

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES BULLETIN

NOVEMBER

2001

Published by the Whitchurch Parish Council in alternate months

There was a meeting of the Parish Council on 5 November 2001 at the Village Hall. Present were Councillors Vincent Aldridge, Nigel Grove, Peter Minton, John Spencer and Geoff Weir together with Janet Holmes the Parish Clerk. Also in attendance were District Councillor Deborah Whitfeld and Mrs Kate Thatcher. An apology had been received from Councillor Brian Mott.

The Chairman welcomed members and, introducing Mrs Thatcher, proposed that she be co-opted to fill the vacancy left by the recent departure of Carol Porter to Scotland. This received unanimous support. *(Kate Thatcher, daughter of Sarah and Harry Butterworth, now lives at Rivendell, Hartslock Bridleway and has lived in or near the village for many years.)*

The minutes of the meetings of 3 September and 1 October were accepted. Under Matter Arising, it was reported that the Deodar Cedar tree in the front garden of Eastfield House has been inspected by the Tree Officer from SODC following an inadvertent application of weed killer to some grass in the lawn. Work is to be carried out on the tree, which is covered by a Tree Preservation Order, to clear the crown and remove deadwood.

In her report, Councillor Whitfeld commented on the new arrangements for the collection of household waste. The previous contractors, SITA, had been removed from their contract and Grundon had taken over from them. There is a gap between the end of the SITA contract and the new one coming into effect so there may be some short term upheaval but we look forward to a far better, if more expensive, service from early December!

Planning

Decision notices

P01/SO825 Cedarwood, Eastfield Lane - erection of stables **Granted**

P01/SO554 Rivendell, Harstlock B'way – replacement dwelling **Refused**

P01/SO594 Thames Bank S, High Street – Solar heaters **Granted**

New Applications

P01/SO882 Path Hill Farm – change of use to food preparation unit

Should be supported

P01/SO892 3 Old Barn Cottages, High Street – extension to rear

No strong views

P01/SO979 Church Cottages, High Street – summer house in rear garden

No strong views

Finance

The following cheques were presented for payment: R M Weaver for grass cutting; NSALG, allotment rent and affiliation fees; Janet Holmes for Clerk salary. The cheque for the new lighting column at the top of Muddy Lane was withheld since the light has still not been connected and switched on.

The District Auditor having finally agreed the accounts, the Chairman was authorised to sign them. The subject of the outstanding invoice for the Audit of 1998 was discussed and it was agreed that further information was needed before the Council could accept the total.

The subject of the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations was discussed. It was felt that a series of events could be incorporated into a Village Celebration starting with the Toll Bridge Centenary exhibition, in May and ending with the Primary School Sports Day and Fete in July. The Chairman will write to all village organisations in order to help to co-ordinate any events that might be planned.

Other Matters

Under Village Maintenance, the Chairman reported on correspondence about the state of Hardwick Road and dismay was expressed at yet further delay (see report later in the Bulletin). The Allotment site is now nearly full with cultivated plots and the Council was happy to see it so well used.

Goring Heath Parish council are looking into a low cost housing scheme and Whitchurch has been invited to join with them in the application. The Clerk was instructed to reply saying that we welcomed this approach and would be delighted to join with them.

Councillor Weir spoke of his visit to a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of SODC at which policing of the area was discussed. We hope that the new arrangements will provide us with a more appropriate service.

The Next full meeting of the Council will be on January 2 2002 in the Village Hall at 8.00pm. Everyone is welcome to come to our meetings.

The Saga of Hardwick Road

The Icelandic Sagas are famous for their length, the Hardwick Road saga is rapidly approaching them! The latest response to letters from both residents and the Chairman, is that there may be money available in April to do a 'thin surfacing' a process which, it is explained, allows them to eliminate the planing of the current 'surface'. It would seem that a thin surfacing would need to be pretty thick to fill in the lumps and bumps that we now have but that is the view of the experts.

However, the treatment cannot be done until Spring or Summer because that is when the process performs best! "In the meantime, we are satisfied that the condition of Hardwick Road does not exceed our tolerances for safety" says the Highways Department.

Look out for future installments of the Saga...

