

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES BULLETIN

www.whitchurchonthames.com

NOVEMBER 2005

Meeting of the Parish Council

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on Tuesday the 8th November at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall.

In attendance were the Chairman Matilda Oppenheimer and Councillors Nigel Grove, Vincent Aldridge, Kate Thatcher, Harry Butterworth, Elizabeth Robinson and Nigel Cabeldu.

Also present were the acting Parish Clerk Janet Holmes and the newly appointed Parish Clerk Andrea Gardner. One member of the Public also attended.

Parish Clerk

We have interviewed and appointed a new Parish Clerk. She is Andrea Gardner, she lives locally and will take over from Janet Holmes at our next meeting. We are very grateful to Janet for helping us over the summer and autumn and warmly welcome Andrea to her new job.

Parish Clerk Email address: clerk@whitchurchonthames.com

Cricket Ground

Nigel Cabeldu, secretary of the Cricket Club, reported to the Parish Council that negotiations were continuing between the Cricket Club Committee and the Whitelock family who own the ground. The CC have taken legal advice and are working on the Planning application for one house on the ground as proposed at the public meeting earlier this year. The delays during the last year have been caused by illness of one of the Whitelock's advisors. Further meetings are planned in the near future and the Parish Council and the Village will be kept informed about the outcome of these meetings.

A Cricket Match was held on the ground in September between the Whitchurch CC and the Whitelock family team the President's XI. The Parish Council and the Village were invited to meet the Whitelock family to discuss the future of the Cricket Ground.

Toll Bridge

Whitchurch, Goring Heath, Woodcote and Pangbourne Parish Council representatives met recently with the Toll Bridge Company.

Major Bridge reconstruction will take place in 2013. The appearance of the bridge will be unchanged.

The estimated cost for this is over £2 million. Operational income will have to be increased to meet the costs of re-building the Bridge as the Company does not have sufficient investments for this. This means that the Company will increase the average Tolls by 0.5p every year until 2013. Since the 20p toll cannot be increased without applying to the Department of Transport this will mean that the **Discretionary Discount Toll (at present 9p per journey) will increase by 1p per year every year until 2013**. The Company will in all probability apply to the Department of Transport to increase the 20p toll in 5 years time.

Partial automation is planned to commence in 2006. This will involve prepaid cards and may involve cash baskets, new barriers and night time collection of tolls. This will not be introduced until a satisfactory trial has taken place first.

The Parish Councils representatives all expressed their wish to have the concessionary rate for the local Parishes re-instated. The Bridge Company say they will not consider this until partial automation has been installed.

As there is no recent data about how many journeys are undertaken by local users (the last survey in 1991 showed that about 65% of journeys were local users) it was agreed that the Parish representatives would seek approval from their councils to co-operate with the Bridge Company to do a further survey.

We will all continue to lobby the Bridge Company for a discount for “local users” greater than the discretionary discount for “frequent users”.

For further information please look at the new Bridge Company website.
www.whitchurchbridge.com

Playground

Mr Sam Josefovitz has donated part of his garden to increase the size of the playground.

The fencing work for this is complete and the new addition is a huge improvement to the area.

We are now organising for new play equipment and seats to be installed.

Once again Mr Sam had kindly donated these to us and we are extremely grateful to him. Without his help none of the improvements to the Playground would have been possible.

Planning

New Applications

PO5/E1045	31 Swanston field. Amended application for erection of a dwelling and new vehicular access	OBJECTION
PO5/E1149	Erection of 4 bedroom Parsonage house and pedestrian gate through boundary wall to Churchyard.	NO STRONG VIEWS
PO5/E1148/LB	Rectory. Demolition of part of brick boundary wall and formation of new access and erection of gate posts.	NO STRONG VIEWS
Po4/e1333	4 Bridge Cottages. Erection of conservatory to rear of property	NO STRONG VIEWS

Decisions

PO5/EO818	Flint House erection of single storey side extension	GRANTED
PO5/EO921	Pluto House	APPROVED

Approved under delegated powers despite objection from the Parish Council.

