

WELFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting Held on Wednesday 17th May 7.30pm in Wickham Village Hall

Present

D. Hunt	Chairman	L. Woodhead	Councillor
G. Frampton	Vice Chair	Sarah Youldon	Clerk
C. Halliwell	Councillor	Gill Comley	Village Agent Coordinator
P. Stanley	Councillor	Parishioners:	20

Apologies

L. Chamberlain	Councillor	Anthony Stansfeld	Kintbury Ward Councillor
James Cole	Kintbury Ward Councillor		

Welcome	Action
The Chairman welcomed all the Annual Parish Meeting	
Matters Arising	
<p>West Berkshire Village Agent Scheme: Gill Comley presented the West Berkshire Village Agent Scheme, this was launched 3 ½ years ago within West Berkshire, following on from the success of the scheme in other counties. The scheme is part funded by West Berkshire Council but run by volunteers; it is referred to as a 'signposting services' with an aim to put older and /or socially isolated residents in direct contact with community, voluntary and statutory agencies, offering help and advice. There are currently 26 agents in West Berkshire, and they are keen to recruit a volunteer to cover the parish of Welford. Volunteers receive full training and the support of the West Berkshire Volunteer Centre.</p> <p>Gill Comley handed out leaflets to all providing further information and contact details. It was also explained that whilst there is not agent in place within the parish residents were welcome to go direct to the coordinator for assistance. Further information is available to all at www.villageagentswb.org.uk or on 01635 581001. S Youldon to post information on the website.</p> <p>Chairman's Summary: The Chairman commenced by outlining the role of the Parish Council. "Councillors represent the local community, particularly in connection with the District Council. The Chairman introduced himself and the four other councillors present, Cllr Chamberlain was not able to attend the meeting. The council provides services to meet local needs and aims to improve the quality of life in the parish. In order to finance 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 9 applications in the last year compared with 12 in the previous year.</p> <p>Since the last meeting a parish website has been created - www.welford-parish.org. In addition to a description of the parish and historical information the site contains Parish Council information such as agendas and minutes of meeting. There is the provision to provide up-to-date news and information on events in the parish. The site aims to foster closes ties with the local school.</p> <p>By having healthy finances the council have been able to maintain the precept at the same level as last year: £8,000. The following donations were made last year: £600 for the Village Hall upkeep, £600 for the upkeep of St Gregory's church graveyard and £200 for the Air Ambulance Service (under Section 137). The Parish Council currently has £10,000 worth of developers contribution (Section 106 money) from the Weston Gate development, this money is designated for improvement to Open Spaces within the Parish and the Parish Council would be keen to hear of any project suggestions from residents.</p> <p>Following the resolution of issues on the surfacing of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) the facility has been completed. Thanks go to Hayley Brown who raised the money for the facility through applying for grants. Signs have been made defining use of the facility. The school has priority usage from Monday – Friday, 9 am – 4.30 pm (Term time only). A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by both parties.</p> <p>The Weston Gate development of 10 houses in Weston resulted in a controversial issue concerning sewage treatment. The developer's original proposal was to put untreated sewage into the sewage main going through the village. This was changed to a scheme where local sewage treatment took place with the effluent being put into the River Lambourn. A concerted campaign resulted in a reverse of that proposal. The Parish Council is not legally allowed to settle the barrister costs incurred and currently the District Council and Environment Agency are refusing to settle the bill.</p>	SY

