

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 28th APRIL 2016 AT 7.30PM IN THE CHURCH ROOM, WEST WYCOMBE**

PRESENT:

Cllrs Mrs. J. Smith (Chairman), Mr. N. Harris, Mr. R. Seymour Mrs. K. Cheshire, Mr. S. Cope,
Mr. N. Timberlake Mrs. S. Henson, Clerk

12 members of the public including County Cllr Mr. D. Hayday, Dist Cllr Mrs. J. Teesdale,
Distr Cllr Mr. I McEnnis

APOLOGIES: Mrs. M. Hilder, Thames Valley Police

The Chairman, Cllr Mrs. Smith welcomed everyone.

Cllr Mrs Vicki Smith, West Wycombe Parish Council Chairman's Report for 2015/2016

This year (this very week in fact) we are starting on our 30th year as a Parish Council.

We have achieved a great deal over the years and now much of our time is spent maintaining many of the things we have provided for our residents.

The playing field and play equipment, our burial ground, allotments, road crossings, grit bins and even dog poo bins we believe have contributed to the well-being of everyone who lives and works in our parish.

I thought you might like to hear about future funding

Everyone I am sure has heard that County Councils, especially in the south of the country have had to take big cuts in government funding over the last few years. After the Government published their Spending Review in February 2016 it became clear that there will be even less money coming down to county and district councils and possibly, eventually these councils will not receive any government funding at all. There is talk of them keeping the business rates in their areas. Over the next 4 years there will be a reduction of 0-5% in spending power for local government with Wycombe District Council expecting it to be a cut of 10.5% in real terms for them.

Over the last few years both authorities have cut back on their staff and outgoings tremendously which has inevitably affected services. The government assumes that local authorities will increase council tax each year. The rising bill for childcare and elderly care in Buckinghamshire means Bucks County Council (BCC) is already spending over 70% of their budget on these two statutory duties.

Something, perhaps, to take into consideration when we are moaning about the state of the roads in Bucks?

Bucks County Council indicated a few years ago that they hoped Parish Councils would take on many of the jobs we have come to expect from them.

At present parish and town councils are not capped on how much they can charge their council taxpayers, larger councils are capped which is why they would like to pass some jobs on to us. Of course Parish Council residents might have something to say about that if we start to put our precepts up a huge amount.

Last year we took on grass cutting and sign cleaning and some weed killing on the roads in the 30mph areas in our parish with a yearly sum of money that BCC gave us to do the jobs. This money will diminish and eventually disappear over the next couple of years but we felt sure we could do more grass cuts and keep our parish looking more cared for. Looking back at the end of the autumn we believe we achieved this. As a small Parish Council with no workforce I don't think there is much more we can take on but we will have to see what happens in the next few years.

I have always been grateful that the people who chose to become Parish Councillors over the last 29 years have been committed to making West Wycombe a good place to live and work.

I believe Parish Councils only work well when their Councillors love the place they live in and willingly give their time to making that place best they can.

West Wycombe Parish Councillors literally spend hours of their time during the year keeping an eye on everything in our parish. Roger Seymour checks on our burial ground, marking out the

plots and checking the ground maintenance, he also keeps an eye on the allotments. Neil Harris advises us on our countryside and he is always on hand to help with anything that needs clearing in a hurry for safety reasons. Kate Cheshire checks and reports on the Parish Council defibrillator on the Village Hall and represents us on the Village Hall Committee. Neil Timberlake makes sure we are up to date with the bus routes through our parish and we all report faulty street lights and potholes and anything that might detract from the smooth running of the parish. Simon Cope has been with us for a year now and he organised our very successful Clean for the Queen Day and keeps an eye on the playing field and reports weekly on the play equipment. All your Councillors are on other committees and organisations within the parish and outside it too and attend training and information courses to do their utmost to keep West Wycombe as up to date, interesting and vibrant as they can. Parish Councillors do not get paid. Our aim is to know that we have all done our very best to keep our community safe and the area where we live the finest it can be.