The SODC planning Officer has written to the Parish Council to explain why this planning permission has now been granted. The reasons given are that this application is for a smaller extension than the previous applications, a tree preservation condition has been imposed on the planning permission by the Forestry Officer and the Environment Agency is raising no objection related to flooding.

Finances

The following cheques were agreed for payment.

To the Clerk for travel expenses, to the Ridgeway Press for the Bulletin, Inland revenue for stamp duty for the transfer of land for the Playground, the Internal auditor, to NSALG for the allotments and for the Wreath for Remembrance Sunday.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday the 5th of December in the Whitchurch Village Hall at 8.00pm. An agenda and the dates of future meetings will be posted on the Parish Council Notice-board opposite the Greyhound before the next meeting.

Matilda Oppenheimer
Chairman



Whitchurch Pre-School Group
Learning Through Play

Our topic for the Autumn term continues with 'Celebrations'. There certainly is plenty to celebrate this time of year. We've already held a Divali party together with the Reception children from the Primary School and celebrated several faiths' festivals including Harvest festival. The children have had plenty of fun weaving baskets for their 'fruit and vegetables' and driving 'tractors' to harvest their crops.

This week we're celebrating bonfire night and producing some rather interesting interpretations of fireworks! And of course there have been birthdays and weddings to celebrate, not forgetting Grandparents day.

The new garden has been a fantastic achievement and this is something we have also been celebrating with the children. They are really enjoying themselves in our 'outdoor classroom' especially now that we have invested in wet weather gear, which allows us to make even more use of this valuable learning space.

Mind you, this wet weather has made our grassy mound into a mud mound and we've discovered the need for more storage and a water butt. Does anyone know if a **locking** water butt (for health & safety reasons) exists ?

We're currently fundraising for these items among other garden improvements and have held a sponsored trike ride which raised almost £300 as well as a craft fair in readiness for Christmas.

Talking of Christmas, we will be having our usual Christmas party for the children with a visit from somebody who lives in the North Pole and an excellent children's entertainer. The nativity play as ever, is sure to be a great success thanks to all the hard work of our wonderful staff.

As always, if you are thinking of sending your child to Pre-School and would like to visit, please telephone Helen on 0118 9844516. You can also find out more from our web site www.whitchurchpreschool.org

If you would like to register your child, we would recommend that you do so ASAP as the '06/'07 academic year is already looking busy.

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year

Maria

WoTHabs (Whitchurch-on-Thames Habitat Study Group)

We have recently enjoyed putting on displays of our group's activities – firstly at the Societies Fair in the Village Hall and secondly at the Primary School AGM. Both events gave us the opportunity to highlight the range of different projects we have carried out in the parish since 1996 and our plans for the future. One of our important ongoing projects is the practical effort and support that we provide to the Primary School in the maintenance and enhancement of the wildlife areas in the grounds.

Over the weekend of 22nd/23rd October, a major task was undertaken – the relining of the school pond. The pond measures 4 x 3 metres and has a good varying profile, from nearly 1m deep to very shallow. The original butyl liner (15 years old) was seriously deteriorating, and the plant growth and decaying leaf litter had reduced the open water areas.

We had to bale out all the water, remove and sort out all the plants (including the dreaded New Zealand Pygmy weed) and then bale the smelly black gloopy debris from the bottom – not a pleasant task! After completely cleaning the old liner, the new underlay and liner were laid in place. It was then refilled and a selection of the most suitable native plants returned. All the detritus had to be removed and the site cleaned up.

It was a fantastic joint effort on the part of school parents and WoTHabs members. Everyone worked extremely hard but it was very enjoyable and the weather was kind. I should like to particularly thank Neil Huntington, Mike Holland, Simon Lidbetter, Alison Michael, Rosemary Pearce, Tim Close, John Southey, James Power, Tim Hardwick, and Pete and Lorna Woolhouse for their enthusiastic efforts, and giving up their precious weekend time. Also, many thanks to the children who came along to help rescue mini-beasts from the black lagoon!