<p><i>It is important that all legal procedures are followed by the Parish Council. To that end new Standing Orders and a Code of Conduct were agreed last year. A lengthy Policy & Procedures document is scheduled to be agreed at the meeting in July.</i></p> <p><i>The District Council have stated that 95% of homes in West Berkshire should have access to Superfast Broadband by the end of 2017. In collaboration with Gigaclear, 50Mb/sec contact speeds are now available to many homes from £41.30 per month.</i></p> <p><i>The site of Swedish Houses on Easton Hill continues to cause problems. Demolition has left the site untidy and unsafe. The landowner, Sovereign Housing, has agreed to re-fence the site leaving access for the District Council to look after its own patch.</i></p> <p><i>Traffic issues continue to be a major area of concern for local people. The Parish Council has been trying to remedy the situation. The exit from Elton Lane onto the Lambourn Valley road in Weston is considered so dangerous that an application was made to have a 30 mph sign moved 50 yards further away from the junction. This was turned down by West Berkshire Council. Instead a SLOW sign will be painted on the road and the 30 mph sign made more visible.</i></p> <p><i>For similar reasons the parish council requested that the Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) on the hill going down into Wickham on the B4000 should be move up the hill. This was also turned down. The Parish Council would like to see a VAS sign on the B4000 to the west of the Wickham crossroads. There is not time to cross the road before an unseen vehicle is upon one.</i></p> <p><i>Through the use of covert monitors the police have been able to assess the traffic flow through Wickham on the B4000. There has been an increase in the average volume of traffic from 4,111 to 4,887 per day passing through Wickham in the last 10 years. In December 2016, 39 % of vehicles were travelling at over 40 mph. One vehicle was recorded travelling at 98 mph. The Chairman hoped this was a police car! The high volume of traffic has resulted in considerable wear and tear to the B4000 and sections of it have recently been resurfaced.</i></p> <p><i>Two councillors have been trained to use the Speed Indicator Device (SID) (with the smiley or sad face). We can book this at any time and will do so over the coming year.</i></p> <p><i>Twice a year there is a meeting of Parish and District Councillors to review current issues. At the last meeting in March the proposal for devolvement of services was discussed. Some services and facilities will, in future, no longer be provided by the District Council. This includes some libraries, salt bin filling, sand bags, verge clearance etc. Cooperation between Parish Councils may result in economic alternatives.</i></p> <p><i>As a cost saving measure it has been proposed that the number of Wards in West Berkshire is reduced from 52 to 42. At the same time the number of District Councillors per Ward will be made more even. It is proposed that Welford Parish will be transferred from Kintbury Ward to Downland Ward.</i></p> <p><i>The Parish Council has agreed to purchase at least one defibrillator for the Parish. With the permission of the Parish Hall Committee it is agreed that one will be installed outside the Village Hall. A second is under consideration. These community access defibrillators are designed for anyone to use in an emergency no prior training is required, although we do have two councillors (Paul Stanley and myself) that have received training.</i></p> <p><i>A presentation was made to Gerald Chandler to celebrate his 21 years as a parish councillor. The gift was a glass block inscribed with his name and the Parish Council logo. The chairman gave a short summary of Gerald's life in the area and his involvement in the Parish Council. Gerald's wife, Mary was presented with a bunch of flowers for putting up with Gerald for so long!"</i></p>	
<p>Open Sessions</p>	
<p>The opportunity was given for residents to raised their enquiries and concerns; the following comments were made:</p> <p><u>Superfast Broadband:</u> Within the room there was a general consensus that the Gigaclear installation had been a success; over a third of the room had signed up and were pleased with the service it was providing. The PC will feed this back to the WBC team that having been running the project across the district.</p> <p><u>Trees:</u> A resident reported that sadly their very old and large Chestnut tree that had been a feature within Wickham for many years on the B4000 had to be removed as it was diseased, this work would be carried out shortly and temporary traffic lights will be in place whilst it goes ahead.</p>	<p>SY</p>

<p><u>Elton Lane Junction, Weston:</u> Concern was raised that the swap over of the yellow backed speed sign and writing of SLOW on the road was not a significant enough measure to protect against an accident of drivers pulling out of Elton Lane. PC explained that they too were disappointed with the result of the Speed Reviewing meeting held last year where a proposal to move the 30mph signs further back had been refused. Whilst the PC has to wait another 3 years to propose another a Speed Review meeting, it will continue to harass the WBC Highways team to take further measures. Residents were encouraged to report all accidents and near misses to the PC to enable them to build a stronger case. Suggested that setting up the SID near here would help the PC monitor the traffic. Also suggested that a concealed entrance sign may be of benefit.</p> <p><u>Wickham Church:</u> The Parochial Church Council was proud to report that the roof repairs at the cost of £100,000 were complete at Wickham Church together with the work of the South Aisle. Work will start shortly on the North Aisle. Residents were encouraged to go and see the completed work and the difference that it had made. They were also in the process of improving their website and agreed that the Parish website should link to it and vice versa. Volunteers were also encouraged to come forward to assist the small committees that look after the 3 Churches within the Parish. Please contact the PC or PCC for further details if you would like to volunteer.</p> <p>The Parish Council was pleased with the APM turnout, which was an increase on last year. The Chairman thanked the residents for attending the meeting and invited them to stay for a glass of wine and nibbles.</p>	
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The meeting closed at 8.30pm and refreshments followed after.

The date for the next meeting is the 19th July 2017 at 7.30pm

**The remaining 2017 meetings are:
13th September and 15th November**