

. REPORTS TO PARISH COUNCIL MAY 2023

Chair's Report to the West Wickham Annual Parish Meeting 2023

The West Wickham Parish Council has undergone significant changes over the 2022/2023 year. Four long-serving councillors stepped down for well-deserved breaks or retirements, with four new councillors ably stepping up to represent our small community and perform the important roles that help our village parish run smoothly. In May 2022 we welcomed Caroline Mulley-Richards and Ronnie Temple from West Wickham to the Parish Council joining David Sargeant, Allen Hazlehurst and myself, Alex Schuilenburg. Later in July we also welcomed Richard Ling from West Wickham and Graham McNeillie from Streetly End to the Parish Council. I was honoured in May to be elected as Parish Council Chair alongside David Sargeant as vice chair, but must point out that every member of the parish council is equally important. We met formally six times over the 2022/2023 year in the Village Hall, typically on the 4th Monday of every alternate month. All residents are always welcome and encouraged to attend our meetings and invited to participate in our activities. We discussed a wide range of topics such as planning applications, finances, the children's playground, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, traffic and the Neighbourhood Plan. I would like to express my gratitude to the Parish, District and County Councillors for the generous time and effort which they have given to the Parish of West Wickham. I am also grateful for the experience and professionalism that Jenny Richards, our Parish Clerk, brings to the Parish Council. Thank you.

The 2022/2023 year was very busy for us. The main highlights were: the automated external defibrillator (AED) was installed at the village hall; we held a referendum resulting in an overwhelming vote in favour of the Neighbourhood plan, now formally adopted by South Cambridgeshire District Council; we held a small celebration to thank the volunteers who contributed to the plan; the Parish Council initiated a project to refresh the footpath indicators and posts where necessary for the many footpaths through the parish; much needed maintenance of the children's playground and multi-user games area commenced to address the items highlighted in the last RoSPA report as needing attention, as well as repairs of the minor damage caused by vandalism; the Queen's wood was planted to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee; and of course we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

As a Parish Council, we recognised the rising rate of inflation and while we have a reasonable reserve, unfortunately we needed to ask for a 5% increase to the annual precept. This brings it to £12,600 to allow us to meet our ongoing commitments, as well as set aside some contingency funds. Despite the rising costs we managed a <1% deficit to our annual precept of £81.66

The Village Voice and the Parish website, westwickham.org, remain the primary source of local news, events and resources. I would therefore like to thank the editors of the Village Voice, Andrew Morris and Anna Fairhead, along with other contributors and helpers as well as the contributors to the Parish website. While the Parish Council remain committed to sponsoring these traditional forms of conveying news, I am also pleased that the unofficial Social Media West Wickham Village community group on WhatsApp continues to grow to satisfy the immediate need for communication within the community.

Our Village Hall remains a valuable and important community asset, so my special thanks go to the chair of the Village Hall Management Committee, Trevor Hall, and the committee's members who maintain and run the Village Hall. Without you, most of the local community clubs and activities would not take place, and we could not draw clubs and activities from further afield.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the small army of volunteers within the community that also contribute their time, effort and money to provide events such as the coffee mornings, the Hub nights, the many superb societies and community activities that use the Village Hall, gritting of the pavements, as well as activities such as the rewilding of the verge outside the village hall that saw a wonderful display of colours bloom just in time for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Finally, I would like to thank the community for its support of the clubs, events and activities our volunteers provide. Without you these would not exist. We live in a truly wonderful countryside community.

Alex Schuilenburg, Chair of the Parish Council.

West Wickham Village Hall - Chairman's Report April 2023

Summary of Items contained in the Report

- The Management Committee has met regularly.
All trustees are entered on the Charity Commissioners' website
All trustees make significant contribution to running the hall.
- All equipment has been inspected and relevant certificates are up to date.
- The financial position is good with adequate reserves of money.
- A contract cleaner continues to provide a high standard of cleaning.
- The Management Committee is trying to reduce the hall's carbon footprint and has proposed fitting a photo-voltaic (PV) system on the roof along with a battery storage option. A grant from South Cambridgeshire District Council has been received.

Trustees Meetings

The Village Hall Management Committee have met 6 times including the AGM in October 2022.

Committee

The Committee comprises of 10 trustees and was reformed in April 2022 when 2 new members joined and one former trustee left.

