

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES

PARISH COUNCIL

www.whitchurchonthames.com

Minutes of the annual meeting of Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council on Tuesday 6th July 2009 in the village hall

Present:

Cllr Harry Butterworth (chairman), Cllr Vincent Aldridge (vice chairman), Cllr Matilda Oppenheimer, Cllr Nigel Grove, Cllr Elizabeth Robinson, Cllr Keith Brooks

In attendance:

Jo Wheeler (parish clerk), District Cllr Pearl Slatter, County Cllr Dave Sexon, John Lynch (representing Going Heath Parish Council), Matthew Rice (Trading Standards Enforcement Officer), Amanda Waterman and Rosamund Heath (Whitchurch and District Allotment Society) and several members of the public.

Apologies for absence

None

Minutes of previous meetings

Minutes of the 12th May 2009 meeting signed as a true record.

Declarations of interest

None

Public forum

Concern was expressed about the proposed Bridge tolls and also about parking, particularly in the region of the Hardwick Road junction. The problem of large vehicles finding their way through the Village was discussed at some length.

Matthew Rice was able to inform us that although the “environmental” seven and a half tonne limit was currently unenforceable (because of a paperwork error), he would see that this was corrected. Anyone who sees a vehicle exceeding the weight limit can report it to a member of the Traffic and Roads group. Photographs would be a great help.

Matters arising from the minutes

David Robinson and Richard Wingfield have been working very hard on the new design for the web site. Please see the item later in the Bulletin.

Co-option of new councillor

Mrs Lindsay Austin of Old Barn Cottages was proposed and the vote was unanimous. Mrs Austin joined the Council.

Thames Valley Police Update

There had now been two “brick through window” burglaries in the village. If a suspicious person or event is witnessed please report this to Thames Valley Police or a Neighbourhood Watch representative.

Allotments

There was a lengthy discussion about how allotments should be allotted. Amanda Waterman from the Whitchurch & District Allotment Society felt strongly that the allocation should be on a “first come, first served” basis. The view of the Parish Council was that the allotments were part of the Whitchurch Parish and are actually subsidised by the Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council, so should be awarded to Whitchurch residents first.

The issue was not fully resolved and it was agreed that the Allotment Society and parish council will arrange a separate meeting to discuss the matter.

Toll Bridge

Cllr Oppenheimer reported that the parish council presented its case at the Public Inquiry. The case had been prepared with the help of Neil King and Jim Kerevan and was presented by Councillor Aldridge. The case was cross examined at great length.

Cllr Oppenheimer noted that the Bridge Company had offered a statement whereby the card toll would be capped at 20p until January 1st 2013 and thereafter would “be kept as low as possible”. The Parish Council had indicated that some discussions along these lines might be of interest but have sent a letter to the Minister making it clear that any discussions of this type are exploratory and do not alter our position which we presented at the Inquiry.

The Inspector, Martin Brain (OCC Bridge Engineer) and Cllr Butterworth spent the morning after the Inquiry looking over, around and under the bridge. The problem was clearly visible and as described by Martin at the Inquiry.

The Council wishes to thank Neil King and Jim Kerevan for the help they provided.

Cricket Ground

Cllr Oppenheimer reported that negotiations were proceeding along lines already reported. The cost to the parish was estimated at £7000 for which reserves are available. There was a slight risk that the project would fail, but the prize was such that the risk was well worth taking. Cllr Oppenheimer was continuing to work for a successful conclusion.

Environmental Matters

The Village Plan Environmental Group had reformed and was adopted as the Parish Council Environmental Sub Committee with chairman Keith Brooks. Dr Brooks reported that they were currently looking at litter bins, street lighting and the verges in Manor Road.

Traffic and Roads

The Village Plan Traffic and Roads Group had reformed and was adopted as the Parish Council Traffic and Roads Sub Committee with chairman Richard Wingfield.

