

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON MAY 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019

### 1. **Present:**

D Hunt (Chairman), L Woodhead (Vice Chairman), Paul Stanley, M Ellard, S Kynaston.  
20 Members of the Public. James Cole (District Councillor), Ms K Griffiths (Clerk)

### 2. **Introduction by Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed those attending the meeting and commenced by outlining the role of the Parish Council. Councillors represent the local community and provide services to meet local needs. It aims to improve the quality of life in the parish. In order to finance its activities, the council raise money through a precept that is added to the council tax. An important role is to have the opportunity to voice an opinion on all planning applications in the parish. There were 8 applications in the last year, the same as the previous year.

The members of the council were introduced. They were David Hunt, Martyne Ellard, Paul Stanley, Lynn Woodhead and a new Councillor, Sam Kynaston. Mr Hunt said that he was honoured to have been elected as Chairman again. This was now his 41<sup>st</sup> year as Chairman and 47<sup>th</sup> years as a Councillor. Lynn Woodhead was elected as Vice Chairman. There remains a vacancy for another Councillor.

The new Clerk, Karen Griffiths was introduced. Karen has not had any experience as a parish clerk but is doing a wonderful job in what has been one of the busiest years we could remember.

Following the District Council elections on 2 May the following Councillors were elected for the Hungerford and Kintbury Ward: Dennis Benneyworth, James Cole and Claire Rowles.

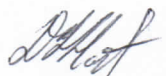
The Chairman introduced the guest speaker. Superintendent James Weems who is the Local Area Commander for Thames Valley Police. Jim started with Thames Valley Police in 1993 and worked most of his uniform service in Reading and Oxford. Prior to taking up his command in West Berkshire, Jim worked within the Joint Operations Unit, where he led on wider collaboration with Hampshire Constabulary on public order policing and specialist search. Jim also spent two years developing neighbourhood policing strategies to improve Thames Valley Police's approach to policing the night time economy and rural crime.

James has three local connections - his children went to Welford and Wickham School, he was a governor at the school and my wife, Kathryn taught him French at a school in Andover.

### 3. **Talk by Jim Weems, Local Area Commander for Thames Valley Police.**

Jim explained his area of responsibility is the Thames Valley which comprises Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, containing c160,000 residents.

He discussed County Drugs Line gangs who target our area especially vulnerable children, young adults, missing/homeless people and single mums. Our area is particularly targeted by these gangs due to the good road and rail links and a high number of residents in central places making it easy for them to accumulate a large number of customers in a small area. The drugs they supply include Class A & Class B. Jim encouraged all those attending to report unusual activity to 101 to help the police identify and apprehend these gangs in our area. He advised they usually achieve c30 arrests a week for drug related activities which helps keep W Berkshire in the top 5% of safe places in the UK to live. The Chairman thanked Jim Weems for his very interesting and informative presentation.



#### 4. Chairman's Summary of the Last Year

By having healthy finances, the council has been able to maintain the precept at the same level as last year: £8,000. Section 137 donations are: £600 for the upkeep of St Gregory's church graveyard, £250 for the Air Ambulance Service and £200 for ARK, concerned with river maintenance. Poppy wreathes were purchased for Remembrance Day services and for the Anniversary Service for US airman that died following a crash at Welford Air Base during the war.

As reported last year, the council installed two defibrillators in the parish – one outside Wickham Village Hall and the other outside Weston Farm Barn. It is proposed to install one at the Halfway Inn when approval has been obtained. Although the defibrillators have automatic guidance it is proposed to run a training session for those who are interested. Cllr Stanley and the Chairman have already been trained in the use of the defibrillators.

Following the hard winter, the 8 salt bins in the parish are in need of being refilled. There has been a request for a dog waste bin to be installed on Easton Hill. Approval has been requested.

There continues to be a problem with cars parked on Welford Road near the entrance to the path leading up to the playing field near Wickham school. On exiting from the path there is poor visibility of traffic on the road if cars are parked near the entrance. The council are trying to get double yellow lines painted to get more visibility.

After over a year the water leak near the top of the B4000 out of Wickham has been dealt with. The solution was to divert the water into the adjacent field. The plan is to stop the leak at a later date.