Peter Minton, Chairman WPC

FROM YOUR DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

A new refuse and recycling contract has been awarded to Grundons. This will come into effect on 10 December and it is hoped that from that date residents Will be able to put plastics into their recycling box. Grundons will operate a temporary service without change until then; These changes follow months of unsatisfactory service by S.I.T.A. who had requested early withdrawal from their contract: these negotiations failed and the Council is now taking legal action against them for breach of contract.

The Henley Area Forum will be held on 29 November at 7,00pm at Sonning Common Village Hall: this is an opportunity to meet Councillors and Officers and to discuss relevant local issues.

Deborah Whitfeld

SODC Community Collection Waste Service

SITA have ceased to provide the refuse and recycling collections and we have been informed by SODC that during the period up until 10 December the supervised collection waste service will be suspended.

They are in negotiation with a S Grundon (Services) Limited who will take over the contract from the 10 December. The Public Amenities Team at Wallingford will give us the dates from then on, when they are agreed - they will be posted on the Parish Council Board in the High Street. This information will also be available on the Council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk or by telephoning Mrs Heather Leyland on (01491) 823487.

In the meantime you may find it useful to use the **TIP** facility provided by Oxford County Council at the following address:

Oakley Wood, Old Icknield Road, Ewelme. The opening hours are as follows:

Monday to Saturday 8.30am - 4.00pm

Sunday only 9.00am - 4.00pm

This will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

The house-to-house collection for both dustbins and green boxes will be as usual.

Policing in Whitchurch

Following a letter from the Parish Council to Thames Valley Police expressing concern at the apparent lack of Police presence in the village, Sergeant Irfon Rees came for a chat over a cup of tea.

Geoff Weir: How is the local Policing organised?

Sergeant Rees: Inspector Parker is in charge of the local Area, which is based at Didcot. I'm one of 2 Sergeants at Wallingford, and I look after the rural villages, which includes Whitchurch, Berinsfield, Cholsey, Benson and Warborough.

GW: So what policing should we see in Whitchurch?

SR: Your Area Beat Officer is PC Paul Conyers. In recent months Paul has had to be taken off his ABO role more than I would like, but this shouldn't happen in the future and you should be seeing more of Paul in Whitchurch.

GW: Is there any other patrolling?

SR: Yes – there is a patrol car which covers the rural villages on a 24 hour basis.

GW: So what happens if there's an emergency call and the rural patrol car is miles away in Warborough?

SR: We have an agreement with the Pangbourne Inspector, and they will respond if they have a car nearer than us.

GW: There's been quite a few car crimes in the village – what are you doing about this?

SR: Overall the number of car crimes is reducing. But it's true that we cannot always do much to investigate every incident. In the future we hope to train constables in basic scene-of-crime techniques such as taking fingerprints. It's important to take precautions to deter thefts – not leaving valuable items in cars, and always locking the vehicle when unattended.

GW: Do you ever recover stolen items?

SR: Yes, but returning them to their owners would be much easier if valuable items were security marked.

GW: What about distraction and other burglaries? How do they know which houses to target?

SR Usually the criminals will visit the area first. They may drive around, and get to know when people come and go. They may knock at doors and if challenged say they're from the water board, or looking for another house. So it's very important that houseowners take care and be aware that callers may not always be genuine. Always ask for ID from people who claim to have a right to come into your house.

GW: What can people do if they see somebody acting suspiciously?

SR: Just noting a vehicle registration number is useful, and passing it on to the Police or your Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator. We recently caught a burglar in another village because someone had taken the number of a suspicious vehicle.

GW: What are you doing about speeding traffic?

SR On the way here I stopped and cautioned 2 drivers near Crays Pond for speeding well over the 40 limit. I intend to come out with a speed gun in the area over the next few weeks.

GW: Who are the worst offenders?

SR: It's not so much young men in Metro's, it's more people who should know better, drivers of top of the range cars, including school run time.

GW: What else are you doing to combat crime?

SR: There are Thames valley Police initiatives on car crime and drug abuse. In addition I intend to visit and get to know all the pub licensees in my area, and also to attend some Parish Council meetings to listen to local concerns. We are also keen to recruit special constables and to hear from anyone who could work part time in police stations.

