

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 19th MARCH 2020 AT 8.00PM IN THE CHURCH ROOM, WEST WYCOMBE

PRESENT:

Cllrs Mr S Cope (Chairman), Mr. N. Harris, Mr. N Timberlake, Mr P. Brown
Mrs. S. Henson, Clerk & RFO
Alison Rimmer - West Wycombe PCC; Andy Stafford - Downley Dynamos; Peter Towersey

APOLOGIES: Cllrs Mrs V. Smith, Mr R. Seymour, Mrs K Cheshire
County Cllr Mr. D. Hayday, Dist Cllr Mrs. Teesdale, Dist Cllr Mr. I McEnnis,
Sir Edward Dashwood, Mary Hilder - West Wycombe Estate; Rosie Jones- West Wycombe Pre School; Tabitha Rowley - West Wycombe Combined School; Christine Barry – West Wycombe Library and West Wycombe Cricket Club; PC Danny O’Driscoll, PCSO Penny Ling - Thames Valley Police

The Chairman, Cllr Mr Cope, explained that guidance for Parish Councils had not been issued by the government or NALC in relation to the current COVID19 pandemic. As the Annual Parish Meeting is a legal requirement and should take place between 1st March and 1st June it was decided to proceed with the meeting as the situation was likely to get worse. We invited organisations to submit reports rather than attend. Those who did attend have the facilities to wash their hands and seat 6 feet apart and refreshments will not be served at the end of the meeting.

Cllr Mr S Cope, West Wycombe Parish Council Chairman's Report for 2019/2020

This past year has been one of preparing for a major change in the structure of local government here in Buckinghamshire, as the district and county councils are replaced by the new unitary authority, Buckinghamshire Council. For the Parish Council this has meant feeding in to proposals on the new Community Boards which come into being from next month; West Wycombe Parish has been placed into the North West Chilterns area, which encompasses Stokenchurch in the west and stretches as far north as the edges of Stoke Mandeville and Wendover. We will therefore be working as hard as ever to get our voice heard and our concerns recognised by the new unitary authority.

As I write this report, we have yet to consider the impact of the postponement for a year of local elections - including those for the Parish Council. These had already been delayed to cover the transition period to unitary, so we will have to reflect on what this further deferment means in regard to our activities, and indeed to our membership.

We none of us know for how long or to what extent we will continue to be affected by the current coronavirus pandemic. I am sure I speak for all of us when I express the hope that we as a community can find ways to look out for one another and to assist our more vulnerable neighbours for as long as is necessary.

I would like to reflect on the many things we have achieved over the past twelve months, both one-off projects and the regular, ongoing work that we do.

I will leave it to our events team to report on this year's successful Summer and Festive Fayres, which once again drew hundreds of visitors into the parish to enjoy the rich and varied entertainment provided by both events, and to patronise our local businesses.

Through our contractors we now carry out maintenance work on local roadsides and grassed areas, keeping them looking at their best for residents and visitors to appreciate. The cherry trees on Park Farm Road, which had become rather straggly and appeared to be dying back in places, have been pruned back into shape; one of the trees was dead and this was removed, a replacement of a similar species will be planted later on this year.

The gates and signs marking the entrances to the parish have been complemented with the addition of metal troughs, planted with a variety of species intended to provide a display of flowers through as long a period of the year as possible; and through our contractor we will continue to maintain these and adapt the planting as appropriate.

The issue of road safety throughout the parish is always at the forefront of our thinking. 30+ years of experience has taught us that there are no simple or quick solutions to the perennial twin problems of parking and speeding, but we persist in looking for ways to mitigate both issues.

The A40 Road Safety Scheme implemented by Buckinghamshire County Council resulted in a number of new features intended to slow traffic being added to the main road leading into and out of West Wycombe village; and work on the A4010 which came about as a result of the diligent efforts of my predecessor as Chairman, Cllr Vicki Smith, our clerk Sharon Henson, and the redoubtable Jim Stevens in holding HS2's feet to the fire has resulted in the additional pedestrian island on the Bradenham Road, major work on the bus shelter, and other additional safety features.

Together with Cllrs Harris and Brown, at the end of last year I helped erect the two new MVAS units on Chorley Road, which - after some to-ing and fro-ing with the supplier - now illuminate to remind drivers of the 40 mph limit. Having looked at a variety of options for speed reduction measures on Chorley Road, we concluded that these would be both cost-effective and the most likely to have an effect on driver behaviour. Our intention is to mount a third MVAS unit on the westbound side of the A40 coming into West Wycombe village, which we hope will prompt motorists to slow down as they approach the narrower section of the High Street.

