

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 5TH MAY 2005 AT 8PM
IN THE CHURCH ROOM, WEST WYCOMBE**

PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs J. Smith (Chairman), M. Gerrard, Mrs C. Dakin,
Mr D. Callaghan, Mrs A. Harris Mr N. Phillips (National Trust)
Mrs S. Henson, Clerk

Mrs A Cobb, Rev N. Lacey and 14 members of the public

APOLOGIES; Cllrs R. Seymour, F Downes, District Cllrs Mrs J. Teesdale and
Mrs A. Snelling, Sir Edward Dashwood, P.C. Dave West

The Chairman, Mrs J. Smith welcomed everyone present and then gave her annual report.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2005

The past year has been very busy for the Parish Council, there honestly is never a dull moment!

We were very pleased when at last the Pelican crossing on West Wycombe Road was installed. Looking back in the records the idea of the crossing was first turned down about 10 years ago, so it gives us much pleasure to see the children crossing there to get to school buses as well as everyone else that uses it.

By working closely with Bucks County Council Highways dept, and receiving partial funding on some of the costs of this and other projects, we have managed to achieve our goals in getting, what we see as necessary work, done in the Parish. Many of the issues we deal with as a Parish Council are Highways related, but sadly because of our geographical position we are limited with what we can achieve or change. We will continue to do our best in maintaining and improving the quality of our resident's environment.

We are currently battling with the Government and the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA), backed by Bucks County Council (BCC) and Wycombe District Council (WDC) to have them recognise the effect of increased traffic on the A4010 caused by expansion of housing in the Aylesbury area and the Stoke Mandeville hospital proposals.

We have added more lights in Chorley Road and Bradenham Road this year. We currently have 44 lights that are either new or we have replaced. The residents of these roads asked for this work to be done and have said how pleased they are with the results. We plan to sort out and add new lights on the rest of Bradenham Road in our budget for next year.

We are in negotiations with Bucks County Council, Wycombe District Council and Babbie to improve the lights in West Wycombe High Street, and we are offering some funding towards this project, albeit quite small in relation to the overall cost, which could exceed £80,000. Obviously, the National Trust will be consulted on the planning and the design of the lamps etc. in this historic and sensitive area.

"Reg's Island," named after Mr Reg Hickman of Church Lane, who came up with the idea, has been made a permanent traffic calming measure at the top of Church Lane, as residents felt that the trial had definitely acted as a deterrent to traffic in both volume and speed.

Beechwood Road residents asked if we would put a grit bin at the end of their road and they also asked the Parish Council to sort out cars that parked there during the day, which meant that the road was blocked, and for some weeks the refuse lorry could not gain access.

These may seem like small things to some, but can make a difference to people's quality of life.

We are awaiting the results of Bucks County Council speed review, and have been told that the consultation period for the "No right turn" at Chapel Lane is nearing its end, so hopefully there will be better signage on West Wycombe Road about this junction soon. There has been a problem with emergency vehicles not been able to find their way to residents in West Wycombe Hill Road, (by the Caves) as it is now called. We carried out a survey of the people who live there and they would prefer it be changed back to Church Lane, so we have been working with Wycombe District Council to change the name and to line it up with the postcode, and to make sure all the relevant bodies know about it. We should see the final results of this work during the coming year.

We are one of a very few Parish Councils who have met their statutory obligation to provide a burial ground if land is available and the churchyard is closed. We spend a lot of money keeping the Burial Ground maintained, because we know how important it is to people who have loved ones there.

We have worked with the conservation dept of Wycombe District Council who are writing a Conservation Area Character Study of West Wycombe. This is a very important document, as it will become supplementary planning guidance for planning applications. Most of the every day work of the Parish Council is reporting things that need to be repaired, cut back or removed, and I have to say the powers that be mostly react quite quickly when we call.

To support our community we paid for The Church Room Roof to be repaired and gave a large donation to West Wycombe Cricket Club for the construction of practice nets. We have to give our comments on planning applications to Wycombe District Council, and we have continued to support the residents of Copperfields by opposing the proposed development of 45 units.

The Parish Council have worked with our residents, The National Trust and the police to combat the anti-social behaviour, which was very unpleasant at times this year.

At last years Annual Parish Meeting we launched The Parish Plan, and I am pleased to say that, that the committee, under Cllr Danny Callaghan's Chairmanship has produced an excellent questionnaire, which has gone to every house, business and the School in the Parish, and we await the findings.

The Parish Council were dismayed when two of the bus services serving West Wycombe were taken off this year. We are poorly served by buses in West Wycombe and are very pleased that Bucks County Council are funding the Rider On Call bus through our Parish as well as Bledlow-cum-Saunderton and Bradenham, and we have been to every meeting about Rider on Call to make sure that our residents are represented in the decisions made about this important and valuable service.