Safety

All surveys and inspections are up to date.

Financial

The hall holds 2 accounts with Lloyds, a current account and a deposit account. The deposit account has the £4000 grant received from South Cambridgeshire District Council for the PV installation

These accounts are accessed on-line by the Chairman and the Treasurer.

The Financial Statement for the year ending 31 March 2022 is attached and was submitted with the Annual Return to the Charity Commission following an independent assessment.

Reserves continue at an acceptable level in the region of £25000 in the current account.

Income

Income has recovered since the Covid 19 shut down, with additional activities such as the Coffee Morning, dance meditation and badminton being booked and regular clubs such as Karate and laido continuing as before.

However, due to the increase in electricity charges the hire charges were increased from January 2023 in order to maintain to suitable level of reserves.

Cleaning

The standard of cleaning by the contractor has been very good and has been favourable commented on by users.

Maintenance

The fittings in the bar have been upgraded and a number of plumbing repairs have been carried out in the toilets, with some further repairs needed in the near future.

PV Installation.

An application to install a PV installation was made via Cambridgeshire Together Scheme run by Cambridgeshire County Council in the 2021-22 financial year and a quote for the installation was received from Greenscape Energy. This initial quote was for £13970.

Following an onsite survey Greenscape Energy advised that we were not eligible for an installation under the Cambridgeshire Together scheme and we were offered a commercial installation for a quotation of £24739. This change in quotation was based on the hall having a 3 phase power supply.

Alternative quotes were sought from two other suppliers, we received a quote from Cambridge Solar of £30,404.38 and the other supplier failed to quote.

Unfortunately this cost was determined too burdensome for the hall to bear alone, so the project was abandoned. The Parish Council were informed of this decision and, recognising the benefits of the PV installation and that the installation will be a capital expenditure which added value to the hall, offered to take over the project. The parish council will set up and manage an appeal fund, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, for subsequent fund raising and grants for the project into which it would also contribute.

WEST WICKHAM CARPET BOWLS CLUB

Ill health has rather taken a toll on our membership and the Club is currently running at a loss using reserves to pay costs. We would desperately like some new members as the Club provides easy exercise and, more importantly, a social evening for those living on their own. We have been joined by some young people after inviting them in out of the cold while hanging round the Village Hall. They are very good bowlers and seem to be enjoying themselves – we certainly appreciate their muscle power in getting out the equipment. Carpet bowls is easily learnt, suitable for all abilities and a fun evening with a friendly lot of people. Any help the Parish Council can give in promoting and supporting the Club (by actually coming along and trying it perhaps) would be welcome.

Janet Morris, Secretary

WICKHAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY CLUB

The Local History Club continues to hold monthly meetings from October through to April each year and membership has increased slightly. Talks have covered a wide range of subjects with a local flavour and have been on Cambridgeshire maps, the Herveys of Ickworth, the Great Plague in Cambridge (the parallels between the plague of 1660 and the Covid pandemic - such as lockdowns and enforced isolation - were remarkable) and the history of cottage gardens (this a joint meeting with the Gardening Club). We had to postpone our Christmas meeting because of the snow but had the delayed quiz and seasonal refreshments in January. Like all activities in the village it would be good if we had more support. We do try to engage people with the regular pieces in the *Village Voice* and there is a degree of interest but it doesn't result in membership. A larger membership would enable us to attract more speakers as many don't feel it is worthwhile to talk to a small group even for proper payment.

Janet Morris, Secretary

West Wickham & District Gardening Club report for the Parish Council 22.5.23

This report covers the gardening club's activities from September 2022 until the beginning of May 2023.

The date of our AGM, which is usually held in September, coincided this year with the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, and therefore, as a mark of respect, it was agreed that we should postpone it until the beginning of the following meeting in October. All the necessary paperwork was forwarded to club members ahead of time, to enable the process of the AGM to be carried out smoothly in the reduced time that was available.

The significant change to the Committee was the standing down of our Chair, Arthur Mawby, who had led the club admirably for some years, and most recently guided us through the challenge of running a club during the time of the Covid Lockdown. It must be noted here that we are all most grateful for all the energy and enthusiasm Arthur has put into the club, and we thank him for his dedication.

We welcomed Indi Liepa onto the committee who takes over the role of programme secretary. This had been very ably maintained at that point by Janet Morris, in her acting programme secretary role following the death of Rosemary Yallop earlier last year. Loraine Temple also joined the committee and has taken on the supervision of catering for the club.