Regarding West Wycombe High Street, in October we submitted an application for Local Area Forum funding for a feasibility study for the High Street, together with evidence of an increase in the number of vehicles mounting the pavement on a road which was originally intended for use by horse-drawn vehicles. The move to unitary has unfortunately delayed a decision on this, but we are hopeful that we will be able to make further progress in the autumn.

One of our main responsibilities as a Parish Council is the management and maintenance of the Pedestal Playing Field, a much-loved and much-utilised community facility that provides a safe space both for organised sports activities - most notably the football training and matches organised by Downley Dynamos, from whom we will hear shortly - and for families and friends - especially those with young children - to spend their leisure time together.

We ensure that the play equipment, first installed ten years ago and since added to, remains in a safe condition; this is done through regular visual checks, as well as an annual RoSPA-approved inspection which we commission in compliance with our legal obligation. Damage to the equipment - whether through inevitable wear-and-tear and the effect of the elements, or, regrettably, the deliberate actions of persons unknown - does result in us incurring the cost of repairs in order to keep this facility open and its users safe. One example of this is the recent replacement of the basket swing and its framework, which was identified as necessary by the most recent inspection and was a consequence of weather-related decay to the wooden frame and persistent instances of damage being done to the basket itself. We are however confident that the new basket, chosen for its robustness, and the new metal framework from which it is suspended, will prove to be suitably long-lasting.

Last summer we installed a new tri-table seat at the playing field, close by the play equipment, to provide an additional area for families to sit whilst their children are at play; this is designed to allow wheelchair users to sit comfortably alongside their able-bodied companions, and we hope that this will further encourage the use of the playing field by all members of the community.

One more element of our management of the Pedestal Playing Field - less salubrious but just as essential - is the regular collection and disposal of litter, an un-natural resource which the parish alas! continues to be rich in. Over the past year a total of 54 sacks of discarded rubbish were removed from the area. One thing that never ceases to baffle me is the number of poo bags

placed in the litter bins, each of which stands approximately two feet from a dog waste bin; human behaviour is indeed hard to fathom at times.

Talking of litter, our annual spring litterpick earlier this month was again well-attended by many members of the local community, including our MP Steve Baker, and we succeeded in giving the parish a good clean-up on a day on which the coming springtime seemed very close at hand. As well as an annual spring litterpick, we have now introduced an autumn event as well, so look out for details of that later in the year.

Whilst it cannot compare to the thrills of litterpicking, we continue to comment on the many planning applications that come before us; whilst we have no decision-making powers on planning, thanks to the long-term relationships we have built up with the district council our local knowledge and collective memory are well-regarded by those that do, and our views are at least given some consideration when decisions are made. We sincerely hope that this will continue to be the case when we move to unitary.

Getting things done and changes implemented at a local level is often a long and thankless task, requiring an abundance of one particular characteristic: persistence. We are more than fortunate in having a Parish Clerk, Sharon Henson, who is richly gifted in this respect. Thanks to her unflinching pursuit of the various individuals and organisations responsible, over the past year she has won a number of her long-standing battles, resulting in: the cutting back of vegetation on Network Rail land adjacent to the Pedestal Playing Field; the removal - finally! - of the stump of a street-lighting column at the top of Portway Drive which had fallen victim to a road traffic accident; the acceptance of direct debit payments by Castle Water, suppliers at the burial ground and the Chorley Road allotments (which sounds trivial but involved Sharon navigating through byzantine levels of bureaucracy and eventually bearding the company's Chief Executive via email); and her most recent triumph, getting the village's pavements hand-swept to remove months if not years of debris. Sadly this work was carried out only a matter of days before Storms Ciara and Dennis combined to bring down a fresh shower of leaves, twigs and branches onto the footway - but at least for a few memorable days the paths were clear!

Finally, I would like to echo Vicki's words from last year's report and remind you that my fellow Parish Councillors and I are unpaid volunteers who put in many hours throughout the year and strive to deliver real benefits to local residents whilst always seeking to get the best value for the money - your money - that we spend. I hope it goes without saying that, whilst we enjoy our roles and always seek to work in a spirit of good humour, we take our responsibilities very seriously. Most of us also participate in other local voluntary organisations - we shall hear from some of them shortly - and we welcome the work that these groups do alongside the Parish Council to help keep West Wycombe vibrant and flourishing.