There have been lots of changes in Parish Council rules and regulations over the last few years, and our clerk and we councillors regularly attend training events, to keep us up to date. This has been arranged by The Wycombe District Association of Local Councils, and also the Bucks Association of Local Councils. We are members of both these associations. Some of the topics this year have included planning, law and Quality Parish Councils, and procedures and the Code of Conduct.

I am on the Executive Committee at the Bucks Association, and also on Wycombe District Council's Standards Committee as a Parish Council representative.

Sharon, our clerk, also belongs to The Society of Local Council Clerks.

Cllr Frank Downes is on the governing body of West Wycombe School, and Cllr Carole Dakin is our representative on the Community Association.

We regularly attend BCC Area Committee meetings and have found these are all a very useful way of learning, but also networking with other councils and exchanging views and ideas.

The Parish Council are regularly consulted on documents from Government, SEERA, WDC, BCC and Thames Valley Police. These can take up a lot of time, and at times we do wonder if anyone ever reads them!

To help keep our residents in touch and up to date we have five notice boards plus one in the Burial Ground and report on a monthly basis in Contact.

Today May 5th 2005 we are launching our own West Wycombe Parish Council website.

www.westwycombe.org.uk

Our thanks to Mike Henson for creating such a great website. A website for everyone in West Wycombe to be proud of.

Because it is for everyone in the Parish to use for advertising their business, their activities, coffee mornings, art shows, walks, and plays, any thing that is happening in the Parish of West Wycombe. We want your comments and your ideas to make this an up to the minute reflection of West Wycombe, so that when people log on to it they can find out everything they need to know about West Wycombe.

The other piece of news tonight is that we are planning to apply to become A Quality Parish Council very soon.

If we get the status it means that there could be some extra funding, but most of all it means we are recognised as running a good and efficient Parish Council. It is a mark of excellence, and we believe this community deserves the best.

As our Annual Parish Meeting is on Election Day this year, you might like to know that West Wycombe Parish Council is completely non political.

Parish Council and District Council elections will take place in two years time.

I have some people to thank for helping us through this last year with their active support.

PC Dave West, our Area Beat Officer was instrumental in helping reduce the anti-social behaviour.

As was Nick Phillips the National Trust Property Manager for West Wycombe.

Nick is a very useful addition to our team, being that we are surrounded with National Trust property and Land. We have much enjoyed his being with us.

I should like to thank Jean Teesdale and Ann Snelling, our District Councillors, for attending our meetings and taking back our views to WDC.

Next I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their support, and all the time and effort (and humour) they put into the Parish Council, it is a huge commitment and they all do it very willingly.

Parish Councillors are not paid.

A good parish council is known by how good their clerk is, and Sharon is certainly one of the best in this County.

She gained her AQA, a qualification in Local Council Administration this year, which was not an easy thing to do and because of this we can go forward with our application to become a Quality Council.

Nothing is too much trouble for her, her knowledge is incredible, and she is worth her weight in gold.

When she had to tot up our assets recently, I told her she should put herself at the top of the list!

My thanks too, to you the members of the public, who come regularly to our monthly Parish Council meetings, keep us on our toes, and support us in making this Parish a good and pleasant and safe place to live.

PRESENTATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

We started the year with a high balance as we had the money reserved to pay for the Pelican Crossing in the West Wycombe Road.

Our income from the burial ground is, for obvious reasons, going to be variable, and at no time will the burial ground ever pay for itself on an annual basis. We therefore asked the film company making Foyles War for a contribution for using the burial ground car park. We pay a subscription to the Confederation of Burial Authorities and have recently had to purchase special ledger for the register of memorials.

We set a Precept of £25,000. This had an allowance for the youth shelter, however, as we were unable to find a suitable site and members of the community did not show any real interest in the idea, we used the money on another project. We had, over the years had requests for continuous lighting in Chorley Road as many people walk into the village, we therefore decided to use the youth shelter money and a contribution of £6000 from Bucks County Council Highways Department and £1000 from the County Councillors Leaders Fund to pay for this project. We earned a good amount of interest until we paid £20,000 towards the crossing in July. We paid £355 for a salt bin at the bottom of Beechwood Road. We also have to pay auditors fees and nearly £700 for insurance.

We gave the Parochial Church Council £1000 to pay for the repair of The Church Room Roof under Section 137, Class 2 of the Local Government Act 1972 and £500 to West Wycombe Cricket Club for the construction of practice nets. We still pay £1548 per year for the school crossing patrol by Plant & Harvest. We had to pay for several repairs to our notice boards for damage caused by vandalism.