Cllr Butterworth reported that the group had been very concerned about car parking at the Hardwick Road junction. Two letters have already been handed to people concerned and an “under windscreen wiper” leaflet is being prepared. Dave Sexon said that he had looked at the situation and offered his full support.

Village Hall

The Village Hall Group had reformed and was adopted as the Village Hall Management Sub Committee with chairman Stephen Trinder. All agreed to increase payment to Ed Pilcher, the village hall caretaker, in line with an increase in hall hire.

District Councillor

Cllr Slatter reported that, despite a few teething problems, the new waste and recycling collection was going well and feedback from residents has been positive.

County Councillor

The parish council was pleased to welcome our new County Councillor, Dave Sexon. Cllr Sexon said he had toured the Village and this was why he could endorse the Parish Council's approach to car parking problems.

Planning

Presented by Cllr Robinson:

P09/E0565 The Garden House, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames
Erection of single storey front, side and rear extensions. Raising of roof to allow first floor accommodation. Erection of car port to existing garage. Amendment to approved application no. P08/E1064. The Council's opinion was that this improves the building. As we have no objections from neighbours we recorded "no strong views".

P09/E0483 Little Eastfield, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames

Two storey side extension with front and rear projections to provide ground floor granny annexe and first floor study and hobbies room. The Council's opinion was that as we have no objections from neighbours we recorded "no strong views".

The meeting closed at 10:30pm

Traffic & Roads Group

The four members of the former Village Plan study group (Harry Butterworth, Peter Hawley, Adrian Dixon and Richard Wingfield (Convenor)) agreed to serve in the new group, which will aim to provide assistance and advice to the Parish Council on matters relating to traffic, roads and pavements.

At their first meeting, on 22 June 2009, speed limits, speed signs, parking problems, weight limits, rough pavements and road markings were all discussed. Details will be found on the village website. The main points were:

- Agreement that the police threat of yellow lines to prevent parking near the Hardwick Road junction and narrows is best headed off by a policy of proactive involvement of residents in the area, self-regulation of parking, and continued communication with the police.
- Confirmation is needed from OCC that the 7.5 tonne environmental weight limit in the High Street has been reinstated in the official list.
- The rough condition of the pavement of the High Street, passing The Peach House and Thames Bank, is reported to have caused at least one pedestrian to fall recently. OCC to be asked to re-pave it.

Village Hall Management Committee

A new sub-committee of the Parish Council has been formed to manage the village hall. Nigel Grove has done this almost single-handedly for many years and is now joined by Dr Matilda Oppenheimer, Anna Szczeponek , Ed Pilcher and Stephen Trinder (Chairman).

Its first task is to action the cosmetic refurbishment of the hall in August, which involves redecoration, new flooring and curtains. It is hoped that this will stimulate new interest in holding events there – meetings, classes and parties – at the hall. Resident support is vital if further short term improvements are to be justified. A suitable launch of the refreshed facilities is planned on completion.

The committee will also be considering a number of formal aspects of the hall, including the terms of its charitable status and licence; fuller details are provided on the website.

Stephen Trinder

Caveat Emptor

A resident in Eastfield Lane was "cold called" recently by someone offering to cut down a dead tree. A price was agreed. When they turned up to do the work they said actually the price would be twice that. Luckily the house owner was strong and refused to pay any more, and sent them on their way. He feels that this could have been a try-on to extract money from people.

Police advice is not to agree work with cold callers. This has been reported this to the Police as a suspicious incident by Geoff Weir in his capacity as Neighbourhood Watch Contact.

Young Riparians and the Twinning Association present a French Café evening

The French Cafe evening was a great success. The Twinning set up the Village Hall with bunting and table decorations in French colours and the Young Riparians entertained with a series of sketches. The sketches included 'French Cafe', 'Parrot Sketch', 'Can Can' and many others. During the interval, the Twinning served French wine and cheese. The event raised a very healthy sum to help to revive the Twinning coffers after last year's anniversary events.