Finally, to return to the changes taking place in Buckinghamshire's local government, on behalf of my fellow councillors I would like to extend our thanks to soon-to-be-former Bucks County Councillor Darren Hayday, and to our soon-to-be-former Wycombe District Councillors Jean Teesdale and Ian McEnnis for all their hard work and support over recent years. We very much hope that we can build similarly successful and productive working relationships with those who will be representing us on the new unitary Buckinghamshire Council.

Sharon Henson, Responsible Financial officer, Presentation of the Financial Statement

The accounts can be viewed on our website www.westwycombe.org.uk

At this point in the financial year we have finished the financial year with a balance of £24,427.93. We will be able to claim £4387.36 back from HMRC VAT payments. Both these figures could well change before the end of 31st March but not by very much.

Administration covers things like £1000 per annum to insure all the parish council assets, e.g. the street lights, defibrillators, play equipment, gates, signs.

We have a website which is constantly updated and is about to be modified to meet the new Accessibility legislation

As with all organisations and businesses we have to pay into a pension scheme and this year we had to purchase a new laptop.

Our energy costs for lighting have gone down by from £2111 last year to £920 this year since we converted the majority of our lights to LED. We still have some heritage lights to convert and this will be a project for the coming year. The heritage lights in the High Street belong to Bucks County Council but those in Church Lane and the bottom of Chorley Road belong to the Parish Council. We have had to repair 4 of the heritage lights, which once changed will have a 10 year warranty on them as have all the others in Bradenham Road and Chorley Road.

Our allotment income increased as we put up our annual rents to £15 and £30 per annum – as you will see this does not cover our costs of the water supply and hedge and grass cutting. The allotments and the burial ground are costs to the parish council in order that we can supply a service to our residents and in both cases the running costs will always be more than our income.

The Pedestal Playing Field is also a very valuable asset to this parish with hundreds of play hours for the children of this community and those in adjacent parishes. If the weather is dry you will always see people using the play equipment or the football facilities. In an era when childhood obesity and fitness is an important topic it is lovely to see groups of parents meeting with their children after school, having picnics and seeing the children letting off steam. Many parents also use the car park at home time to provide a good walking distance for their children to walk from school. We will be carrying out repairs to the car park once the worst of the weather has passed. Downley Dynamos football club also use the field on a regular basis for their training and matches and we work with them to continue to provide this facility. Sir Edward owns the pavilion and the club are responsible for the building. This year as well as the normal RoSPA required maintenance, hedge cutting and regular grass cutting we have purchased a new picnic table suitable for wheelchair access and replaced the whole of the basket swing. This year we received some money for the use of the car park by a film company.

During the last 12 months we spent just under £10,000 on the Chorley Road speed reduction project. Having had a petition from residents over the speed of through traffic, something which we had tried to address with a single Mobile Speed indicator unit, we had to work with Bucks County Council to come up with a solution. We also pay to have the verges within the 30mph speed limit cut, trees cut back over lights and the pelican crossing and over pavements. We also look after the areas by the Pedestal Roundabout, Cutty Alley, Park Farm Road, Rosemary Close and Portway Drive as well as both ends of Towerage Lane. We pay the Chiltern Society to clear 4 of our footpaths; we pay a contractor to spray weed killer along the road/pavement edges. We are currently waiting for work to be undertaken on the stretch of hedge/trees from Hansons Motors towards Chapel Lane. Currently, and for the next 2 years, we get £2033 from Bucks County Council towards this work but it costs far more than we receive from them. As Simon has mentioned we also purchased and had planted the three metal troughs.

We now have a twice yearly litter pick in the parish as well as several volunteers who carry out this work on a regular basis. We have purchased 30, litter pickers and 35 high viz vests for this project.

We ensure that we have our Christmas trees lit and support the Village Clock. This year we have also given some financial support to our Community Library and Pre School. We keep our defibrillators maintained.

We have paid out £1089 for dog waste bin emptying and this price will increase from April. We cut the grass along the West Wycombe road and the entry to the village as well as cut back trees over traffic lights, cut back the trees, shrubs and grass at the Sands end of Towerage Lane. As a parish council we are allowed to claim back all the vat we payout. This year the figure is quite high due to the large expenditure on the street lighting project.