I would like to thank our Parish Councillors for their support and hard work. They deserve your thanks too.

Sharon, our Parish Clerk and Financial Officer, is a very important part of our team and does all the clerical work, liaises with contactors and Bucks County Council and Wycombe District Council.

Sharon works part time for us and is our only employee. We would like to thank Sharon for all her hard work.

HS2

Almost 2 years ago Sharon and I on behalf of West Wycombe Parish Council joined with Princes Risborough Town Council and Bradenham Parish Council to try and stop HS2 Ltd bringing construction traffic for the HS2 train line through our parishes. Early on each of our councils individually petitioned Parliament with our objections. Eventually Wycombe District Council joined the group and we named ourselves The Wycombe A4010 Group. We meet many times to work out our strategy and on November 17th 2015 we put our case to The HS2 Select Committee in The Houses of Parliament. We tried hard to make our presentation as interesting as possible with photographs and a short film on the traffic and road conditions in our parish accompanying our petition because the Select Committee did not know the area and had sat through months of other petitions and were clearly fed up with the same arguments.

We are fairly confident that HS2 Ltd will give us their Assurance not to bring their construction traffic through West Wycombe Village from the M40 at Stokenchurch although even with that assurance if all other roads were blocked for some reason they could bring up to 23 lorries a day through the village.

HS2 Ltd did not give us any commitment that they would not use the A4010 from Handy Cross. This means through our Parish they could use Chapel Lane, West Wycombe Road and Bradenham Road. We are still working with HS2 Ltd to try and ameliorate the disruption this could cause.

Before I finish I would like to say a few thank you's....

To Mike Henson who runs our Parish Council website

Please do use our website it is not just about the Parish Council it has lots of local news plus interesting articles on wider issues.

Thank you too our District Councillors Jean Teesdale and Ian McEnnis. We look at planning applications for our parish and pass our comments on to Wycombe District Council. If we have a contentious application we involve Jean and Ian so they can speak on it for us at Wycombe's Planning Meetings.

Our thanks too, to County Councillor Darren Hayday who has kept us informed of things happening at the County Council this year.

West Wycombe Parish is a good place to live with wonderful countryside, history, churches, shops and businesses to enjoy on our doorstep. All of us Parish Councillors know how important

it is to keep West Wycombe moving forward with the times but we certainly wouldn't want it to lose its unique character.

Presentation of the Financial Statement

The Clerk/RFO issued a set of accounts to everyone present and gave attendees the opportunity to ask questions. Our biggest expenditure during the year, other than ongoing maintenance of grass, trees, hedges and gates and fences, was the work on HS2 which cost the Parish Council £2000, a new concrete table tennis table and goal post in the Pedestal playing field and sorting out the side boundary hedge in the allotments. The accounts can be viewed on our website www.westwycombe.org.uk

Cllr Neil Harris, Head Ranger National Trust Events/ Village Events Team/Conservation Work in 2015 - 2016

Father's Day- June saw an Outdoors Show in the park! We opened an area for camping on the Saturday night and 30 families enjoyed the unique experience of pitching their tents next to the Lake. Bat walks, moth trapping, a fire pit, star gazing, storytelling and just enjoying the beautiful evening with a bbq and a splendid cooked breakfast on the Sunday morning. Specially invited suppliers of Outdoors equipment such as the Panasonic Roadshow, Cotswold Camping & fly fishing, along with local groups, birds of Prey, the Hughenden Bee Keepers, exhibited along the Broad Walk, helped along by Dan Green and his vintage tractor rides!

Summer Fayre- covered in events team report, but again ably supported by the National Trust Ranger team from the Chilterns Countryside. We welcomed just under 2500 people to the park on another hot summer day! More tractor rides and the Vintage and Classic car show added to the long list of exhibitors and stall holders who attended this event. Our thanks go to Sir Edward and Lady Dashwood for their permission to hold this event on a closed day and their continued support. No Summer Fayre is complete without a Big Tent and our thanks to GKCS for allowing us to use their Marquee. Thanks again to Dan Green for the Vintage Tractor rides, all proceeds from this being split equally between the Village Events and the Chiltern Air Ambulance.