The pond looks rather 'bare' at the moment, but next year it will be most rewarding to watch it return to a beautiful wildlife haven for the children to study and enjoy.

Sally Woolhouse

WOODCOTE LIBRARY

We shall be easing the way to Christmas with an offer on video and DVD hire - three for two on holiday hits. We also aim to help with homework enquiries and can often find in five minutes what it takes half an hour to find on the internet. Our homework collection covers most of the main topics for five to twelve year olds and is kept on reference so that the answers are always at hand. You can photocopy a few pages for your own study purposes. December also sees the arrival of a new Feast on Fiction collection, paperback books of all kinds which are new to this library. Come in and have a look.

The Whitchurch Society

Village Society Fair held 30 September in the Whitchurch Village Hall

Back in June, it was decided to organise an event, along the lines of a University Freshers Fair, in order to demonstrate to local residents - particularly newcomers - the wide range of activities and interests offered by village societies. Invitations were extended to all Whitchurch organisations listed in the Bulletin plus a few, based in Pangbourne, which enjoy the support of Whitchurch residents.

Of the 20 societies who replied positively to our invitation, about 15 set up their stands in the Village Hall on the evening of Friday, 30 September. It was just a well there wasn't a full attendance of societies as the hall was filled to capacity. The quality of the exhibits was impressive. Displays were imaginative and colourful. The Whitchurch Hill Camera club displayed members' photographs on a laptop and Whitchurch Twinning set up a continuous slide show of photos from twinning events.

Drinks and snacks were served and entertainment was provided, in the form of three playlets, by Trudy Skidmore's Young Riparians. A warm social atmosphere quickly developed and was sustained throughout the evening.

We counted the evening a success and thank the local societies for their participation.

One positive outcome was reports from a number of societies - eg the Theatre Club, the Bellringers and the Pangbourne Volunteers - that they had recruited additional members. The one regret of the Committee was that the attendance of new residents was not greater. However, this was the first event of its kind and we were sufficiently encouraged to plan to repeat it at some time in the future.

*Ian Bruce
Secretary
Whitchurch Society*

Harvest Supper

This years Harvest Supper was held on the 29th October in the Pangbourne Village Hall and was well attended despite the fact that it clashed with the end of half term.

The money raised from this event has become an important part of the Churches of St. Mary's and St. John's income so we are always very grateful to the Hostesses who take on the mammoth task of producing a three course meal for eight people, transporting it from their homes to the hall and making some of the prettiest tables to be seen. A big thank you to you all. During the evening our Treasurer Rob Plumb addressed the Guests with our up to date financial state and thanked everyone who supports the church in any way, that took seconds and did not keep anyone away from their wine and food. The raffle was drawn during coffee and the evening ended with liquors taken around the tables. Another successful Supper and I hope everyone who wanted to come was invited and had a good time, which from the noise, they did!

Jo Adams (Churchwarden)

NATURAL SCULPTURE EVENT AT THE WHITCHURCH THYME MAZE

The first Natural Sculpture Event at The Whitchurch Thyme Maze on Sunday 25th September attracted nearly 40 entries. The works of art were laid out around the Maze with many works by children prominent amongst the entries.

“When we first floated the idea we had no idea what the response would be,” organiser Nick Brazil explained. “But on the day we were delighted by the large number of enthusiastic participants.”

Inspired by the work of environmental sculptor and artist Andy Goldsworthy, the event brought together a large number of families from Whitchurch and beyond. The work, all of which comprised only natural materials such as branches and stones, covered a wide range of subjects. These ranged from an exquisite Celtic pattern of wild berries to a white horse made entirely out of fallen leaves. There were also exhibits of woven twigs, vine branches and berries celebrating Lewis Carroll's Alice In Wonderland.