Report submitted by Mary Hilder, West Wycombe Estate

It's been a very strange season on the Estate with the wettest winter we have ever known, however the lake is now brim full with gin clear water, the cascade is in full flow and with the daffodils nodding in the sunshine it all looked magical today and our fishing season is about to start on 1st April, hopefully we will still be allowed out in the open air, we do have a few spaces if you know anyone who may be interested.

Not many of our Charity Snowdrop Sunday's visitors got to see it in such lovely conditions, Child Bereavement UK was able to hold its 15th Snowdrop Sunday and despite the wet conditions and the fact that it was The Six Nations they had an incredible turnout and raised a fantastic sum. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the South Bucks Hospice due to the first storm Ciara and the Church Snowdrops due to storm Dennis. The NSPCC held theirs in terrible weather and only had a handful of visitors and the weather wasn't too kind to the Church last weekend for their Daffodil Sunday, but I did see some stunning photos. A huge thank you to the volunteers from all the charities' that make these such successful events and make it possible for funds to be raised for so many different causes. We just heard that the Rennie Grove Daffodil Sunday has been cancelled for this Sunday 22nd March.

Our poor farmers have also suffered at the hand of the weather and there is still much land in the area yet to be sown as it has been too wet to get on the land. Due to the storms we have lost a large number of trees both large and small and have now cleared a number of trees both in the Garden Centre Car Park and in the wood above the burial ground.

We had a film move in on the first day back after Christmas and they were in and out until the end of January, and last week held a big photo shoot for Vogue America. West Wycombe looked amazing in the first episode of Belgravia. You may also have spotted The Caves in Dracula.

The Caves has been busy with both Paranormal Investigations and our very popular Children's Parties but now we have had to make the very sad decision to close until further notice.

Sir Edward's bridge, that spans the river over the far side of the polo field, has been dismantled and is being rebuilt by Raymond Good Joiners at Myze Farm. It has a geometric design and they have had a huge challenge to construct a replacement bridge and it has been fascinating to see it all come together. We hope to see it back in situ before Easter.

As I write Corona Virus is starting to take a hold and as have had the majority of our events for the coming months cancelled.

Sir Edward and Lady Dashwood have very kindly offered, with the blessing of the National Trust, that we will open the Park for a minimum of 5 afternoons per week from 2-6pm, for with no charge to anyone from Sunday 29th March. There would be no need for anyone to get in close contact with anyone else and all social distancing can be adhered to. We will staff this with volunteers or our staff and this will enable lots of people going through horrific times the chance to enjoy the solace and peace in a safe environment. We will not be offering any toilet facilities.

Report submitted by Christine Barry, West Wycombe Community Library

The Library has seen a number of changes this year. We have lost some volunteers and gained others. Even with the changes we are still maintaining a high degree of service to the library.

We seem to be the 'go to' library for lending books that other libraries do not have. We send out 80 odd books a week on the van to other libraries in the Bucks area, which is quite a compliment about our great stock of books.

Our footfall seems to be steady at an average of 75 people a week. This is mainly due to the four groups we have using the library. Crochet ladies on a Monday, Craft groups on a Tuesday and Thursday and a monthly Book Club. It is nice to see the Library being used as a Community Hub and we would be very pleased to host any other groups who wish to use it.

Our fundraising efforts had a boost with the Quiz Night in February where we raised £800. A donation from Bledlow Ridge Fireworks committee of £250, a very generous donation from you, the Parish Council and another donation from me totaled over £2000. Enough to keep the Library going for a whole year, for which we are very grateful.

We continue to believe that the Library is an essential and important part of the village and would urge everyone to utilise it and support the volunteers who run it.

Thank you for the opportunity to update you on our efforts and the ongoing support of the Parish Council.

Cllr Neil Harris, Head Ranger National Trust

We started 2019, with a full complement of Rangers in our Outdoors Team! Nick Charon had taken over as Area Ranger, looking after the Hughenden and West Wycombe part of the portfolio. Ably assisted by Callum Askew and Simon Allison, Callum came to us from the West Country and Simon from Maidenhead. Working with volunteers from Hughenden and West Wycombe, they have taken great strides in tackling the backlog of scrub regrowth on the chalk slopes, this will always threaten the fragile grassland ecology of the hill.

Ash dieback, continues to pose a threat to the ash trees on the hill and within the park. A summer survey of the extent of dieback gives us only a few years to have to begin to remove those trees in the very high and high usage zones, which pose a potential threat to people. However, the medium term future for the chalk grasslands is improved as ash trees do grow on these fragile areas, shading out the delicate flowers and grasses.