Conservation Work- Our work to improve the grassland on the hill for wild flowers and insects continues with our hay cut and scrub control using our own tractors and contractors with specialised forest mulchers. The ongoing replacement of steps carries on with the help of our monthly Sunday volunteers, who help Jerry Page, our Ranger to undertake practical countryside tasks including scrub removal, looking after the Juniper Bushes and litter and Ragwort picking. We are continuing to protect the ramparts of the hill fort by targeted removal of unwanted trees, to promote the return of grass to its banks. Similarly along Chalky Way, we are removing broadleaved trees that are seeding directing into the chalk grassland and obstructing the wonderful views from the hill top.

We have installed a litter bin on the hill to encourage in particular dog walkers to bag and bin their pet's gifts!! I have been greatly encouraged by the amount of dog waste that has been put in this bin; this would otherwise be still on the hill!!!

In the Park we have finished the restoration of the water fountain, a Fountaineer was found to advise on the works necessary to get this feature working well, after it had ceased to work some years ago. The amount of water available to it was not enough to ensure a good spurt! We shall be appointing a member of staff to carry on the restoration of the canals and pathways and manage the tree work in the park. Some targeted removal of trees will be necessary to enable a replanting programme to begin. This will ensure a sustainable cover of trees in this area for the next 100 years!

High winds in December brought down one of the original seven lime trees from the 1752 Jolivet map. Long since superseded by later plantings, this tree had always struck a lonely position in the middle of the ride up to the Temple of Winds, of which the visitor now has a greatly improved view. This tree was so large it took the combined efforts of NT staff and Sir Edwards's contractors to dispose of the brushwood and trunks and to re-landscape the grounds. The bees' nest we disturbed whilst cutting up the trunk were none too happy to be woken early from their slumber!

Filming- April came with the welcome request to film a WW" spy romance on the hill. A set up of several weeks and a large number of extras, along with a crashed Heinkel 117 bomber all added

up to an interesting time for all. Apart from a few hiccups, all went well and contractors will be undertaking the final works to lift the compressed turf shortly. Income received from this will go directly into much needed conservation projects at West Wycombe.

The hill was transformed into Hampstead Heath and we will keep the village informed of the release of the film in due course.

Trees felled as part of the works to protect the hill fort ramparts were sold to the film company, these were later converted to firewood and the brushwood used to construct the Beacon to celebrate the birthday of the Queen.

A splendid evening's weather allowed well over 500 people to enjoy the spectacle, and St Lawrence did a roaring trade in teas and coffee's!

Cllr Neil Timberlake, West Wycombe Community Library

Madam Chairman, Members of the West Wycombe Parish Council, and residents and friends of West Wycombe parish.

It was just over ten years ago – in 2005- that Buckinghamshire County Council first mooted its plans to close a number of smaller libraries, including the one in West Wycombe, citing the need to reduce expenditure and quoting figures which seemed to indicate poor usage of the library in this village.

At that time, there was a significant reaction from the public, concerned at the loss of a public facility and concerned at what future use, if any, could be made of the historic library building if it ceased to be used for that purpose.

A long campaign, a lot of effort and fundraising, a detailed business plan, and a vision of a volunteer-led community library offering much more than just books took hold during 2005 and 2006, and in the event, the vision (much of it owed to Jean Teesdale) was realised, taking over the library in January 2007. Early next year therefore, and before we next hold an annual Parish Meeting, West Wycombe Community Library will have been open for ten years. We think that is a record worth celebrating, and in due course perhaps we shall.

West Wycombe Library thus became one of the first tranche of volunteer-led public libraries. Indeed our pioneer status led to a lot of other prospective community libraries coming to us for advice and guidance, from all over the UK, in those early times.

