



West Wycombe Parish

The Annual Report of the West Wycombe Parish Council 2008/9

This publication is based upon the report given by Cllr. Mrs J Smith, Chairman of the West Wycombe Parish Council at the Annual Parish Meeting on 14th May 2009. Further reports from West Wycombe Community Association, The National Trust, West Wycombe Combined School, West Wycombe Library Action Group and The Parochial Church Council can be found on our website www.westwycombe.org.uk

Pedestal Playing Field

Last year we mentioned that we were looking into taking on the Pedestal Playing Field. At the Parish Council Meeting in April we signed the lease for the Pedestal Playing Field.

Sir Edward Dashwood who owns the land would like to see it kept as an open amenity space for West Wycombe. We will be paying an annual rent and the grass and hedge cutting will be just one of the on-going expenses.

We know from the Parish Appraisal we carried out a few years ago that a children's playground is something that many of our residents would welcome.

Buying the equipment needed for the playground will be very costly and we would like to encourage our residents to organise some fund raising events to confirm and show their interest in the project. We hope this will also bring the community together and give a sense of ownership of the playground. The field could also be used for events and functions.

We did put a little money into the precept this year for the playground but it will not go very far once we start buying playground equipment.

Allotments

Allotments hadn't been mentioned until February so we did not put any money aside for them this year. But when Sir Edward said he would be pleased if we could get the old allotments in Chorley Road up and running again we were happy to take on this task.

As soon as we mentioned allotments in our monthly news piece in the Contact magazine we had many people asking for plots.

Sir Edward has had the area roughly cleared and we will be marking out plots over the next few weeks.

The ground has not been worked for a very long time and allotment holders will have to do a lot of work on their plots to get them into a good growing condition.

Bearing this in mind we will not be charging for the allotments until the autumn. We have looked at other allotment agreements and now have our own set of rules and regulations for our allotment holders to sign.

We would like the allotment holders to form an "allotment committee" with a couple of our Parish Councillors and our clerk to help things run smoothly.

Emergency Contingency Plan

Because we have suffered from flash floods in the High Street we sit on a Wycombe District Council Committee to consider and discuss issues relating to the safety of our residents.

Over the last year or so we have had to put together an Emergency Contingency Plan for our parish.

We and Little Marlow Parish Council, the only other parish council in the Wycombe area who have completed this task, were asked earlier this year by WDC to put our plans through an emergency disaster situation.

We were monitored by WDC staff and they were amazed by our local knowledge and highly commended us on our handling of the disaster, which was heavy falls of snow for three weeks cutting us off from all amenities, electricity, doctors, hospitals, shops etc.

Sharon Henson, our Clerk, and the Little Marlow Parish Clerk were then asked by WDC to represent them at a Government Disaster Emergency conference in Manchester.

At the conference, which took place in March, they were in steering groups with Liverpool City Council, Greater Manchester Police and many other very large city councils and emergency services. Quite a feat for two small parish councils!

We hope that we will never have to put our plans to the test here in West Wycombe but with a busy main road and the railway running through our Parish we have to be prepared.

What we've done this year!

Commenting on local planning applications and keeping an eye on the new buildings to make sure all their conditions are correctly adhered to.

Reading and being consulted on numerous documents that come out of local government departments.

Reporting street lights not working, holes in the roads and any highway problems that crop up.

These are all part of the every day life of a Parish Council but they are the things that are important to our residents and we act on them as quickly as we can.

During the last twelve months we were given the opportunity to name the two new developments along the West Wycombe Road.

We chose Old Station Place for the Friend at hand site, and Gerrard Court, in memory of Mike Gerrard, a Parish Councillor and a member of an old West Wycombe family, for the flats opposite Beechwood Road.

The Government continue to set new challenges for Councillors from Standards to Planning procedures and West Wycombe Parish Council continually support and instigate training for our councillors and our clerk.

The Parish Council belongs to the Wycombe District Association of Local Councils who keep Parish Councils up to date with all the rules and regulations needed for us to work legally and professionally. There are 28 Parish

What we continue to do!

Councils in the Wycombe District area and it is good to be able to share views and ideas with each other.

Cllr Mrs Smith is on the training team of the WDALC and is also a Parish Council representative on Wycombe District Council's Standard's Committee. She is also part of a team who represent Wycombe Parish Councils on the Bucks Association of Local Councils.

We pay for Sharon Henson, our Clerk, to belong to the Society of Local Council Clerks so that she can keep up with new legislation. Sharon is qualified in council administration.