This year also saw the start of our own breeding bird survey on the hill, this coupled with continued butterfly and flower surveys will over time build up into a clear body of evidence about the state of nature on West Wycombe Hill.

We completed another phase of the work to pollard the yew trees on the edge of the park, this work benefits all by reducing shading of the village gardens, but also enabling a thicker growth of trees to screen the village from the park. All part of the original design of this Grade 1 listed Historic Landscape Park.

Ash dieback also poses threats here, as in the 18th Century, a period of decline led to many ash trees seeding and growing in the park, not part of the original planting they have in places dominated the woodland fringes of the park. Their loss could lead to significant changes to the landscape.

It has been a challenging year in the village, with a larger number of vacant properties than normal and some significant redecorations to get done prior to re-letting. This is keeping our lettings team busy, but we are looking forward to welcoming new tenants into the village.

Chris Hathaway, who has retired after 20 years as Head Guide at the park will be sorely missed. Becky Haines, who will take over from Chris, will combine this role with that of House Steward at Hughenden. The team in the Visitor Reception hut will continue to be looked after by Katie Thomlinson, our Visitor Reception Manager at Hughenden.

Report submitted by Mrs. Vicki Smith, Chairman, West Wycombe Community Association

West Wycombe Community Association are the trustees of West Wycombe Village Hall and the committee known as The Village Hall Committee manage the Hall on a daily basis.

We could not run the Hall without the work our Letting Secretary, Mrs Judith Gerrard puts in to keep the Hall running smoothly. Gone are the days when it was a phone call to check on a

booking, now- a- days it can mean a paper trail of emails that can go on for days resulting in extra work answering the queries and with perhaps, no booking in the end.

Roger Seymour looked after the maintenance of the Hall for many years and since he retired from the Committee a year ago Judith had made it her mission to know all there is to know about the entire Hall, from the electric heating to the way the hot water system works. We are very grateful for her knowledge and the way she deals with trade's people we hire occasionally to maintain everything in and around the Hall.

Judith said she wanted to stand down as Letting Secretary at the end of 2019 and we have been very fortunate to have Mrs Emma Copley take over the Letting from Judith. Over the last 2 months of 2019 Judith has guided Emma through the jobs that our Letting Sec has to do, the Hall hiring process, showing round potential hirers and liaising our regular hirers and with our cleaners. Judith has offered to keep an eye on the maintenance of the Hall for a little longer and to become a member of the Village Hall Committee.

We welcome Emma and thank her very much for taking on this important roll.

We still have much of the planned painting and decorating to get through. Derek, our painter, is limited to when he can get into the Hall to work because the Hall is let every day for several hours at a time sometimes 2 or 3 times a day and people expect to have the Hall to themselves. On the right hand side of the stage Derek has made a new back door with new locks, this opens straight on to the rear of the car park. He has fitted new mirrors in both dressing rooms and the right hand dressing room and toilet area are completely re decorated and he is half way to finishing the left hand side dressing room. The storage heater in the right hand dressing room has been recently replaced too at a cost of nearly £900. I think it would be a good idea have new floor covering in the dressing rooms and toilet areas on either side of the stage too, this would complete their facelift.

This past weekend the front wall on the road side at the Hall has been dislodged by an unknown vehicle and Derek kindly came at the weekend to take down the wall because it was deemed dangerous should anyone lean or sit on it, as people often do. He has taken the bricks away to see if he can match them and found out that bricks today are different size to the ones used when the wall was built in the 1960. It looks as if the whole of that part of the front wall will have to be completely rebuilt with new bricks, it seems matching the colour of the bricks to the other wall will not be a problem.

The biggest maintenance expenditure this year has been the resurfacing of the west side of the Hall car park. This was done in December and the post that no one had any idea why it was there, was also removed. The whole area looks much smarter now. I would like to thank Mr Neil Harris very much for organising this to be done. I would also like to thank Neil for decorating the Christmas Tree in the Village Hall garden.

Our thanks too to our Honorary Treasurer, Mr Graham Wood for all the work he does with our Hall hirers and the car park permit holders accounts. This is the 23rd year that Graham has kept our finances in order and up to date. He also has to liaise with our accountants, Wycombe District Council and the Charity Commissioners on our behalf and this takes a huge amount of his time. Our thanks go to Mrs Marion Brown too, our Honorary Secretary. Marion issues our agendas, writes our Minutes and our letters. The Village Hall could not survive without the work both Graham and Marion does, both do an amazing job for us.

