs. E. Farrar will give a talk on "Learning from One's Mistakes". This will take place in Purley Memorial Hall, commencing at 8 p.m.

Spring Show

This will take place on Saturday, 3rd April in Purley Memorial Hall.

Trading

The Trading Store will re-open at 10 a.m. on Saturday, 31st January and thereafter will be open each Saturday and Sunday between 10 and 11 a.m. until the last Sunday in October. Membership of the Society for 2004 is now £1.50 and subscriptions can be renewed at the Trading Shed when this re-opens.

Marion Dabbs
9422349

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN will be published in March 2004.

Please send your contributions **preferably by e-mail to**
sarah@pongo.freeseve.co.uk **or on disc.**

Formats can be Word (.doc) or text (.txt or .rtf) or PagePlus (.ppp), or Acrobat(pdf).

Other formats by arrangement

Alternatively you can send hard copy to the Editor:

Sarah Butterworth, The Little House, High Street, Whitchurch on Thames, Reading,
Berkshire RG8 7EX (0118 984 2922)

no later than Wednesday 3rd MARCH 2004 .