Since all of the installations are temporary, they have been photographed for display at the Annual Whitchurch Arts and Crafts Exhibition at the Whitchurch Village Hall on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th November 2005.

Whitchurch and Goring Heath Twinning Association

The Twinning Association have just launched their website. Visit us at www.whitchurchtwinning.org.uk to find out all the latest news about twinning events. There are some interesting articles about La Bouille and the history of the Twinning. You can also browse photos of our trips to France and activities we have laid on when the French have visited us. We'd like to keep the website alive by encouraging participation, so please email david@whitchurchtwinning.org.uk if you have any articles, photos or comments you'd like to contribute.

The Twinning AGM will be held on Friday 13th January at 7.30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to come along whether you want to learn more about the Twinning or to take an active part in our events. Telephone David 984 4142 or email david@whitchurchtwinning.org.uk for more details.

David Robinson

GORING HEATH PARISH CHARITY

Don't forget the Christmas Mini Market, Saturday December 3rd, we hope to see you there when you can enjoy another sensational selection of stalls catering for your every Christmas need.

Just to "wet" your appetite and give you a "taste", so to speak, of what will be on offer, we have "Chocoholics", with all their choicest chocolates for Christmas. There will also be a large selection of affordable but beautiful jewellery and cosmetics, from Virgin and other well known names.

There's another chance to buy Kasia Allan's lovely Polish Christmas cakes. All the cards and wrapping paper you need will be supplied by Ros Heath with Phoenix Trading. There's the usual selection of hyacinth and narcissus bulbs and lots of different chutneys, jams and marmalades to choose from, to give as presents or for you to enjoy yourself!

Plus of course, there will be the St Johns Hamper and lots of other prizes to be won in the two excellent Raffles. And just to keep you going, home made soups, bread and cakes will be available through the day.

The Summer Gardening Show was, in the end, a rather good show, no, a very good show! As the Friday dead line for entries arrived, there appeared to be very few entries but after a re-count we found we had a substantial number and with some more entries arriving on the morning of the show, most of the sections had a good selection of exhibits. Definitely less than for last year's show but more than enough for our new Judge David Woodage to be suitably impressed by the standard of the entries.

The results were as follows: - Jim Cairns won overall and took both the Whitchurch Hill Trophy and the Baking and Preserves Cup. Congratulations, Jim!

The Whitchurch and District Allotment Society Cup was won by Doug Grant.

Pat Turner won the Flower Section Cup and Alexi Dragonetti was a worthy winner of the Children's Cup. Theresa Elsome won the Photographic Cup. Well done to all the winners and runners up.

The date of next years Spring Show and the titles for the Photographic Section will appear in the next Bulletin, so keep reading.

Sadly this edition of the News Letter is too late to advertise the children's "play" to be staged in the Parish Hall on Saturday October 29th and also too late to include the children's reactions to our first venture into staging the art of puppetry. Still we'll have to save that too for the next edition, when the details of our next "production" will also be available.

Learn to Ring a Carol by Christmas

Wallingford Handbell Ringers are offering everyone the chance to do a spot of festive ringing. This is a short course of five Monday evenings at 7:30 pm starting on Monday 14th November at the Bullcroft Recreation Rooms in Wallingford High Street. All are welcome, young and old. No previous experience of music making is required to enjoy ringing carols on handbells.

The first session is free and the cost for the whole course is £20. For more details contact Alan Cooper, 01491 822406, ajc@hrwallingford.co.uk.

Thames Vale Singers Christmas Concert

The Thames Vale Singers warmly invite you to join them for a memorable evening of carols, Christmas music and readings at:

Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley – Friday 9th December

The Barn, Beech Road, Purley – Saturday 10th December

Performances start at 8.00pm.

Tickets are £6 (£5 for senior citizens & children) and include interval refreshments.

Book now by phoning 0118 9624651.