We have a website that Ms Louise Brown keeps up to date and Mr Simon Cope and Emma Copley are endeavouring to get Wi-Fi into the Hall, this is proving to be more difficult than we first thought.

All of the committee members contribute to keep this Village Hall a viable, clean; safe and welcoming venue for all that use it. It is a very valuable asset in this community.
All the Committee Members are volunteers and my sincere thanks go to them all for their support of West Wycombe Village Hall.

Report submitted by Tabitha Rowley, Deputy Head, West Wycombe Combined School

This has been a very exciting year for the school. We have had extensive building work taking place over the last few months replacing the old porches with new, more substantial porches in keeping with the style of the Victorian building of the school. We have also had electric gates installed and have more projects in the pipeline.

We are in the process of becoming an academy. This is something that was an order that was given to the school in 2016 and, after much research and investigations, we are now hopefully going to become part of the Great Learners Trust. They are a multi-academy trust specialising in primary education based in Buckinghamshire. The Great Learners Trust was established in 2014. They are now a dynamic group of schools, working generously together to provide the best possible education for the children in the schools.

We are thrilled to share that we have been chosen to be one of the few schools who are taking part in the Mental Health Trailblazer projects that the NHS is launching in the UK. As part of this project, we will have a mental health support team (MHST) who will provide in-reach support; the primary focus of these teams will be to deliver evidence based interventions to children and young people that have emerging low to moderate mental health needs bridging the gap between schools and specialist NHS services, and increasing the awareness of mental health and wellbeing in the educational environment. This is an extremely exciting project for us to take part in, as supporting our children's emotional and mental health is a key priority for us as a school.

In the middle of July, we had a Challenge Week at school. During the week all the children in the school took part in Science experiments, Art days, DT mornings and a Geography project. In Science, we made bubbles, water fireworks, bottle rockets, Mentos and Coke explosions and other exciting experiments.

To finish the week, we all dressed as Victorians for a Victorian Day. The teachers were all very strict and 'naughty' children had to wear dunce hats! We practised writing like a Victorian and recreated an old photo of the school (see attached picture). The children really enjoyed all the challenges in the week and are looking forward to the next one.

The most exciting thing to happen in October arrived a couple of weeks before the half term. We had a delivery of 10 eggs that we have enjoyed watching hatch and become cute chicks. The children enjoyed naming them and seeing how they develop and grow. We learnt about the life cycles of chicks as well as how they have evolved in Science. Some of the children drew pictures of the chicks and their eggs.

The children have been on various trips this year. Year 6 became junior rangers for the day with the Chiltern Rangers. They helped to cut down invasive Laurel in local woodland. They also visited the Imperial War Museum to round off their learning about the first and second World Wars. Year 5 enjoyed a trip to the mosque on Jubilee Road in High Wycombe also. Key Stage 1 and Year 5 have visited West Wycombe Park to support their learning in Science and Geography. We are excited about growing the relationship with the Park and the village. There are many other trips planned for the rest of the school year including a week long residential after the SATs for Year 6 and a trip to the Science Centre in Oxford for Year 1 and 2.

As well as trips away from school, we have had visitors come to school to run workshops and experience days for the children. In the summer, we had a visit from some reptiles as a treat for working so hard over the year. We enjoyed our annual dance workshop by Ricky Brown and were amazed by how far Nigerian Olympic long-jumper Ezekiel Ewulo could jump when he visited our school. Little Strummers joined us for ukulele workshops across the school and we have a yoga workshop day planned this week.

Finally, we converted our governing board from an Interim Executive Board (IEB) to a Full Governing Board (FGB), as a result of the progress the school has made. We are seeking governors to join our board and contribute towards the school's journey moving forward. We would love to find out if there are any members of the Parish Council or the residents of West Wycombe who would be interested in joining our board so that we have input from local members who are passionate about the village and the school. Please contact the school office for more information.

The children continue to amaze and astound us with their enthusiasm for learning and we are immensely proud of each and every one of them.