We attend the local Neighbourhood Action Group set up by the police to help with local issues such as anti social behaviour, litter and speeding on our roads. Piddington and Wheeler End, Radnage, Lane End and Stokenchurch are all part of our NAG and it is good to hear other Parishes problems and try to solve them together.

We also attend Bucks County Council's Local Community Partnership meetings which cover the above Parish Councils plus Marlow, Marlow Bottom and Hambleden.

These two groups have been set up as a result of Government initiatives to encourage local people to become more involved in their communities.

We attend The Rural Forums at Wycombe District Council Offices because 80% of the Wycombe District area is farm land and it is useful to

hear what the policies are for planning and sustaining the rural landscape and how local farmers are managing to diversify and survive in these difficult times.

What's the Precept?

This is a question we're often asked.

The precept is the money we ask Wycombe District Council for each year to run the Parish Council and you find detailed on your Wycombe District Council Tax statement.

Parish Councils are not capped with the amount they can ask for but we always want to give good value for the money you entrust us with.

We start planning the next year's budget in November and our precept request has to be in by the beginning of January. We then receive one half of the precept in April and the other in October.

We have consciously lowered our precept this year in the light of the financial recession but of course it means we cannot do all the work we would like to.

Highways On Call

Need a hole filling in the road, street light not working, road sign broken, tree or hedge over-hanging the pavement?

Telephone Highways On Call on
0845-230 2882

or you can log-on to the website and report your problem online at:

www.buckscc.gov.uk/hoc

Looking back...

You may be interested to know some of the things that over years we have instigated/organised and in most cases paid for.

A pathway across West Wycombe Hill for the School children and parents to get to the Garden Centre car park and paid for a path from the main road up to the School. We have always paid for the School Crossing Patrol person in Chorley Road.

Double yellow lines and ziz-zag lines outside the school for the children's safety.

We made a case and paid £20,000 towards the Pelican Crossing in West Wycombe Road.

Purchased and maintain 57 street lights in Bradenham Rd, Chorley Rd and Church Lane.

We paid for 3 grit bins. One in the Garden Centre car park entrance one in Church Lane and one on the junction of Beechwood Road and West Wycombe Road. We continue to pay for the grit/salt at the Garden Centre. BCC fill the others for us free of charge.

Bollards on the corner of Chapel Lane and West Wycombe Road and the ones near Copperfields to stop people parking on these areas and to ensure the safety of all road users.

We asked BCC and WDC for new and specially designed High Street lighting scheme in West Wycombe Village and paid £6000 towards the total cost.

Ordered and organised the placing of

the kissing gates that we have on our walks in our Parish countryside.

Made a request to BCC and The National Trust to create the bund and install new drainage in the Swan Yard to reduce the possibility of flooding into The Swan, Troutts and the Community Library.

In the year 2000 we opened our own Burial Ground when the Church Yard at St Lawrence Church became full. This took many years to plan, finance and build but we know from the compliments we receive how local people appreciate having their own burial ground in their own Parish.

We worked with BCC and Thames Valley Police for a Zebra Crossing in the High Street and 45 minute parking bays outside the post office and the newsagents.

We have asked for two more bays outside The Apple Orchard shop.

Shrubs planted by the Pedestal Monument to stop cars parking there and blocking motorist's view of the traffic.

Verge grass cutting and gully clearing and occasional weed killing.

Dropped curbs for pushchairs and wheelchairs and scooters in all parts of the Parish.

Built "Reg's Island" at the top of Church Lane to slow traffic which used the lane as a 'rat run'.

We arranged for BCC to reduce the flow of rain water down Church Lane by installing grips and a new drain.

Provided five information notice boards in the Parish where any residents can advertise their fundraising activities and functions.

Created a website that can be used for advertising your activities as well as giving information about the Council and other organisations in the Parish.

Hired vehicle speed activated signs to monitor and help control the speed of traffic through our Parish.

Given donations to West Wycombe Library and West Wycombe Village Hall because we believe these to be essential to the well-being of our Parish.

We paid for the electrical installations for the Christmas tree lights and organise the erection of the two Christmas trees which are kindly donated by Sir Edward Dashwood each year.

We paid for repairs to the Church Room roof.

We have lobbied BCC and WDC for years to keep a bus service going through the Parish. It may not be perfect but without regularly meetings with BCC transport people it could be much worse.

All these things take planning and commitment and your councillors dedicate a lot of time to make sure we make the right decisions.