For the coming year we Precepted for £27,000. We will be meeting the requests of Bradenham Road residents with the start of a lighting project. The Wycombe side of the bridge has already had three extra lights installed in April at a cost of £3551 and the other side of the bridge, which will be a much bigger project, will be tackled in the next financial year. We will also be making a contribution of £5000 towards the replacement lights in the High Street. We plan to repair the bus shelter in Bradenham Road. We expect our total lighting bill to be in the region of £12,000 and our Burial Ground grass cutting and maintenance in the region of £5000. This figure is quite high as we have to start building up a fund to have the car park resurfaced and we have had a small oak gate put into the hedge between the car park and the burials area as mourners and the gravedigger were continually breaking the hedge by walking through it. We have also had a pair of gates erected at the entrance to the car park in an attempt to stop unauthorised parking which has caused the heavy wear on the car park surface. The surface specified by the planning authority was based on occasional usage only.

Sharon L. Henson, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, May 2005

REPORT FROM THE WEST WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE ON
THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Cllr Downes was not present and Mrs Alison Cobb, Headmistress, West Wycombe
County Combined School

The school remains very popular and is still oversubscribed.

We are keen to be involved in the Community and, as well as being involved in the development of the Parish Plan, we also have strong links with the National Trust – our Y2 and Y4 pupils being “Guardians” of West Wycombe Hill. Three times every year each class spends a morning on the hill under the direction of Jessie Binns of the National Trust.

Since the start of the academic year there have been builders and decorators on site under our “Operation Facelift” project. Visitors to the school will see great improvements including a total revamp of our admin. area with new medical room, offices, staff room and toilets. In the entrance hall there are two beautiful mosaics depicting the local area - the result of the very successful Art Week held in March.

We hope to have builders back on site in the near future as planning permission has been sought for a new classroom and an extension. This is because we need more space to deliver the 21st century curriculum for existing pupils. We shall not be increasing the number of children on roll.

If planning permission is granted, the funding for the new classroom will come for a Government Modernisation Grant, whereas that for the extension will be as a result of PTA fundraising, together with our Devolved Capital Grant.

The school is still a target for vandals, particularly at weekends, and we have recently had to replace some of the boundary fencing above our car park. Eventually we would like to replace the wooden panels with railings to match the existing ones at the front of the school.

In our efforts to reduce traffic congestion around school a team of parents have put a great deal of time into compiling a Travel Plan. Their efforts have been recognised and the school has now been awarded Level 3. There is also a “Go for Gold” scheme in operation to encourage the children to walk all or part of the way to school – the incentive is a free swim at the Sports Centre when they have a fully stamped card! On 20th May our Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSO's), under the direction of Miss Muschamp will be presented with an award for hosting the Bucks CC Road Safety website.

Alison Cobb
Headteacher

REPORT FROM WEST WYCOMBE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Cllr Mrs Carole Dakin is the Parish Council representative on the association and gave the following report.

The Village Hall has been well used again this year. Our regular users continue to support the Hall and casual users, such as quizzes and children's parties, make up a fair amount of other usage.

There have been the usual ongoing wear and tear repairs. Roger Seymour is invaluable when it comes to knowing whom to call out for what problem!

I understand our painter, Mr Stacey, has left the district. He has worked for the Village Hall for many years and will be much missed.

The Committee decided to make the downstairs of the Hall "no smoking", and most people seem to appreciate this decision.

Wycombe District Emergency Planning Officer has deemed the Hall suitable for short-term use in the case of a national emergency. People would have to be moved on to a more suitable site after 6 to 8 hours. We do not have proper cooking facilities in the Hall for people to stay longer, but we are pleased the Hall could be used for this purpose.

West Wycombe School asked if the Village Hall car park could be used as a car park and dropping off point for their school children. We felt we could not give permission because the car park is very busy at school times with playgroup arriving to use the Hall, and other users who pay to park in the car park. Access to and from the High Street is also very dangerous at this time. There is a designated car park at the Garden Centre for the parents of the school children.

We have also been asked if a refrigerator could be installed in the Hall. It was decided to turn down this idea, for Health and Safety reasons.

In May this last year Mrs Palmer, our cleaner, resigned. Mrs Palmer had been an excellent cleaner and we knew it would be hard to find someone to take over from her. Mrs Julie Baker took the job for a short time, but found she couldn't give the Hall the attention it needed. She resigned in September. Mrs Jane Ross has been doing the job since November, and we hope she will continue. It is a thankless task cleaning the Hall, but Jane seems to be able to cope with the fact that she will leave it spotless, someone will come in to use the Hall, mess it up, and it all needs cleaning again!

Jane's daughter Elizabeth Ross has been looking after the Village Hall garden for the past nine months. She cleared and weed killed the garden and planted new shrubs.

Mrs Plumridge continues to be our letting Secretary.