The District Council have approved the method of sewage treatment for the four houses to be built next to Elton Farm in Weston. This follows pressure from the Parish Council to avoid the fiasco that resulted from the proposed method of sewage treatment from the Westongate development.

Traffic issues on the B4000 and Lambourn Valley road continue to dominate. The VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign) on the B4000 has been repaired after over a year of poor performance. It has been agreed that a new VAS is installed to the west of the crossroads and that the white gates at the entrance to Wickham are moved nearer to the crossroads. An attempt by the council to reduce the speed limit through Wickham to 30 m.p.h. has been turned down but it is proposed to create a central reservation near the crossroads to allow safer crossing of the B4000.

The council failed to get the speed sign near the Elton Lane junction in Weston moved further away from the junction. However, it is proposed that white gates are installed near the speed sign. The yellow backing on one sign will be moved across the road.

A proposal is expected on the parking issue on the triangle of land in Mant Close. The council would like complete coverage of the area but because of draining/cost issues this may not be in the plan.

Cars parked at the bottom of Church Hill in Wickham are obscuring the visibility of traffic on the B4000. A tree is to be planted to prevent such parking.

The imposition of a 30m.p.h. speed limit on The Row in Welford has been approved. The District Council have been very helpful in extending the speed limit to integrate better with the Lambourn Valley road limit. Implementation is expected in early 2020.

The Wickham Play area/MUGA have been safety inspected, only a few minor issues were raised.

The council have been made aware of fly tipping in Gypsy Lane and speeding cars on Welford Road.





## 5. Parishioners' Questions

Speed Enforcement is needed in Wickham on the B4000. Jim Weems is happy to be involved in liaison on this matter, especially with SID Training which is being arranged in Aug 2019. Jim advised Mobile Speed Cameras are used in 30 – 60mph areas and must be visible. Entrance to the village seems a particular pinch point and it was felt there were several repeat offenders. Jim also commented that street lights help to alert drivers to a 30mph speed limit. There was also a suggestion whether "SLOW" could be written on the road surface as drivers entered the village. Other options discussed included islands in the centre of the road, village gates and a form of chicane. The Chairman suggested "traffic on the B4000" would be added to the next PC meeting.

Another Wickham resident commented that the road surface could be made quieter. The ensuing discussion included the comment that a quieter surface had already been specially added but it was felt during patching up of the road some of this surface had been lost. This too would be discussed at the next PC meeting where the PC may feel representation can be made to WBC to resurface the B4000 with the quieter surface again.

Lorries/more traffic using the bottom/Lambourn Road in the Parish were also discussed. It was suggested that by pushing traffic off the B4000 in Wickham, residents of some of the other villages felt they were seeing more traffic, especially lorries on the smaller, quieter roads in the Parish.


Residents of Mant Close in Wickham asked for an update on the status of the proposed parking options being offered by WBC. They were hoping hard standing on the sides of the road would be an option. The clerk advised that the help of Sovereign Housing Association would be necessary as WBC did not have the finances to do the work on their own and drop kerbing had been declined by Sovereign. Residents felt the progress on this project was slow and the PC agreed to try to get WBC to move forward with their proposals on what options they were proposing and the costs involved, before Sovereign were approached to assist with the funding.

A resident asked for an update on the Parish website. The clerk advised it was all significantly out of date and once the PC's internal audit and annual accounts were complete updating the website was to be the next project.

Councillor Lynn Woodhead advised all those attending that the library van visits Wickham school once a month and encouraged anyone available to visit, if only for a chat and a coffee.

The planning decision at Elton Farm was discussed with several questions being asked about the planning decision and the proposed drainage solution. The PC advised the Planning Decision had been made in Dec 2018 and the PC had been assured by the Planners at that time that the PC's views on drainage options had been taken into account along with those of several other bodies. Whilst Klargesters and reed beds as drainage options were discussed it was stated that no-one on the PC had been made aware a decision on the drainage at the Elton Farm development had been made nor what it might be, and the Planning Department at WBC would be the correct point of contact in the first instance for anyone concerned about the decision and drainage options thereon.

The Chairman thanked the Councillors and the clerk for their work and support during the year. Those present enjoyed wine and light refreshments after the meeting.

  
17/7/19