As it happens, public habits have continued to change, and nationally library book lending has continued to decline. Faced with ever-tightening budgets, and increasing demand on health and social care spending commensurate with an aging population, most if not all local authorities have since turned to the volunteer-led, charitable model of library provision on an increasing scale as perhaps the only sustainable means of maintaining a significant free-to-use public book-lending service.

Buckinghamshire County Council has recently published further proposals to change the method of library provision in the county in the years ahead, and this may have longer-term impacts on the way in which West Wycombe Library develops, or not. I will say a little more on this subject later.

So, West Wycombe Library is now in its tenth year as a volunteer-led, community-based enterprise. We have a 25-year lease with Buckinghamshire County Council to provide public library services to residents of the parish and, indeed, across the county. We are grateful for the support of everyone who has contributed to our continued existence.

In last year's report to the Parish Meeting I indicated that we were nevertheless missing an important element – users of the library! That more or less remains the position today.

Footfall in the last couple of years or so has been poor and declining – book issues are pretty mediocre in number. There are a few residents who use our facility regularly – amongst them numbered our esteemed Parish Clerk – but most residents we never see or hear from, and that is a shame.

The efforts of our volunteers, and the money that we raise and spend in support of maintaining the library service, is only vindicated if people use it.

The library volunteers and trustees, some of whom have put in a decade of activity, are beginning to question whether Bucks County Council may have been right all along – perhaps the day of the library, even one which tries to be a community hub, with internet access, local information, coffee and cakes, is past.

Perhaps partly in response to this, I have to confess that the year just passed has been one of plodding along rather than concerted effort in any given direction, and as one of the Trustees of the library I have to accept my share of the blame for that. So, with due apologies for past sins of omission, let's take stock, gird our loins, and push onwards once more, re-visiting some of the ideas that were offered this time last year:

We would like to know what people in the parish want from their library – what services can we offer – how – and at what times and on what days?

The Parish Council undertook a Parish Plan survey a couple of years ago, which included some questions about people's awareness of, attitudes towards, and use of the library – and the library's trustees will be looking again at the detailed results from that survey. Later this year we may perhaps commission some further surveying of our own.

We continue to be the grateful recipients of a continuous supply of varied donated books. We plan to undertake an inventory of our stock-holding and to thin out our less popular items to make room for new arrivals, and to try to provide a less cluttered appearance. This is not a small job, but time and effort needs to be directed towards it.

We are also most grateful to the National Trust for kindly supplying us with a substantial quantity of wood logs for us to burn on our library fire and keep the building and its occupants warm during the winter months.

No vote of thanks can ignore the support from a dedicated team of some twenty active volunteers, who provide librarianship services during the five days a week that the library is open, or who support the work of the library behind the scenes in fundraising or administrative support.

The County Council continue to be immensely supportive and the current terms under which we operate for them are very much more generous than were the terms of our first five years.

The County Council continues to provide a mobile library service to the village on Wednesday afternoons, in the Garden Centre car park, on the day when our Community Library is closed.

I mentioned earlier some possible significant changes to the County Council's model for library provision. No decisions have yet been taken, but West Wycombe, along with representatives of all the other current community libraries, have had meetings with Bucks County Council to discuss a possible new way of providing the library service in Buckinghamshire.

Faced with a £2m budget reduction over the last 5 years and a further £1m saving required in the next three years, senior staff in the library service have been developing a new strategy, with the aim of seeking Cabinet approval for it in the Autumn, having first undertaken a public consultation and consultation with parish councils.

In short, the main proposal on the table is that the library service should be 'spun-off' from the County Council and formed into a non-profit-distributing organization or a charitable company limited by guarantee.

What is now a relationship between the community libraries and the county council could become one between the community libraries and this new organization, with the possibility of community library representation on its management board, alongside representatives from Bucks County Council, transferring paid staff, and other stakeholders.