Alison Rimmer, Church Warden, West Wycombe PCC

The last year has been a very unusual one for the churches of West Wycombe, as well as the village community and that of Piddington. Sadly our Rector went on extended sick leave last April and has been unable to return to post since, and the Benefice as well as the parish have sorely

missed the presence of an Incumbent who fulfils so many roles. Our thoughts and prayers are with Revd Allan and his family and we do hope that the situation can be resolved for him and for the Benefice very soon.

However, we have been so fortunate to have the support of the three Assistant Priests throughout and their care and compassion is remarkable. We have also been supported by local priests from the Wycombe Deanery for both occasional and Sunday services and it's been a pleasure to meet them. It's also been a time of much learning – our learning curve appears to remain vertical in our parish daily life!

Much has been achieved in the last twelve months and its thanks to everyone's support and commitment that parish life has not faltered and stopped. Weekly services have continued between St Lawrence and St Paul's churches, and we have enjoyed more shared services as a Benefice. There have been six weddings at St Lawrence, Baptisms at both churches and three funeral or memorial services. Our weekly attendance varies between six for an 8.00am monthly Communion service at St Paul's, and an average of 25 – 30 at the 11.00 services. Our congregation is relatively small but very committed and caring, everyone has felt the absence of the Rector but the support and generosity have meant that worship and social events have been able to continue as usual, which is hugely important.

We try to plan services which will appeal to as many as possible and these include the seasonal services such as Easter events, Harvest, the Animal service, All Souls memorial service and a very busy month in December with carols, Christingle and Christmas trees!

We were all very shocked and deeply saddened by the death of Libby Squire last year, and this was a dreadful time especially for her family who live in West Wycombe. Local support for Libby and her family has been immense, her funeral at St Lawrence attended by over 300 people, and our thoughts and prayers remain with her family. We look forward to seeing Libby's bench on WW Hill, one of her favourite places to be.

Apart from the worship, we have also become increasingly aware of the huge financial and building responsibility which we share with four Church buildings, St Lawrence, St Paul's, the Church Room and the Church Loft. We've benefited greatly from the knowledge and experience which Revd Allan has of historic buildings and architecture and we've gone on to address the various issues as he wanted us to do. All four buildings have their own concerns. Repair and conservation work needed at St Lawrence for the Nave, Chancel and Tower are paramount in the light of the 2018 Quinquennial Inspection and the PCC have appointed the Oxford Heritage Partnership as project managers to create and submit a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund once the list of work has been completed. We are very grateful to Sir Edward and to Verne Grinstead who are very supportive of this work, and to those who have agreed to join the Project Group committee. Unfortunately the Chancel is closed at present and cordoned off in the churchyard until major repair work can be done to make the area safe. St Paul's needs much less work doing but we still have a list! We are also working to establish a formal sharing agreement with the Serbian Orthodox church who meet there monthly, their priest and congregation are extremely supportive of work required and that future agreement which will also be a significant and unique ecumenical agreement within the Diocese. The Church Room and Loft present a rather bigger challenge. In order to be able to pay the bills of parish life as well as meeting our Parish share which amongst other things pays the salary of an incumbent, we really do need to cut our commitments in the face of the large bills which we have. We are unable to make good use of the Church Room and Loft and would like to be able to sell them to an individual or organization who could make the very best of their potential and give them the care and funding which they need. However, work needs to be done before the building is viable for selling and this is a further ongoing project. Sincere thanks to the Parish Council who have contributed generously to the upkeep and repair of the iconic clock there.

However – the church can never just be about buildings – it has to be about people too and we always want to enable fulfilling worship, share outreach and provide social and community events, many of which are also fundraisers. Between 20 and 30 various concerts take place at St Lawrence each year, many of which are for a charitable cause and we enjoy supporting the Wycombe Arts Festival as well as smaller local groups and individuals. There's been an increasing number of musicians rehearsing during Sunday Teas which is very popular, and there have been a wide range of social events in the village. Many Thanks to the Events Team and community who support and involve us so wholeheartedly, the church always needs to be part of the community.

As a very regrettable and unforeseen final thought, I have to refer to the effect which the corona virus has had upon the whole community and church in particular. It is a time of great difficulty and immense worry for so many, and sadly, all weekly church services have been suspended until further notice. This is at a time when many of those affected really need the reassurance and interaction of worship or friends and so we're constantly seeking to provide other means of contact and spiritual support for as long as the situation continues. The local churches will do whatever we can to sustain and provide practical help, please do let us know if you hear of anyone in need whom we can support at any time and especially now.