_____ to read and see more.

Young Riparians

On the 3rd. & 4th. of July we held a very successful "French Cafe" evening, with the Whitchurch and Goring Heath Twinning Association provided the atmosphere, food and wine, which included genuine French cheeses.

We provided the entertainment of sketches, including our version of the "Cancan" and music during the interval.

A good time was had by all thanks to the children, who put in a great deal of hard work in a very short rehearsal period. Some of the older ones were sitting exams during this time, so their work load was quite high.

Our next production will be in December, "King Arthur, the Pantomime", so look out for further news.

Pam Chandler

"And now, to our darker purpose".



Here at Whitchurch Pre-School we have just been visited by Ofsted (June 2009) and we're absolutely delighted to have been rated as outstanding in all areas. We're enjoying the summer and the hot weather; the children are busy practising for their Sports Day on July 10th. We're also gearing up for the end-of-term picnic, when the children will be entertained by a circus skills performer.

Our vegetable garden is thriving and the children love the new equipment in our garden, which includes a sandpit, a wonderful new fort/ climbing frame and a giant weaving frame for the children to thread ribbons in.

We recently participated in the Whitchurch 10k race, alongside the Primary School. The Pre-School organised events on the Green and raised £750 (see separate article about the run itself). We are very fortunate to work alongside the Primary School to support our fundraising. The children have also enjoyed taking part in the Big Toddle at Beale Park, alongside hundreds of other pre-school aged children, to raise funds for Barnardos and Pre-School.

Next, we've got the Whitchurch Fete on Saturday September 5th to look forward to; we've got some great attractions planned for this.

If anyone has any children they wish to register for Pre-School, please contact Kathy Aitchison on 984 4462 or Helen Lowney on 984 4516.

Whitchurch Primary School

Rated OUTSTANDING by Ofsted!

Congratulations are due to all involved with Whitchurch Primary School which was rated outstanding by Ofsted following a recent inspection.

The Inspectors noted that:

- * The Early Years Foundation Stage helps children make an excellent start to their school life.
- * Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 2.
- * The great majority of children attain high standards by the time that they leave the school.
- * Pupils make such exceptional progress because teaching and learning are of outstanding quality.

The inspectors also praised the leadership of the school, the personal development and well-being of pupils, and opportunities provided for children to take responsibility.

Plans are already being made to build on this success to ensure that children continue to realise their full potential in their time at the school.

The full Ofsted report is available at:

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/display/\(id\)/109711](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/display/(id)/109711)

The School website can be accessed at:

<http://www.whitchurch.oxon.sch.uk/>

Toad Hall 10K Race - 28th June 2009

The Toad Hall 10k Race took place on 28th June 2009 and we really couldn't have been blessed with better weather. Maybe a little too hot for some of the runners but for the activities on the green, it was idyllic.

The race started on time at 10.30am and runners ran what can only be described as an incredibly beautiful, if a little tough, course through Hardwick Estate, Bottom Wood, Goring Heath and surrounding areas.

Runners came from as far a field as Holland (believe it or not!) with all levels of overall fitness. Our winner, Christopher Dettmar crossed the line in 36.33 minutes setting a course record that will need cooler weather to beat, closely followed by Trevor Hunter in second place with a time of 37:50 and in third place Michael Hiscott in 38:08.

Our first lady, Samantha Amend crossed the line in 41:21, putting her in the top 10 overall. All competitors completed the course after 1 hr and 32 minutes.

On completion of the race, the runners were welcomed by a lovely array of tea, cakes, Pimms, local real ale and tasty bacon butties! All of which, I hasten to add, ran out!! After the punishing hills, many runners were grateful for the availability of a rub down from the sports massage team on hand. For the children, there were mini- races, face painting, hair braiding, tattoo's and bracelet making.

A truly wonderful morning was had by all with the Toad Hall Team receiving lots of positive feedback about the organisation of the race.