Although it would be expected that Bucks County Council would continue to provide core funding for the new organization, the new organization would have access to funds not available to a public body, as well as being able to benefit from the fiscal advantages afforded by charitable status. Income could also be sought in alternative ways, possibly by scaling-up and selling its expertise to other local authorities.

There is much development work still to be undertaken, and it is important to emphasise that Buckinghamshire County Council has not yet formally agreed a specific option.

The public consultation exercise on the future of library services will be an opportunity to measure wider public support for various options and the views of community library partners will be sought during this consultation.

West Wycombe Library volunteers and trustees will have an opportunity to consider the implications for our own library, if the library service were to 'spin out' and create a not for profit organization. There are interesting times ahead.

In the meantime, we will again review and may adapt West Wycombe Library's opening hours during the year. At present we are open from 9am to 5pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 9am to 1pm on Fridays, and from 10am to 1pm on Saturdays, and with Sunday afternoon opening in the summer months once again eagerly anticipated to align with the period of summer opening of West Wycombe House and grounds in 2016. We can only do so thanks to the tremendous efforts of our volunteers.

The summer Sunday openings, serving cream teas and other delights to tourists and locals alike, are a huge money-spinner for us, and nowadays meet almost the entire costs of running the library service.

For this reason we didn't hold any fund-raising events in 2015 beyond our participation in the West Wycombe Christmas Fayre. At the Festive Fayre we raised some £479 towards our expenses in maintaining the library service. The library has also been supported by the very generous donation from Christine Barry, to whom we extend our grateful thanks.

To support our fundraising we also sell a number of small items, such as bags, potted plants, jewellery, and surplus books.

We probably need to invest some time and attention towards the refresh and re-invigoration of our website – www.westwycombelibrary.org.uk – as well as our Facebook page. We are grateful for the support and co-operation of the parish magazine "Contact", of the Parish Council, and of the Bucks Free Press for all they do to publicise our activities and raise awareness of the library.

We continue to host a regular programme of craft skills sessions, and welcome a regular Tuesday morning craft session which is well-attended.

The Library is run by a charitable Trust. There are currently seven Trustees, but the Trust Deed allows for up to nine. If anybody is interested in joining our ranks, or being trained as a librarian, or to be a chef or waiter on summer Sundays, or who wishes to support us in some other way, please talk to me or introduce yourself to the duty librarian. You will be made very welcome.

Finally – although we are an independent, volunteer-run and volunteer-financed library, we are nevertheless part of the County Council library network. As such, if you have a Bucks County Library card then you are automatically a member of our library, and can borrow items on the same terms as from other libraries. You can borrow books from West Wycombe and return them to other libraries in the county – and vice versa. Some people may be of the mistaken belief that because we are an independent charity-run library there is some form of charge or fee to use our library. There absolutely is not – we are free to all residents of Buckinghamshire.

We hope that we can continue to provide a library service to West Wycombe, and the wider population of Buckinghamshire, for many more years to come! Give us some encouragement to do so in the year ahead. Thank you.

Mr. Graham Wood, Treasurer, West Wycombe Community Association

The Community Association is in the healthiest financial position it has been for years with £18,500 in the bank account. However all the Committee members are getting to an age when they might like to retire and there is a concern over who will be interested in joining the committee and eventually taking over the reins – we need new people.

A big thank you to Judith Gerrard, our lettings secretary who has done a wonderful job of bringing in new bookings to replace those which historically came to local village halls for e.g. wedding receptions. The committee has tried to keep the letting fee at a low and realistic level but keeping the maintenance of the village hall to a good standard without breaking the bank – this year we have undertaken a large amount of internal and external painting. Our biggest outlay is the electricity – we are negotiating our contract to get it as low as possible and through installing control systems we have managed to reduce the bill from £7000 in 2013 to £5,800 in 2015, however we had a warmer winter and with a donation from the Parish Council two committee members installed roof insulation.

We have just paid £4000 plus VAT to have the rear of the car park repaired and resurfaced. At some point we will be at stage where we can no longer keep repairing the windows and this will be an enormous bill to install replacement wooden frames.