Your Parish Council in West Wycombe works well as a team, each member bringing in their expertise and knowledge. Parish Councillors do not get paid.

Thank you!

As we live in an area surrounded by National Trust properties and land it is imperative to have a representative from The National Trust as part of our team. Our N T Property Manager Nick Phillips was a much valued member here but has now moved on to pastures new and we welcome back Neil Harris to the Parish Council as a non voting but equally important member of the this team.

We would like to thank our Bucks County Councillor Frank Downes for keeping us informed of BCC plans and ideas. Frank is of course one of our Parish Councillors too.

Our thanks too to Jean Teesdale and Ian McEnnis, our Wycombe District Councillors, who are always supportive and also keep us abreast of Council strategy and help with any planning issues we may have. Carol Burslem has been to almost all our meeting this year which we appreciate because she is BCC's Area Co-ordinator, Locality Working Team.

The Parish Council works closely with all departments at BCC and WDC and we are very highly thought of. Certainly we are said to be one of the best and most efficient Parish Councils in the area which is why we are a Quality Parish Council. Most of this is down to Sharon our Clerk who works tirelessly for this Parish. Well beyond the call of duty.

Lastly a big thank you must go to all the Parish Councillors for their continued support and for all the hard work they do for this Parish Council. We all strive to keep West Wycombe a good, safe and pleasant place to live.

The Financial Report

Receipts and Payments Account for the Year ended 31st March 2009

Receipts	Year Ended 31.3.2009	Year Ended 31.3.2008
Opening balance	7002.81	3552.48
Precept	35000.00	32000.00
Interest	312.27	302.39
HM Customs	1557.29	2240.05
Burials/Memorials	300.00	150.00
Refund towards telephone line	354.22	245.06
Refund towards training	0.00	30.00
WDC refund—air quality elec	1391.66	881.08
Bank adjustment	0.05	0.00
Total income	45918.30	39401.06
Payments		
Administration	11737.46	11521.39
S137 payments	1301.01	698.39
Operational costs:		
Street Lighting & Air Quality	5053.57	4303.03
Burial ground	4191.08	7495.01
School crossing	1548.72	1548.72
Training	36.35	118.32
West Wycombe Comm. Assc.	2000.00	1500.00
Subs (Misc)	214.85	267.36
VAT on purchases	1748.74	2240.05
Room hire	20.00	120.00
Bank charges (Misc)	0.00	2.32
1/3 Cost new PC etc (Capital)	0.00	370.54
Clear path to Piddington (Misc)	0.00	1300.00
Litter picking equipment (Misc)	0.00	55.00
Highway weed killer (Misc)	0.00	342.02
Bulb planting (Misc)	0.00	471.10
Bus shelter cleaning (Misc)	0.00	45.00
1/3 Cost Printer	109.27	0.00
Air Ambulance Donation	100.00	0.00
Highways works	1505.38	0.00
Bradenham Road Bus Shelter	150.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	35.00	0.00
Total Expenditure	29751.43	32398.25

Cumulative Balance

Opening Balance	7002.81	3552.48
Income	38915.49	35848.58
	45918.30	39401.06
Expenditure	29751.43	32398.25
Balance	16166.87	7002.81

Balances:

Current Account	2394.70
Deposit Account	131.36
Bank of Ireland Account	13640.81

Total **£16166.87**

Report of the Responsible Financial Officer - Year ended March 2009

We have finished our financial year with a higher than normal balance.

We increased our precept for the year 2008/09 by £3000 to allow for expenditure on The Pedestal Playing Field. For legal reasons not connected with the Parish Council we have not signed the lease for the field with West Wycombe Estate and therefore the money put aside for this project has not been used hence the high end of year balance.

We have had shrubs planted at The Pedestal in order to stop cars parking on this area of grass.

We have added proper refuse collection at the Burial Ground by Wycombe District Council and had tree works and fencing carried out in the Burial Ground.

We have made a contribution of £1000 towards the Community Library and £2000 to West Wycombe Community Association for improvements to the Village Hall and £100 towards the Old People's Christmas Party.

We continue to pay for the School Crossing Patrol at the Garden Centre.

We purchased a new printer and the cost of this was shared three ways between Piddington and Wheeler End PC and Hambleden PC, as is the cost of the telephone line.

The air pollution monitor, installed in the Village Hall Car Park by Wycombe District, continues to function and WDC refund all the costs of the energy used.

Insurance cost £1075.39 and energy for street lighting increased by £200

Your Councillors for 2009/2010

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