GW: How much crime in Whitchurch is cleared up?

SR: I will get some figures for you, but it may take a week or two [*these will be published in the next Bulletin*].

GW: Thank you very much. We hope to see you again soon.

Geoff Weir



CHRISTMAS MINI MARKET

Saturday 8th December

GORING HEATH PARISH HALL

Whitchurch Hill
OPPOSITE ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

10.30am - 3.30pm

lovely presents for everyone

refreshments:

HOME MADE SOUP AND ROLLS
MINCE PIES. CAKES
and much much more

phone - Theresa Elsome on 0118 984 2056
or Pat Turner on 0118 984 4200

letter to the Editor ...

When the restriction of the road near the Ferryboat was originally being planned I was a frequent user of that piece of tarmac and I noted that there were usually pedestrians on the pavement, typically mums going shopping in Pangbourne. I was uncomfortably aware that it was only a matter of time before a vehicle travelling towards the river much too fast encountered something coming the other way, swerved to avoid it, and hit some young mother who happened to be walking along the pavement with her offspring in a pushchair.

The Rectory wall at that time bore witness to many squeezes that were too tight. At the time I was a member of the Parish Council. Of course, I can not now speak for the Council, but my memory is that the other Councillors felt the same way and were unanimous that something must be done before someone was hurt.

My own opinion is that the original modification worked quite well. Nevertheless there was still occasions when wheels swerved off the roadway. The small minority can spoil things for the majority. The latest version (which I have had nothing to do with) does force everyone to slow up until they can see right through to the far side of the restriction.

We will never know for certain whether life and limb has been saved because we can't record an accident that did not happen. I for one have no reservations about it. There will still be scrapes and metal will still get bent. The risk of damage to people, particularly as innocent passers by, has surely been greatly reduced.

Harry Butterworth

Whitchurch pre-school Group - "learning through play"

Well, the Autumn Term is well and truly upon us and the children have been making some beautiful Autumnal pictures, and some pretty scary wicked witch masks for Halloween. Their colourful, glittery Rocket and Catherine Wheel firework pictures celebrating Bonfire Night were almost as spectacular as the real thing! The children will also be spending some time this term doing music and drama in preparation for the school nativity play.

Many thanks to everyone who came along to the sponsored bike ride. It was very well attended and a thoroughly enjoyable event. So far we have raised £147.50 in sponsorship money.

A taste of Christmas has come early for the children at pre-school this year, as we have been spending some of the money raised during the year on new toys and games all of which have been enormously popular. These include a large set of traffic lights, a large chalk and white board and the one that has the longest queue in the morning to use, a toy microwave.

We are looking forward to the Christmas play and the pre-school Christmas Party, also to the annual appearance of Father Christmas - a full report in the new year.

Finally a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year to you all.

Trudy Reynolds 984 2609

ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Enthusiasm for growing fruit and vegetables continues; we welcome three new families to the Allotment Society this Autumn. Indeed, we are almost over-subscribed (but we can find space for prospective allotmenters!)

We are always on the look-out for old baths being thrown out, please let me know if you have one you want to get rid of, we will take it away for you and "plumb" it in to the water circuit at the Allotments!

Rosamund Heath 984 2358

WHITCHURCH AND GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

Formerly The Ancient Parish of Whitchurch History Society. A resolution was passed at our last open meeting to formally change the name as we had felt for some time that the original name did not reflect the wider area of local interest. Following that we had a fascinating talk given by Clive Williams on how money made in India had led to the building of great country estates in the Thames Valley.

We do not have a meeting in December. In January we have our Members' Evening when some of our members talk about their projects. It is on the third Thursday and is open to all, members and non-members alike. Please join us.

GORING CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR
Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 November 10am to 5pm

GORING VILLAGE HALL

Entry 50p for adults with accompanied children free
This is a reputable quality Fair now in its 12th year
with a wide variety of gifts and at prices to suit all ages.

It is being held in aid of Hall improvements.

LESLIE BOOEN

About 5 Years ago when Leslie was 90 or so, he and Frances bought a new video. They were able to play pre-recorded tapes but Leslie had not yet got down to learning how to operate the machine to record programmes. We said you will have to do something soon, but Leslie said “there’s plenty of time”, it was a favourite phrase of his.