Total funds raised for our local school - Whitchurch Primary and Pre-school Group are believed to be just over £6000.

Thanks must go to our sponsors - Warmingshams and Richard Wilson Solicitors, both of Goring and The Henley Standard and Trail Junkies of Moulsoford. Additionally much praise must go to all those that helped on the day, be it marshalling, helping out on the stalls or making a cake. The event would not have been such a success without the help of each and everyone of them so THANK YOU very much for your support.

We hope that you will all join us next year and even try your luck at Taming the Toad!

Toad Hall 10K team

Whitchurch Village Fete

Saturday 5th September 2009

2.00pm - 5.00pm

**Whitchurch Cricket Ground
Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch on Thames,**

* Circus Entertainer * The Animal Woman *
Alpacas * Granny's Attic *

* Interactive displays for children * Tug of War * Bouncy
Castle and Games *

* Quality Gift and Craft Stalls *

Grand Draw - fabulous prizes to be won

Beer Tent * Tea and Cake Stall * Ice Creams * B-B-Q

PLUS

Whitchurch VS Whitchurch Hill

Cricket Match

From 5.00pm

If you would like to join us with a stall, donate items for
Granny's Attic or purchase tickets for the Grand Draw, please
contact **Helen Bowsher** at

helenbowsher@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 0118 9841826

*Fete organised by the parent committee of
Whitchurch Pre-school Group*

Main sponsors

Warmingshams Estate Agents & R Wilson Solicitors of Goring

Grand Draw kindly sponsored by the BP Technology
Centre Whitchurch Hill

A WHITCHURCH ARCHITECT & HIS FATHER

In 1983 we moved to Whitchurch from Co. Wicklow in the Republic of Ireland, where we have lived ever since in part of Swanston House, known as Swanston West. My only memory of the previous incumbents was that we were told the whole building had been the home of the son of the architect of Truro Cathedral, who was himself an architect, and had extended Swanston twice, before and after the First World War.

It might have taken a rather shorter time than it has to find out a bit more, but there were a few other matters.....However, on one occasion I was in the west country and made a point of visiting Truro Cathedral – where for the first time I met the name of John Loughborough Pearson, its architect, who quite surprisingly had lived long enough to see it through to completion.

Subsequent, and only recent, enquiry in the R.I.B.A. Library revealed Pearson's considerable practice mainly in the line of Victorian Gothic churches. Even in his lifetime his views on restoration called forth strong criticism, but there is no doubt as a church architect he was much sought after – and once you have looked at a number of pictures of his different buildings, there is undoubtedly a similarity in style and his handling of material which is clearly distinctive. As Surveyor of the Fabric of Westminster Abbey for many years he is buried in the nave.

And what is this? Another Cathedral? Down Under? Well, look it up on the internet! He did indeed design a Cathedral for Brisbane, the capital of Queensland which was on schedule for completion at the end of last year and subsequent dedication. That one has taken just over a hundred years. In the pictures you can see all the character of his other buildings – and as they say there, it will be the last Gothic Cathedral in the world to be completed. Although he did not live to see Brisbane even begun, it has rather remarkably come to pass after a long pause – a considerable achievement by any standards especially in the present day.

Now I have digressed – for the architect Pearson who lived in Whitchurch was his son, Frank Loughborough Pearson. His mother died in his infancy, so his father sent him off to grow up on the Isle of Man with her unmarried sister. After a subsequent education at Winchester he joined his father’s practice and continued with and completed his work when he died. This included the Brisbane project, and some involvement with Auckland, New Zealand – also worth having a look at, as well as the English Church in Madrid.