Thanks must be given to the other members of the committee who continue to put in so much work to maintain the life of the club: Andrew Morris for his role as Treasurer and Membership Secretary and leading on the Plant Sale, Janet Morris for her work on the programme and the regular newsletters, Marian Corbett for again organising the purchase of seeds from Fothergill's, Sue Herbert for producing careful and accurate minutes of all our Committee Meetings, and to Sue Thurston for organising the Annual Show.

From the beginning of this year, the club has had very healthy reserves, and therefore there was no increase in the annual subscription. Membership is steady. We currently have 35 paid-up members.

The first presentation of the year was given by Peter Jackson guiding us through the various scented plants that one can grow. The following month Sharka Baxter gave us an inspiring talk entitled 'The Forward-Looking Gardener'. Janet and Andrew Morris stepped in at the last minute to provide us with a Christmas Quiz in December, when the arranged speaker was unable to attend. The careful mix of topics for the monthly meetings continued to be maintained into 2023 with a talk in January by Ian Bedford entitled 'Everything you wanted to know about slugs'. This was followed the next month by the curator of Hyde Hall, Robert Brett who described why we all have such a need for plants. Our own Janet Morris completed the season of talks presenting a historical take on gardening with: 'Fact or Fiction; a brief history of cottage gardens'.

It must be said that the extreme weather last year, both the high temperatures of the summer, and the extremely cold weather during the winter, have had quite an impact on many of the plants in our gardens. Within the club this has been quite a topic of conversation, and we have joined with some other local gardening clubs to organise an event on 12 August this year entitled 'Gardening with Climate Change, what can we do'. This event, with a mixture of talks by experts in the field, and stalls focusing on the various aspects to consider, such as drought tolerant plants, composting, and encouraging wildlife in our gardens, will be held in West Wickham Village Hall. We hope this will help inform gardeners in the local area as to how to adapt, and mitigate the changes we are all now being faced with.

Sue Boase Chair, West Wickham & District Gardening Club

May 2023

District and County Councillor's Annual Report 2023

County Council

A1307

The upgrades to the A1307 have continued to be implemented over the last year. The 'Greenway' (a path suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and horses), that will ultimately link Linton and the new Park & Ride site that is proposed to be on the outskirts of Babraham, has been steadily moving forward with the construction of the section between Linton and Abington progressing, as well as the new pedestrianised crossing at the Hildersham junction being finished and very much in use.

There was some good (we hope) progress made on the decision of where to route the Abington leg of the Greenway should go. The original plan was to direct the route along Linton Road, through the middle of the village and then out along Bourne Bridge Road. This option was met with some robust challenge locally, from residents, your councillors and the parish council. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) then went away and have decided to only look at the option that runs along the side of Pampisford Road. The downside of this is that it will take longer to construct, as there are compulsory land purchases required, which involve lawyers, and always take time.

The next, and final, phase of the scheme to upgrade the A1307 will be starting in May this year. This is to construct a roundabout at the end of Bartlow Road, Linton and also to remodel the highly dangerous Dean Road junction on the A1307. The work will run for just under a year, which will very likely mean some disruption to traffic, but the plan is to build a temporary road around the area that the roundabout is being constructed in to avoid any closures to the A1307. Some concerns that rat running will increase during this time has been

responded to by the GCP with the reassurance that sufficient signage will be put up to inform people of the temporary road and to deter them to take more rural detours.

Full detail can be seen at - <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/sustainable-transport-programme/public-transport-schemes/cambridge-south-east-transport>

Greater Cambridge Partnership

The other big news that came from the GCP this year was that Cambridgeshire are being offered a large sum of money (many many millions) by central government to help improve the local public transport network in and around the city. The reason for this isn't random - Cambridge scores very poorly on congestion and pollution metrics – some saying it is the 3rd worst city for congestion in England and that it emits over 25% more pollution than the national average.

A solution to this, that the government are looking to support financially, is get a very reliable and cost-effective public transport system, as we have seen works in other cities. This would eventually have to be self-funded however and a proposed way to do this would be to charge for road usage, a congestion charge, or what is being labelled as a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ).