When I was chairman of the Fete Committee, I knew that if Leslie was asked to run a stall or perform some other task for the fete, which he usually did with Hugh Bryant, I could put a tick against that event and forget about it.

On the day, Leslie and Hugh would be there with their stall up and ready for business when the fete opened and some ingenious device or covering for the operation had been constructed to see that everything ran smoothly. They were both around 70 then, but what a boon for a chairman of the Fete Committee.

Leslie was the kindest and most gentle man I ever knew, nothing seemed to phase him. In later years he was always interesting to talk to and was as sharp as pin right to the end.

For Leslie, Time ran out. But I wonder. Suppose Leslie arrived at the Pearly Gates and found them locked, then St. Peter put his head out of the lodge window and said “hello Leslie, just a jiff while I find the key”. I bet Leslie said “take it easy, there’s plenty of time”

Tony Voysey



PANGBOURNE WI MARKET
CHRISTMAS MARKET
PANGBOURNE VILLAGE HALL
SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER
9.30AM TO 4.00PM

EXCELLENT SELECTION OF
Home Baking
Crafts and Cards
Fresh Eggs - Preserves

Christmas Order taken for Cakes, Puddings, Mince Pies etc
Christmas Wreaths and floral decorations
Refreshments served all day, including light lunches
Visit us to sample and buy our home-made specialities!

WHITCHURCH HABITAT STUDY GROUP (WoT-Habs)

In Muddy Lane a small working party spent a morning relocating dead branches left by the Southern Electricity Board after their last clearance job. We heaped the branches near the School's woodland corner to create a wildlife corridor and enhance the habitat value. We definitely created more warm places for creatures to hide as the weather gets colder.

About a third of the fencing work round the school wildlife area has now been completed and WoT-Habs has finally been allocated a grant from SODC under the Agenda 21 initiative which will help us to buy materials to do further fencing and work on the paths.

A wildlife painting project is now well underway at the school with the help of WoT-Habs members. Children from Class 3 have painted a variety of wooden 'nature' shapes to adorn the fence and other parts of the wild area. The paintings were done with great enthusiasm and will be on view in the school section of the local Art and Craft Exhibition on 17 and 18 November. When their paintings are fixed on the fence, the children can look at insects, birds and other wildlife even when the real creatures are hiding or waiting to be born. All the pupils in the school will have the opportunity to make their contribution to this project in the coming months.

Congratulations go to Sandra Conn (a very active and founder member) and her husband Dick at Bozedown Vineyard, who were among the five winners of Wildlife Awards in the Berks, Bucks and Oxon area for their contributions to habitat conservation on their land. These awards, which are made by the Country Landowners Association, are for work carried out without the aid of any grants, and do not appear to be of any monetary value, but the Conns are no doubt looking forward to receiving something decorative they can frame.

Do please get in touch if you would like to help WoT-Habs in any way.

Gill Goodwin (984 2934)

St. Mary's Christmas Fair

Saturday, 1st December at Whitchurch Village Hall
2.30pm to 5.00pm (please note revised time)

Christmas Gifts. Bottle Tombola. Cakes
Domestic Stoneware Pottery. Potted Plants
Raffle. White elephant etc.

Mulled wine and mince pies & tea and cake
will be available during the afternoon

All proceeds towards St Mary's and St John's churches.

*If you are able to help on the day or offer donations
for the Raffle or any of the stalls,
Wendy Ferguson would be pleased to hear from you on 984 1262*

THE ALPACAS OF HARDWICK ROAD

The sight of alpacas -natives of the South American Andes - at the base of the Chilterns still causes cars to screech to a halt in surprise. Many local residents walk along Hardwick Road to see these attractive, peaceful, eco-friendly creatures. The change from the big fluffy creatures of Spring to the thin matchstick figures of Summer is quite dramatic - so, what happens to all their lovely coats of many colours?

Alpacas produce luxury fleece comparable with cashmere, but lustrous and strong as well being hypo-allergenic. We have had our alpacas in Whitchurch Hill since 1989, and have researched and developed our own ideas over what to do with this wonderful fleece. We now have a glorious range of luxury fabrics, throws and shawls. These are perfect for that very special Christmas present. We also have socks, gloves and sweaters made from pure alpaca.