Coffee Morning

Dec. 8th, 10.30 am to 12.30

In lieu of the St. Mary Christmas Fair
which cannot be held this year,

Dalby & Leslie Landen will host a Coffee Morning at
Coombe Lodge, Hartslock Bridleway

There will be a Cake Stall, Raffle and a Stall with Christmas Gifts

Whitchurch Bridge – job vacancies

The Whitchurch Bridge Company has vacancies for Toll Collectors who would be available for a minimum of 4 hours per week during weekdays. Full training is given, and pay for adults over 21 starts at £5.10 per hour.

We offer flexible working hours, and you would only be rostered to work when it suits you.

The work is ideal for an active pensioner who would like the opportunity to get out of the house and meet people.

Application Forms are available from the Toll Booth.

Geoff Weir
Company Secretary, Whitchurch Bridge Company

The Whitchurch and District Theatre Club

Has been running successfully for twenty years and currently has 250 members.

The membership is broad but is particularly popular with older members who love the theatre but don't necessarily want to make their own travel and booking arrangements. An eclectic range of London and regional theatre, musicals, new and classic productions (at discounted prices) are selected by a small committee, and optional coach travel provided.

We are urgently seeking a new Secretary to take over the running of the Theatre Club. If you are interested in this role, or in joining the Theatre Club, please contact Diana Marriott on 01189 844582.

Pangbourne & District Bowls Club

On the rough green grass lie open horse chestnuts, the brown conkers glistening in the late autumn sunshine where in the summer the brown woods rolled along rink one. Leaves and worm casts dot the grass and the Green team are busy in spiking, raking, deep tyning (I hope that's how you spell it!). The beautiful copper beech is resplendent. The leaves on the surrounding trees look like a fairy tale or a painting by Turner: gold, red, yellow and brown in their autumn coats of many colours. This is the bowling green before the onset of winter and fills one with longing for the next season and the musical click of bowls as they are kicked back after each end. Somebody once said to me there is no sound like it – they were right! Ever since I've kept those chunking, clicking musical sounds in my mind, and they'll stay there until once again I can feel the soft grass beneath my feet.

I only managed to play one game on the Green this year, and even that I spent sitting on a chair between ends. But we drew! I do hope that when I have the next knee operation I can get over it quickly enough to join in next year's games.

One of the few games I was able to arrange was Finals Day – it was a tremendous success for Whitchurch's Nigel Cabeldu who won five single competitions. Normally the finals would have taken place on one day, but due to an unexpected, unwanted and unusual downpour at four o'clock on the Saturday two of the games had to be held over until the Sunday afternoon. Nigel won each of those! Finally beating Alan Blacklock by three shots in the Handicap Singles. It was a little awkward, as at the beginning of the season Nigel had been given a handicap of plus 2, whereas poor old Blackers was at scratch! He didn't complain, he never does, and played to his best, but even Blacker's best wasn't enough to beat Nigel on this day. But a new member, Joy King, brought "joy" to Blackers when they won the Open Pairs competition.

Susan Batts won the Ladies singles for the second year, Sheila Drew the prestigious Doreen Hamblin trophy and Allan Tucker the Walter Greenford Cup. I was particularly pleased to see Allan's name on the cup, as he was one of the beginners I coached a couple of year ago, and I feel we still haven't seen the best of him yet. Alan and Joan Ball did well to beat Jack and Rita Messenger in the Mixed Pairs. Well done to all the winners and I hope next year even more members will take part in the Club Competitions.

On Tuesday afternoons Whitchurch's Jan Readman runs the Tuesday Trophy competitions, this brings a lot of pleasure to many people, especially new bowlers and people who can only play occasionally. It is a friendly, but competitive game for which everybody taking part and winning received points. This year it was won by Bill Steele and the runner up was Audrey Holmes – another new bowler!

Doreen Miller has had very good year as Captain of the Pangbourne Ladies, getting higher up the table than last year, but not quite reaching the top spot and promotion., but there is always next year! Ralph and Doreen have been excellent members this year. Ralph has been very industrious on the Green and has passed an important examination in Green Keeping, which is good for him and of course the club. Thank you Ralph!