The GCP published an initial proposal back at the start of 2022 which outlined which areas of the city could be affected by a STZ. This stretched to most of the city limits and also included Addenbrookes hospital. The GCP then ran one of the largest public consultations in Cambridgeshire's history on the topic, to garner the thoughts of the public on this important decision. Some 24,000 responses were received, which equates to roughly 15% of all adults in South Cambridgeshire, an enormous response. The full results of this are currently being collated and will be available for viewing in the summer.

Personally, we aren't against the principle of congestion charging as a medium to help fund a much-improved public transport system, however, the plans as they currently are need some improving before they can be in a supportable state.

This issue has, and will continue to, get a lot of media attention so you won't have to look very far to get an update on this. We do always encourage people, when formulating a view, to look at the facts, as there is a lot of opinion out there which doesn't always represent the full picture.

New HQ

The County Council's brand-new purpose-built HQ, in Alconbury, was formally opened in July last year. This replaces the previous location in central Cambridge. Our view is still that it is in the wrong location, given the non-existent public transport links and the fact it is an 80ish mile round trip for us living in the south east of the county.

Waste issues

Back in the Autumn last year the governments various departments, DEFRA and the Environment Agency, informed local authorities that they would be bringing into force legislation that means some wholesale changes to the way that the County Council has to dispose of various things.

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) – these are essentially upholstered items such as sofas, chairs etc. The new legislation dictates that they can no longer be put into landfill and have to be incinerated. This causes a problem for the County Council as their contact with the waste disposal company doesn't stretch to incineration, so this led to a week where the Council couldn't accept these items at their recycling centres whilst they looked for a solution. They now have one and have been accepting the POPs at their recycling centres since January. The District Council also has a bulky item collection service, that is chargeable, if transportation is an issue.

Food waste – again, an announced change in legislation by DEFRA is meaning that, in a few years time, all food waste will have to be collected and disposed of separately to all other green household waste. Some of us have been taking part in a, District Council arranged, food waste collection trial for the last 3 years in preparation for this change. The issue the County Council has is, again, contractual as they will now have to renegotiate their current contract with their waste contractor, or find a new one, that has the capability to dispose of food in the appropriate way, which is different to regular green waste. This is ongoing to watch this space

District Council

Local Plan

The District Council has been going through the process of looking at the next Local Plan – which is a blueprint for where development, both residential and commercial, will be happening over the next 30 years. This plan needs to be updated every 5-10 years as the local picture is constantly changing.

Currently the District Council have a very healthy '5 year land supply' which means they have allocated, and approved planning permission for, enough houses to accommodate the growth of the area over the next 5 year period. This means that we only have controlled development and the Council don't have to relax their planning rules to allow uncontrolled, unsustainable development – as they had to in 2014-18 and we ended up with a lot of unplanned and unsuitable developments, such as Horseheath Road and Bartlow Road in Linton, Linton Road in Balsham and Bartlow Road in Castle Camps.

The District Council are currently going through the process of allocating the sites for the next Local Plan, which we were all consulted on last year. Their current principle is to concentrate development into existing towns and larger settlements, such as Cambourne, Northstowe, Waterbeach New Town, Bourne Airfield etc and they will leave the villages as rural villages. We hope they continue with this principle and we know a lot of parishes wrote in supporting this concept.

This will be an ever evolving process, that we will keep you as updated on as possible, so please do watch this space.

Ukrainian Guests

More than 800 Ukrainian guests have been welcomed to South Cambs since the war started last year. This is the highest number of any District Council in the country. This is a great achievement and says much for the humanity of those who have opened their homes to these people in need. More hosts are needed as Ukrainians continue to arrive or move on from their

current accommodation. If you can help just contact the team on:
HFULiason@Scams.gov.uk

Coronation Celebrations

If you are planning something or thinking about it, you might like to take a look at 'The Big Lunch'. There is lots of information and materials to help you on their website:
www.thebiglunch.com/

Or for parish councils try www.edenprojectcommunities.com/biglunch/councils There are also grants available from South Cambs District Council, just check out their website.

Elections May 2022

The District Council Election saw the Liberal Democrats increase their majority. The current distribution of seats is as follows: Lib Dems 35, Conservative 9 and Independent 1. Thank you to everyone for voting to re-elect us both, we're very privileged to continue to do this job

We now only have elections every 4 years so the next District election will be in 2026. The County Council is due to hold elections in 2025.

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