We spend over a £1000 each year on the main hall floor to keep it in good repair, this year the year the bill will be £3000 as it is having a deep clean and maintenance and "polish". The wood block floor down there now was new in 1996.

We had to buy 6 dozen new sets cutlery this year as so much was "missing".

Each year we have to pay 2% of our income to the Performing Rights Society – money which we can ill afford and as we hardly ever have any music playing seems an unnecessary cost – we have tried to negotiate not paying it but were threatened with a court case if we did not! Hirers who play music already pay the same fee.

We continue to negotiate with Wycombe District Council over paying Council Tax and most years we have been successful in getting a reduction or having the fee waived but as local government finances get tighter this may not continue for much longer.

We always keep a set amount of money aside in case the village hall has a problem with the roof and/or drains etc. The hall opened in 1960.

Our attendance at the West Wycombe Summer Fayre where we have sold teas, coffees and cake has been a great source of income, however it is volunteers and committee members who work hard making the cakes and serving on the day. The West Wycombe Events Committee gives the stall rental fees at the Festive Fayre to the Community Association. Last year we raised £900 with these two activities.

Elaine Rose, Manager, West Wycombe Pre-School

We are currently running at full capacity with 41 2 – 4 year olds, with a healthy waiting list for September 2016. We have just lost a member of staff and have been advertising for a replacement, preferably a Level 3 but to date we have not received any CV's.

Our outside area has 3 new activities: Mud kitchen, water wall and the biggest hit with the children – a wooden play house. We have been lucky enough to have great parents who are erected these pieces of apparatus and painted the fencing. The mud kitchen has limited use at the moment due to the outside tap needing to be repaired.

With the weather finally getting warmer we will make use of our beautiful surroundings with visits to the park, the play area and library and organize more walks in the vicinity.

The parents are all grateful that the huge holes in the car park have been repaired and tarmacked over.

Alison Rimmer, Church Warden, West Wycombe PCC

It's been an eventful year since the last APCM! I'm sure this is a good thing as it shows that the church and parish are active and this is definitely true in West Wycombe where the very broad age span and range of worship, activities and challenges reflect the life that we lead.

Our church life and worship is considerably strengthened by the love that is evident throughout, and there are so many opportunities to expand and explore our worship and develop alongside it. We also relish the opportunity to welcome to our services other priests within the Benefice, and are truly blessed to have such an amazing team.

The Parochial Church Council has met seven times during the last year. Our thanks to the members of the PCC who meet regularly and with commitment, they form a strong backbone to our church family and we are also very grateful to the various sub-Committees who do so much planning and hard work.

As you will know, a new Churchwarden, Beverley Cope has been appointed as John Hilborne has decided to stand down for current health reasons. I am immensely grateful to John for his tireless work and thoughtfulness during his time as Churchwarden, and also to Ros for supporting him (and us!) so effectively during this time, they are a remarkable and generous team who contribute so much to our church life and wellbeing. We are delighted that John who has a wealth of knowledge and skills will continue to lead and advise on the Fabric and Maintenance Committee whilst Ros now chairs the Social and Fundraising Committee which is continually raising awareness of, and funds for, our very special churches.

The Quinquennial Inspection of both St Lawrence and St Paul's churches is currently underway; the PCC has had an informal initial report on progress so far picking up various points, and the full report is expected within the next two months.

Both St Lawrence and St Paul's churches have seen building work started and/or completed. St Pauls is clearly an easier building to maintain, but its needs are no less important. A very positive achievement has been the installation of the toilet there with ongoing decoration of the vestry and the creation of a flower bed over the plumbing pipes outside, all such an improvement to the church facilities. In the churchyard, a dead walnut tree came down in heavy November winds

and there are plans to carve the remaining trunk into a seat. The peaceful Parish burial ground is attractive and also very well maintained, and offers a resting place and source of solace.