This will be my last year as Secretary of Pangbourne Bowls Club. After thirteen years it has been long enough, I would be happy to carry on, but as the probability will be that I'll have my second knee operation early in the next season, I think it better to stand down (forgive

the pun!). I hope that the Parish Magazine would still like me to put in my reports; it is nice when people say they've enjoyed it – not so enjoyable when somebody says “You've got that wrong!” Still it is fun!

Bless you all!

Bill Ayling

South Chiltern Choral Society Christmas Concerts

Saturday 17th December and Sunday 18th December 2005

FROM FAR AND WIDE 20 Carols from 20 Countries conducted by Gwyn Arch

Why not pack your suitcase now for a journey with the South Chiltern Choral Society around 20 countries, popping in to countries as diverse as Botswana and Sweden!

Look out for a gospel version of 'Silent Night', a beautiful American carol arrangement of 'Away in a Manger' and a funky little rap song 'Rapping Paper'- about Christmas presents of course!

There will be the usual audience participation for familiar carols and in Bob Chilcott's clever 'Twelve Days of Christmas' the audience may have a small part to play.

Musical accompaniment will be provided by Claire Perriton and Martin Jones on piano, with Luke Daniels, a celebrated accordion player, leading a group of folk instrumentalists, which should get us tapping our toes!

As usual these concerts will be held at Chiltern Edge School, Reades Lane, Sonning Common

Sat 17th 7.30pm, Sun. 18th 2.30pm.

Tickets £8 (£5 under 18's) from Judy Griffiths on 0118 9345746

PUCK'S BOTTOM

A fantastic one-man show was held at Goring Heath Parish Hall on 29th October. The hall was reasonably full, in fact the audience was captivated for almost an hour especially Alexander (only 3½) who thought it hilarious.

The next show being held at Goring Heath Parish Hall is on Friday 10th March 2006, and is for adults, "The Truth about Daughters".

Rosamund Heath
984 2358

ADVICE FROM THE CAB

Q I have a legal problem, and I urgently need the help of a solicitor. However, I cannot afford to pay expensive legal bills, and can't find anyone who will give me "legal aid". What can I do?

A: Good legal advice is a right in this country, and just because you can't afford to pay for a solicitor this shouldn't stand in the way of you getting help with important problems. What used to be called "legal aid" has changed a lot in the last few years, and the system is now more complicated than it was only five years ago. In each area, certain solicitors or other organisations (for example, law centres or Citizens Advice Bureaux) are allowed to give state-funded legal advice. You should go to your local Citizens Advice Bureau and they will be able to tell you which local solicitors or organisations can do this. Or look on www.clsdirect.org.uk

However, in some areas, it is still difficult to find state-funded legal help with certain issues. This should not mean that you suffer as a result, and there may be a solicitor or organisation in the neighbouring area that can help. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau should be able to point you in the right direction. How much state-funded legal help you can receive is decided by a number of things, for example, the sort of case it is. Another thing they will look at is your financial situation – both your earnings and your savings. You may have to pay a contribution out of your own money. A solicitor or advisor at the Citizens Advice Bureau can tell you more. Or look on our website at www.adviceguide.org.uk

Another option to consider is a no-win no-fee arrangement with your solicitor. These are only available for certain cases, usually where state-funded legal advice is not available – sometimes they might be your only option. You should read the conditions of these schemes carefully before signing up. A solicitor or an advisor at the Citizens Advice Bureau will be able to tell you more about these. Or look on our website at www.adviceguide.org.uk

Back inside BMW Group Plant, Oxford...



...The perfect way to celebrate this Christmas....

Follow Gerda on her epic journey to rescue Kay from the icy grip of the Snow Queen in this exciting tale of intrigue, adventure and the healing power of friendship. With stilt-walking, circus skills, aerial acrobatics and original songs, this highly entertaining and sparkling winter production is sure to delight and enthral audiences of all ages.