Both father and son numbered William Waldorf Astor, one of the world’s wealthiest people at the time among their clients. Father designed the Astor Estate Office near Temple underground station, besides doing work at Carlton House Terrace, and at Cliveden. Frank – the Whitchurch L.P. – was commissioned to create the Tudor Village at Hever Castle in Kent, and only recently there has been an article in *The Times* about staying at Hever in the mock Tudor Medley Court. One account I have read claims that he designed over a hundred cottages there – and if you think about it there is clearly somewhere else which has more than its fair share of black and white mock Tudor buildings – and similar.

Frank Loughborough Pearson’s obituary tells us a little more of him – he married in 1891 the appropriately-named Cecilia, elder daughter of Alfred Littleton, chairman of Novello & Co., the well-known music publishers. No doubt it was through this connection he was commissioned to design their new head office in Wardour Street, in 1906, which today is a Grade II listed building. He had four daughters, three of whom survived him after his death in 1947 – and I wonder how many of them might have been married in St. Mary’s or St. John’s and where their descendents live now? I think Richard Hughes told me he designed the War Memorial. During WWI he served in the Artists Rifles, and he also enjoyed sailing and golf.

The final lines read as follows – “He was particularly successful in his country house work, notably in the neighbourhood of Whitchurch, Oxfordshire where he made his home for many years.” If you look about, he is around us to this day, and no doubt there is an unusually high consumption of black and white paint on both sides of the river!

A recent expedition in London, largely on foot, took me first to what had been the Astor Estate Office designed by the father, at Temple – now used for other purposes, but clearly well cared for. Then I made for Wardour Street, where the son's splendid building for his in-laws has become home to one of their great rivals in music publishing, Chappell's of Bond Street! Downstairs has a large showroom selling almost anything musical you can imagine. Upstairs is quite grand, and I think should be described as a *salon* in which the *pianofortes* are displayed in considerable number. There is a gallery overlooking the main area, while pillars and other decorative features are liberally gilded. My eye was caught particularly by a child's miniature piano.

Then I found my way to St. Augustine's Church, Kilburn, much loved by John Betjeman, where Canon Anthony Yates was kind enough to show me round in some detail. It is a very atmospheric building, and as it was explained to me, one could come to understand the care – indeed, devotion – which had gone into its design. I think this is now the only central London church designed by John L.P. which survives, although there is another in Croydon, where the tower and spire remain unfinished. There is clearly a resemblance between the two. The elegantly designed website for St. Augustine's contains some excellent detail photographs of this remarkable building, besides its history, and something of the story of the development of the Anglo Catholic movement in the nineteenth century.

All in all – with the addition of diversions to the Algerian Coffee Stores, and Harold Moore's Record Shop - a very satisfactory day out!

David Laing

WOTHABS
Whitchurch-on-Thames Habitat Study Group

On 21st June, we held our second Wildlife Explorers event at Chalkhills, on a perfect summer's day. Nine primary age children came along with their parents and they took part in various activities including searching for flowers by colour and bug-hunting using three different techniques. The most popular method was sweeping the long grass with a strong net on a pole – amazing how many unsuspecting insects can be found!

After a picnic lunch in the sunshine, we walked through the New Plantation and up onto the top ridge. There were plenty of butterflies, day moths and flowers to observe and identify. We were able to find five-spot burnet moths in all their stages – caterpillar, pupae in cocoons on grass stalks and adults – the children were fascinated. We wound up the day with snail races – they can be faster than you think!

There was lots of positive feedback so we plan to hold another similar event in the autumn. If you would like to be circulated with the details, please ring me on (0118) 984 4365 or preferably email on sally.woolhouse@homecall.co.uk.

My thanks to everyone who attended, also to Gill, Lorna and Sandra for running the day with me and especially to Sandra who allowed us to hold the event on her land.

Sally Woolhouse

Summer
GARDENING
Show

Goring Heath Parish Hall

SATURDAY
AUGUST 29th 2009

Exhibitors 8.30 ~10

PUBLIC 2 ~ 4pm

Refreshments

Raffle

Schedules From-: Pat Turner 0118 984 4200

Theresa Elsome 0118 984 2056

Trish Bland 0118 984 2908

Kate Giles 0118 984 1590

Liz Gibson 0118 984 2012

Yattendon – a round walk (or two)

Use Ordnance Survey Explorer map 158

Park in the village but without imposing on the residents; perhaps in front of the shop or, preferably, in the car park round the corner.