St Lawrence churchyard, owned by the church but now maintained by Wycombe District Council, has seen various trees pruned and made safe. A defibrillator has kindly been provided by West Wycombe Parish Council and placed just inside the gate; this is a very valuable resource for visitors to church and the Hill alike and is checked routinely once a fortnight.

Inside St Lawrence, last year's invasion of gliss-gliss was, thankfully, avoided this year.

However, we've had much greater challenges to face in terms of the dampness and dry rot which has caused much damage to the church fabric and the cause and extent of damage isn't yet known. There has been mould growing on the wooden panels, windows and column on the south side of the Nave, and the church was closed for seven weeks to remove the growth and clean / make safe the church throughout. Joshua Harrison continues to examine the building for the source of dampness and has applied for grants to cover the cost of investigation and major work expected – this will be a lengthy business. The top guttering will have to be examined and also the roof space above the Nave.

There is continued support for our new Children's Room and fundraising is boosted by the Buy a Brick campaign which will be formally launched in May. An Open Evening will be held at St Lawrence when the architectural plans will be explained.

The Tower has been a cause of much discussion throughout the year. The netting on the first landing needs replacing and this is expected to be done before the end of April. A member of the public has requested access to the Golden Ball, this was understandably refused. The local Fire Service have carried out an informal training session and checked the access whilst they were there; the Ball is deemed safe generally but further work would be needed before anyone can go into it. The top landing slats have been cleaned and repaired where necessary. It is planned to fit a hydraulic strut to the hatch door onto the top landing which will make lifting and closing it safer and much easier. Concerns continue concerning the safety of the Tower access and people's vulnerability on the first and top landing; a further risk assessment will be completed this month and the current insurance company requested to endorse again the safety measures in place. The positioning of a steward on the top landing is also being considered and would provide a further safeguard.

There has been a concerted effort to tidy up the Church Loft which is open to visitors when we are using the Church Room, but much more remains to be done and the overall plan for the Loft's use and great potential is still a topic of discussion. The Church Room clock is of interest to everyone and we are currently working with Smiths to get its problems resolved and to arrange a regular service.

We are very fortunate to have such beautiful and historic buildings in our parish, but the implications of this have been felt acutely over recent months. Costs continue to rise, and we are very fortunate to have people in our congregations and village who are often willing to complete jobs free of charge and for the love of our heritage. However, we also need to be mindful that we cannot rely on this alone and that the work needed to maintain and enhance our precious buildings depends increasingly on a steady income and concerted fundraising; our thanks to everyone who supports this in any way.

When St Lawrence was closed in February and March we were able to move to St Paul's church for most of our services, but were also very grateful for the warm welcome which Bledlow Ridge gave us at other times. Many have said since that this time of uncertainty and doing things differently was actually a very positive outcome, with a great team spirit throughout!

Worship lies at the heart of our church. The strong Sunday School consisting of children and young people are an absolute joy and a very rich part of our church family; they bring so much life, fun and energy to our services.

There have been many evening Concerts at St Lawrence; we are so fortunate to have the West Wycombe Chamber Choir in our midst, and the Wycombe Arts Festival and other concerts provide a marvellous range of music.

There have been many social and fundraising events throughout the year which have been great fun. The Tower and Teas running throughout the year boosted fundraising for the Children's Room as well as much needed funds to cover everyday bills and overheads. The St Lawrence Flower Festival in September was a huge success and brought much beauty, happiness and fellowship to the church. The Festival of Christmas Trees at St Paul's was the first event of its kind and also very popular locally, definitely to be repeated.

We all value being part of the West Wycombe Parish community and enjoy working with everyone to ensure that West Wycombe is a friendly and caring community.