Andy Stafford, Chairman, Downley Dynamos

Downley Dynamos continue to grow and evolve every year and this season has been one of mixed emotions. I'll start with the biggest impact across the club and community, with the tragic passing of Oliver Darlington from our U13s team, who train and play at the Pedestal. Oliver, and his dad Tom who is also a coach for the team, have been with the club since 6 years old and was a spirited young man taken away by contracting sepsis, and passed away in Southampton General January 3rd, 2020. The club have been supported by an amazing amount of generosity from both West Wycombe and Downley Parish Councils, the communities and Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, with donations totalling over £5k for his family.

Half of this was raised through the just giving page to place a memorial bench at the pitch side, and I would like to thank the parish council and Sir Edward for the amazing speed gaining approval getting this arranged. The rest of the funds are to be used (at the family's request), to tidy up the pavilion and make 'Ollies Café' which will be a place for his team mates to remember him and certainly grieve in their own way.

Downley Dynamos has become an extremely stable club both in terms of children coming in through all year groups, we have over 300 registered this year, and financially by moving to electronic payments which means the pitches can be maintained with more ease. We can now invest in grounds maintenance when required which is aligned to our responsibilities across all pitches.

The weather, which has scuppered many training sessions and games since November, has not been as dramatic as other areas of the country and certainly Oxfordshire, but has posed a challenge using as many astro turf options to protect the pitches and parish lands. Fingers crossed for a lovely summer.

We have continued to persuade parents to try and limit the use of cars when training or games, I hope this has not caused issues as in the past, Ben Stupples has placed the matting down on the extended area in the car park which will provide much needed extra capacity.

Finally, as highlighted, the club is evolving and I'm delighted to announce that we are on the cusp of becoming a Football Association Charter Standard Club, it's been confirmed and just awaiting the certificate. What this means is wider FA support including contributions to develop the pitches, wider support for the welfare of the children, opportunities to place more coaches through badged courses, and the one I'm most delighted to see is the youth players (16-18), having the option to gain qualifications. We hope that many of these will come back to club when they may have children of their own in future years.

Once again, on behalf of our committee, I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to the Council, this is my 3rd year as chair and 6th including vice chair, and the close bond we have has gone from strength to strength and wish everyone well during this exceptional time.

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Report submitted by Kate Cheshire, West Wycombe Events Team

The Events Team continue to deliver high end key events with such a small group of dedicated volunteers. We have been self-sufficient for a number of years now and are continually searching for good quality and best price when we are receiving quotes for all the equipment we need to hire.

Again, like last year, our focus has been on four main events. Running up to our busiest weekend in July we contracted a company to build a fabulous main marquee and this year it all went to plan. The scouts kindly built their marquees earlier than expected, so we were on track and ahead of planning. We also outsourced the PA of the event to a delightful team who made our lives much easier. All these items come at a price, but when the team is so small, it is an absolute necessity to free us up to be on hand over the weekend.

We had 16 teams join us for a beautiful Summer evening Quiz in the marquee in the park. 120 people wined and dined, played games and enjoyed time with the friends. We often get many comments about how wonderful this quiz night is and how much it is look forward to.

The following day was the Annual West Wycombe Summer Fayre, yet again we were incredibly fortunate with the weather and the sun shone yet again, the crowds grew and the park became a hive of stalls, entertainment and fun for all the family. Tractor rides, Dog Show, main stage of music and a wide variety of stalls were among many of the activities on offer. Plenty of food suppliers and the George & Dragon bar were offering their produce.

We also had a display of over 180 classic/vintage cars for folk to enjoy.

We had a staggering footfall of over 4700 through the gates!

The Festive Fayre was held on December 4th- loads of food stalls throughout the village and craft stalls in the village hall and the George and Dragon, Crown Court and Black Boy Yard. Father Christmas arrived and told fabulous stories in the Christmas Grotto. The National Trust Rustic Produce team had a selection of wooden gifts for sale, all made from estate timber, along with the customary Mistletoe, from Bradenham Manor.

On New Year's Day – we guided a group of over 100 locals on a walk up and along West Wycombe Hill and through the woods for an hour and a half before heading back to the Village Hall for delicious cakes and teas made by Vicki Smith and her helpers.

Our sincere thanks go to all those that help us over the year, it makes such a difference to get support and help with the different projects and events. Our thanks to the National Trust, not only for their commitment, strength and resources, but for the continued use of the events store.

With the current worldwide situation, all future dates for events in 2020 are on hold until further notice.