Call **(01865) 245745** to book tickets or visit www.creationtheatre.co.uk
Ticket prices £6.50 – £19.50

Arrive early to enjoy gourmet crepes, mince pies and mulled wine!

“Creation Theatre Company’s performances always hit the mark”
The Guardian

Letter to the Editor

I must emphasise that the following comments are my own personal thoughts.

I do know, or at least, I used to know, a little about strength of structures, but only enough to get a glimpse of a very large subject. If you can handle the maths and stay the course it must be very satisfying. But I certainly can’t remember enough to comment on the structure of Whitchurch Bridge.

On the other hand, I can quote (as accurately as my memory will allow) the late Bob Morgan who was our County Councillor for many years. He started off on a crusade to get the Bridge taken into the public domain. He was fully aware that his initial data base was limited, so he talked at length to County engineers, Highway Authority engineers and anyone else he could find with useful knowledge.

My recollection is that Bob's research concluded that the cost of *refurbishing* the bridge would be roughly in line with the Bridge company's current estimate of £2M in today's currency. He was sure that the Bridge Company would get planning permission for that. On the other hand any highway authority which took it over would be legally obliged to replace the existing bridge with one fully conforming to the highway regulations in force at design time.

A replacement bridge really would be much more expensive. Removal of the all of old structure would absorb lots of cash. Construction of new foundations and piers in moving water with no firm underlying ground would absorb much more. Then there is the new superstructure to go on top and the need for complete reorganisation at the river banks. Remember that individual houses in this region cost from 400K to £1M plus, and a bridge is a much more massive structure. Houses do not have to be able to absorb the forces that result from a line of cars each weighing a ton or two all slamming on the brakes at the same moment.

The cost would be born by the outside community and would have to be justified by designating the new bridge as a major river crossing. Woodcote and Whitchurch would therefore become bridge approach roads. How could the roads be widened to accommodate all the traffic? At the Pangbourne end the railway line can't be moved horizontally or vertically. Pangbourne centre is already a nightmare, so there would have to be a new road, presumably cut through the water meadow.

So far as I am concerned, what is at stake here is the total loss of our villages' characters, all of which include the *Wind in the Willows* bridge. And if a new bridge plus its approach roads were to cause a large increase in traffic the consequence for house prices would make any concession seem trivial.

One thing that I do remember clearly is that Bob eventually found himself forced to the conclusion that the status quo represents the best of the practical alternatives. In that case it is essential for there to be a sensible, amicable and realistic relationship between the local communities and the Bridge Company.

Part of being realistic means accepting that the Minister of State has been persuaded (presumably in consultation with Highway Engineers) that a toll of 20p was needed to cover long term maintenance costs. Also that the only lever we have (short of an indefinite boycott or stuffing the roads with parked vehicles) is that we could put an objection forward the next time the Company goes to the Minister for permission for another increase. As the later is not anticipated for some years, its weight is very limited.

The local Parish Councils do have a good relationship with the Bridge Company. But we have to remember that this is based on being realistic. The Bridge Company is

entitled to call off all concessions and demand 20p from everyone wishing to drive a car across . *Harry Butterworth*

NEW FEATURE

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

DIARY DATES

NOVEMBER (18th onwards)

19th & 20th Arts and Craft Exhibition – Village Hall

DECEMBER

8TH Coffee morning at the Landon's

9th & 10th Thames Valley singers Carol Concerts

17 & 18th SC Choral Soc Concerts

JANUARY

9th Parish Council Meeting

13th Twinning AGM

Special Rubbish Collection

The winter service is now in operation.

A van will be at Woodcote Car Park on Wednesdays from 12 noon till 3.00pm to collect household rubbish. It will also be there every third Saturday in the month from 8 am till 12 noon. There is no green waste collection in the winter.

Christmas and New Year Collections:-

Rubbish will be collected on our normal Thursdays over this period.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN will be published in JANUARY 2006.

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

sarah@pongo.freeserve.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 11TH JANUARY 2006.

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