Paul Baker, Chairman, Downley Dynamos Football Club

Mr Baker explained their plans for the football club who now have 40 coaches working with 350 children from age 5 to under 16, in eleven age groups training and playing on 5 different sites including the Pedestal Playing Field as well as in Downley and Mill End Recreation Ground and they are currently looking for a sixth site. They have recently undertaken their first tour with the Under 9 and Under 12 teams where they met Glenn Hoddle and won the Fair Play Award. All is working well with the arrangement at the Pedestal Playing Field. The initial agreement terminates in August 2018 to tie in with the agreement with West Wycombe Estate for the use of the clubhouse.

Cllr Mrs. Kate Cheshire, West Wycombe Events Team

The events team has completed their third full year. With a lot of effort and determination we have delivered very high level events with a very small group of volunteers.

Hard and strenuous labour began for two full days from 9th July when a small team of village locals joined the National Trust to start building marquees for the Summer Fayre.

By the evening of 10th July we were ready to run our first event of the year at the pre-fayre summer quiz. 14 teams joined us for a beautiful summers evening in the marquee in the park. Delights of a hog roast with a selection of gourmet salads along with a well-stocked bar left the quizzers full.

On Saturday 11th July 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, archery, nerf wars, mini golf, penalty shoot-out, trampolines were among many of the activities on offer. Plenty of food suppliers and the George & Dragon bar were offering their produce. We had a footfall of over 2450 through the gates – which we will try to beat this year.

A quiz night on November 13th was supported by 13 teams in the village hall. The quiz was accompanied with fresh fish and chips cooked outside in the car park. A hit with the locals, and a total of about 130 portions of fish and chips were supplied within an hour.

The Festive Fayre was held on December 3rd - we were told it was the busiest ever. Father Christmas arrived (albeit a little late) in a classic car kindly owned by Mr. Wood. Locals were entertained by the music of the Polka Dots and the village hall was very busy with stall holders. Lavender Green bought along their donkeys and the evening was another huge success.

On New Year's Day – we guided a group of 60+ locals on a walk for an hour and a half before heading back to the delicious cakes and teas made by Vicki Smith and her helpers.

On 15th April we ran another one of our famous quizzes in the village hall. As usual it was well supported and a good night was had by all.

21st April – Our last event of the year was the Queen's 90th birthday beacon on the hill. At least 500+ people attended to watch Sir Edward and Lady Lucinda light the beacon. St Lawrence Church also opened for the evening and provided refreshments.

Our sincere thanks goes 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.

Long term purchases made this year:

Reflective road signs

Festive Lighting

Laptop

Domain name registration wweventsteam.co.uk. Emails are in the process of being set up.

Future events

8th July – Pre Summer Fayre Quiz Night

9th July – Summer Fayre and Classic Car Show

14th October – Autumn Quiz Night

7th December – Festive Fayre

1st January – New Year's Day Walk

County Cllr Darren Hayday

Cllr Hayday thanked the Parish Council for their sterling work and he will continue to give his support to all the efforts made by the Parish Council to improve the roads in the parish during these difficult and challenging times at Bucks CC.

District Cllr Mr Ian McEnnis

Cllr McEnnis focussed his report on the emerging Local Plan and the proposed major building projects close to our parish in Longwick and Princes Risborough which will have an effect on the road infrastructure of our parish. He continues to support the Parish Council particularly when contentious planning applications are submitted for our parish.

District Cllr Mrs Jean Teesdale

Cllr Mrs Teesdale raised concerns about the future of local government and local organisations where new and young people need to be encouraged to join in and take over all these voluntary roles hoping that people will realise that their lives can be enriched by becoming involved in their community.

Wycombe District Council is now looking at the release of the Reserve Sites, which have existed for over 30 years. She was adamant that Green Belt would be safe. Everyone acknowledged that new homes are needed but they must be affordable and appropriate infrastructure must be in place to ensure that existing communities are not spoilt or disadvantaged.

She thanked the Parish Council for being one of the few Councils who replied to consultations and attended consultation meetings.

Both she and Cllr Mr McEnnis enjoyed working with the Parish Council and offered their help in any way we needed.

Cllr Mrs Smith invited everyone to stay for light refreshments.