There will be an opportunity to see and buy these exclusive products at the Christ Fair to be held in Goring Heath Parish Rooms on Saturday 8 December. We look forward to showing you the end product.

Ken and Joy Whitehead

ALL CHURCHES TOGETHER - Advent Carol Service

*All Churches Together in and around Pangbourne will be holding an Advent Carol Service at St James Church, Pangbourne, on **Sunday 2 December at 6.00pm**. This service is a lovely way to start the Christmas celebrations so do come and join the members of local churches as we sing familiar carols and listen to traditional readings.*

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES ART AND CRAFT EXHIBITION

SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER 10.30am - 5.00pm

SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER 10.30am - 4.00pm

COME AND SEE THE SHOW !

PANGBOURNE AND DISTRICT BOWLING CLUB

It has been a wonderful season for the Club, and one which we will all remember with affection. The evening of the last match of the Kennet League between Pangbourne and Huntley & Palmers was “electric”. Either team could have won, it’s history that Pangbourne on the night were slightly the better team. Every wood counted, everybody strived to win, not just the men from Pangbourne, but also our opponents. Every member of his rink played to the best of their ability, and not one was found wanting. We’ll have to see what happens next season when Pangbourne get promoted to a tougher division, but the spirit and skill are there. I’m sure we’ll do well.

On Finals Day we had a club record broken. Ron Salsbury won five titles and was runner-up in a sixth. This has never happened before and Ron played every game with the same energy throughout the long, long day. He was in fact in so many finals that we had to extend the games over two days. Ron has also recently appeared in “The Weakest Link” which he did not win - still you can’t be good at everything. On the new club presentation evening Ron walked off with five trophies, and six shields. I suggested a wheelbarrow, but he gamely staggered out into the night laden down with two Waitrose carrier bags which gave out a metallic clink as he disappeared into the darkness.

This year we will have a new Captain, Len Bunting. Len is a good bowler and a kind and considerate man, well liked by everybody in the club. Ray May has decided after five years as Club Captain to step down but staying on in his capacity as Green Keeper. There again he has does a really good job.

The Green has been laid to rest for the Winter, but there is still a lot of work being done. The paving slabs around the Green need to be re-seated and collecting fallen leaves from the trees around the grounds is a never ending job. Ray is blessed in having a superb Green Team to help him.

My sincere thanks to the Whitchurch Bulletin for once again this year allowing me to pen these few words about the bowling and a little about the individuals who go to make up this wonderful game.

Bill Ayling

LOCAL CRAFT GROUP

We have run as a Lace Circle for the past 14 years. During that time we have organised Lace Days for other lacemakers to attend, demonstrated our skills at Craft Fairs around Reading, including the Waterfest at Blake's Lock, held Workshops and run an Annual outing.

Whilst we enjoy our lacemaking it is not unusual for one or more of our members to turn up at our weekly meetings with some other form of needlecraft, such as knitting, cross stitch, tapestry etc. With this in mind and with the idea of bringing new members into the group, we have renamed ourselves :

Tylehurst Lace and Needlecraft Circle

SO, if you are interested in any type of needlecraft and would like to spend an evening with like-minded people, we would welcome you at our weekly meetings. These are held in the Vestry of St Mary the Virgin Church, Purley-on-Thames from 7.30pm - 9.30pm on Wednesday evenings.

Just turn up with your needle(s), or ring before hand if you prefer.

Jane White on 0118 941 1559 or Diana Mattison on 0118 942 7574

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN

will be published in January 2002.

Please send your contributions for the January edition,

preferably on disc in Word 95 or plain text

or alternatively hard copy to the Editor:-

Sylvia Rosekilly, 22 Swanston Field, Whitchurch-on-Thames, RG8 7HP

Telephone (0118) 984 3080

no later than Monday, 7 January 2002.

The views that may be expressed by individual contributors to **The Bulletin** are not necessarily those of the Whitchurch Parish Council or the Editor. We welcome all news items or letters we do require that they be signed; we will not publish items or letters from sources which cannot be identified.