Cross over the road and turn right to walk back down towards the Church. Just as you reach it you will see a footpath sign on your left (map reference **554745**). This is your start, walk up the path which quickly turns right with another path joining from the churchyard and then left and becomes a broad path with woodland on your left. This path carries you forward for over a mile straight ahead; ignore the path leading off to your right at about the half mile point. You will eventually reach a hedgerow running at right angles to you, the path turns right here (and so do you) and shortly afterwards a left turn at an angle to meet a field path and to reach a 'restricted byway' (which comes up from Burnt Hill).

Turn left onto it and the byway becomes a road leading into Ashampstead. Just before its Church on your left you will see a footpath running across the churchyard (map reference **565767**), turn left and follow it through and across a field to meet a concrete road, turn left onto this road until you see a footpath on your right (before the entrance to the farm enclosure). Follow this path without deviation until you are along-side a large open field, keep an eye open for your next footpath which is on your left and it strikes directly across this field, you will cross numerous stiles (there are 8 on this return leg) until you reach a hedgerow blocking your direct route, turn left alongside it to meet another stile on your right giving access to the field beyond.

Your path here is again at an angle, although most people have chosen to edge around the field (left and then right), yours can be the direct route to meet and turn right onto this fieldside path. Again keep an eye open for your next path on your left which strikes diagonally across to a distant stile, cross over to reach a gate and stile leading onto the road from Yattendon to Hampstead Norreys. Turn left to reach the square at Yattendon.

It is a lovely walk, just under 5 miles so allow at least 1½ hours. I have added a further walk in Yattendon for another time, but sometime in the future I will introduce you to one from Frilsham church.

Eric Hartley

WOODCOTE LIBRARY

We shall be going on a Quest during the summer months for our summer reading challenge. From 4th July we will be signing up children to take part by reading six books over the holidays and thereby helping to find the "Golden Book". There will be prizes along the way and of course a medal at the end as the seekers tackle the "firebird rising", the "mountain mission" and the "dragon's lair".

Two storytimes will be held on this theme, the first on August 6th for 2 to 5 year olds at 3pm and the second on August 20th for 6 to 9 year olds at the same time. Look for the posters and tickets at the library desk - the event is free, but parents need to stay, especially to help with the cutting and sticking!

No chance to be bored over the summer holidays as the library will open at the usual times and will be running events for children. Throughout the summer, the Questseekers challenge will give young readers the chance to join in our search for the golden book while collecting stickers and other gifts along the way.

There are two Storytimes planned, both on Thursdays - for the 2 to 5 year olds on August 6th from 3 to 4 o'clock and for the 6 to 9 year olds on August 20th at the same time.

In a new initiative, we're delighted to welcome Andrew from the Rainbow Children's Centre who will entertain the very young with stories, rhymes and colouring every Tuesday afternoon from 2.15 to 3pm. Mums and babies also welcome.

We're very pleased that one of our young readers won a prize in the Alice Day colouring competition.

For adults we can offer a cool place to find summer reading - if you need the date extended to cover your holiday please just ask at the desk.

DIARY DATES

Contributions welcome for this column if anyone knows of a date that would be of interest to the village.

AUGUST

29TH Summer gardening Show
Goring Heath parish hall

SEPTEMBER

5TH Whitchurch FETE
Village Cricket Field, Eastfield lane

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN

will be published in September 2009.

Please send your contributions **preferably by e-mail to**

Sarah.pongo@talktalk.net by 10th September 2009

Views of individual contributors
are the views of those contributors,
and are not necessarily the views of the Parish Council, or the
editor.