We are still waiting for The National Trust to mend the front wall that was knocked down some time ago. I have been told that it should be done, hopefully be the end of this month.

The wasps returned again this year with a vengeance. We have no idea why they like this Hall so much! We had to call out the Environmental Health Department at Wycombe District Council five times. Unfortunately we have to close the Hall for a couple of days when it is fumigated.

Mr Neil Harris of The National Trust joined the Committee for a short time this year, but we now welcome Mr Nick Phillips, Property Manager for West Wycombe, who will be joining us on the Committee. We have not yet sorted out the problem involving named Trustees of the Village Hall and hopefully Mr Phillips can help us to find our way round this legal document.

Our finances are in a fairly healthy state but there is always something waiting to be done. The upper windows need replacing, as does the floor covering in upper room. It is

nine years since we applied for a grant, which was for the flooring in the main hall. We are looking into making the kitchen bigger and are hoping for funding to achieve this. We are always thinking to the future. If anyone has any ideas or suggestions please make sure you let us know by filling in your Parish Plan Questionnaire. Further details of this will be discussed later on in the meeting.
Please keep using your village hall.

REPORT FROM PC DAVE WEST

PC West was on duty and unable to attend. He took over from PC McDonnell last summer and has been very helpful in dealing with our youth problems. He sent the following report:

When I began working on the Marlow Sector at the end of December 2004, the West Wycombe Area had been without its own Beat Manager for some six months.

Since I have started work in the West Wycombe area the crime levels have reduced. Between April 2004 and March 2005 there has been a 33.3% reduction in burglary of homes and a 58.8% reduction in auto crime.

Incidents of an anti-social nature have also reduced. Following high visibility patrols and an operation dedicated to tackling anti-social behaviour, which was run at the beginning of March, the amount of incidents reported to both the Police and Wycombe District Council have significantly reduced.

I am aware that there are still a few issues regarding anti-social behaviour in the area and I urge all residents to report any incident no matter how small to me. This will enable me to create an accurate record of what is happening and when it is happening enabling me to deal with any problem promptly.

If anyone has any issues they wish to speak to me about then I can be contacted at Marlow Police Station. Phone number and e-mail address at the top of the page.

Many thanks

Dave West

PC 1115 West

THE PARISH PLAN

A committee had been formed under the leadership of Cllr Callaghan, with Cllr Mrs Harris taking on the task of leading the group working on youth issues. All households in the parish have had questionnaires delivered, as well as one for youth, another for children and another for the nursery age group, as well as one for village users who were not residents. The closing date for returning these is 20th May with a draw prize of £25 of M & S vouchers for those returned by that time.

REPORT FROM WEST WYCOMBE ESTATE

Sir Edward was unable to attend; however details of activities in the park were given. Members of the public asked that the new laws on the use of fireworks should be strictly adhered to. Concerns were raised about the large pieces of debris that landed in villager's gardens.

REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL TRUST

Mr Nick Phillips took on the post of Property Manager, 8 months ago. He has had many issues to address and was well aware that The National Trust had arrears for improvement in the village in particular the decoration necessary on the outside of the properties.

He reported on the installation of the gate on top of West Wycombe Hill, which had not been able to work as when closed it had caused a confrontational situation for the

residents of Windyhaugh and people trying to access the top of the hill late at night. The top of the hill has been levelled to get rid of many of the potholes and there are discussions taking place as to how the grass can be maintained in good order, however any plan of action will be dependant on restricting night time access. The National Trust has spoken to BCC to see if they would consider allowing The National Trust to adopt the road leading to the hill.

The tree and landscape team led by Neil Harris are doing sterling work clearing the hill and looking after the enormous amount of land owned by The National Trust.

Mr Phillips then reported on the 'Top Secret' activities taking place at Hughenden over the summer months. Last year it was discovered that Hughenden had a secret life during World War 11 and was called Hillside. It was here that a small team, including people from our parish, created all the maps necessary for the bombing raids on Germany.

Maps for Hitlers Eagles Nest, the Dambuster raids and the sinking of the Terpitz were all created at Hughenden, Children from West Wycombe School would be involved in some of these activities.

Mr Phillips reported that he thought there maybe a chance of creating a pavement leading up to the school.

Mr Phillips reported that there was just one cottage still to be let.

Mr Morgan asked what we could about making access easier for people with prams and wheelchairs when entering the village from the western end. The Chairman advised him that we have had a site meeting with the police and plan to have one with BCC to look at the only option which is to lower the pavement opposite the Malt House.

Mr Plumridge asked if we could have double yellow lines near The Apple Orchard – we reported that the police prefer cars to be parked there as this slows the traffic down.

Everyone was given the opportunity to ask questions and then joined in light refreshments.