



# *Wickham Bishops Parish Council*

## ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

YOUR COUNCILLORS	AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY
Cllr. Iain MacGregor Chairman	Amenities and BHSA Trustee Emergency Planning and Environment
Cllr. Mandy Mickelsen Vice-Chairman	Finance and Planning Committees Emergency Planning
Cllr. Henry Bass District Councillor	District Council Liaison Environment
Cllr. Peter Bates	Website Manager Publicity
Cllr. Stephen Nicholas	Highways Public Rights of Way
Cllr. Tilly Pink CBE	
Cllr. Barry Sayers	Planning Committee Chairman
Cllr. Ian Wardrop	Finance and Planning Committees Speedwatch and Traffic Calming
Vacancy	
NON-COUNCILLORS	AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY
Mrs. Liane Rowland	Parish Clerk & RFO
Heelis & Lodge	Internal Auditor



## MEETING SCHEDULE

Wickham Bishops Parish Council meets on the first Tuesday of each month, except August, in the Village Hall Boardroom at 7.30pm. The Planning Committee meets if required, on the third Friday of each month in the Boardroom at 11.30am. Members of the public are welcome to attend these meetings.

Agendas are displayed on the Parish noticeboard by One Stop and on the website at [www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](http://www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org), where the minutes can also be found.

## HOW TO CONTACT YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

All correspondence should be addressed to the Parish Clerk.

Write c/o the Village Hall, Church Road, Wickham Bishops, CM8 3JZ

Email to [info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](mailto:info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org) or call or text on 07542 190176



## RESIDENTS' NEWS

Not content with reaching the milestone age of 100 and starring in Gardeners' World last year, in March a Wickham Bishops resident was privileged to receive Maundy Money from the Queen. Congratulations!

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

At the end of the year, Councillor Ruth Johnson stepped down from the Parish Council, following twenty years' service as a Councillor. Most recently on the Finance and Planning Committees and with responsibility for Transport, Councillor Johnson has been an active participant. Visitors to the village hall may have noticed the attractive chairmen's board which now hangs on the wall, which was entirely due to Councillor Johnson's efforts. The Parish Council would like to thank Ruth for her commitment and contributions over the years.

Following Mrs. Johnson's departure, the Council has one vacancy, which at the time of writing appears likely to be filled by co-option.

The website continues to be an important link between Council and residents, as it provides details of past and forthcoming Council meetings, information about events in and around the village and various Statutory documents. Contact addresses for Councillors and the Parish Clerk are also listed.

A report from the Council is included in every issue of the Parish Magazine, which highlights a few matters of interest or concern each month, and also gives the dates of forthcoming Parish Council meetings and contact details.

The Parish Councillors' Surgery, where two Parish Councillors and a District Councillor are available to listen to problems and suggestions, is held one Saturday morning per month. Since November, the Surgery has been held in The Mitre and this appears to have been successful in increasing visitor numbers. The dates of these meetings are available on the noticeboards, the website and the minutes of the monthly meetings.

## AMENITIES REPORT

In the course of the year the Parish Council was delighted to accept the services of Mr. Chris Cooke as Village Tree Warden, on a voluntary basis. Chris has considerable knowledge of trees and he may be able to assist you with a tree problem in your garden. Chris can be reached through the Parish Clerk.

As you may know, the Parish Council is endeavouring to bring the neglected air raid shelter, within the library grounds, into use as a bagged road salt store and a historical relic. Funding for the acquisition has been obtained from Essex County Council, which is arranging to open up the shelter and to install a door. Once complete, the Parish Council will be seeking help in a tidy-up day.

All the benches in the village were refurbished in 2015 and essential maintenance of the Witham-bound bus shelter on Witham Road was also undertaken.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Parish Council is considering initiating a Neighbourhood Plan. This will comprise a community-led set of policies that will shape development in Wickham Bishops and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. To be involved, please contact the Parish Clerk.

## PLANNING

The Parish Council and its Planning Committee have considered seventy applications in the last year, which is an increase of twenty over the previous year, reflecting both the national upturn in the housing market and the desirability of Wickham Bishops in particular. Perhaps the most contentious has been the Church Road proposal for 52 dwellings, which precipitated 64 letters of objection to the Parish Council. Following the Parish Council's resolution to recommend refusal, the proposal was turned down by Maldon District Council's (MDC) Planning Officer.

More disappointingly, the appeal decision by the Planning Inspectorate, to allow fourteen new homes on land between Maypole Road and Great Totham Road, shows how urgently the District Council's Local Development Plan is needed.

With the help of the Rural Community Council of Essex, the Planning Committee is hoping to refresh its local Housing Needs analysis with a new survey. Should you receive a survey through the door, **please** fill it in and return it so that your views can be incorporated.

## HIGHWAYS REPORT

Damaged pavements, potholes in the carriageway, weeds obstructing sightlines and blocked drains were all fixed this year following action taken by the Parish Council. One parishioner was delighted with the new drain cover in place following clearance works down Church Road.

You may raise such issues directly with Essex County Council (ECC) on its "Report a Highway Problem" website: <http://www.essexhighways.org/Report-a-problem.aspx> or via telephone on 0845 603 7631. It is recommended you also report them to the Parish Clerk to ensure a Councillor can keep the issue visible to the appropriate departments.

## WHERE DOES THE WATER GO?

Two Councillors and a local volunteer recently completed the 'Where does the Water Go' project for Wickham Bishops. This initiative, devised by Essex County Council, involved identifying, surveying and mapping the ditches and other watercourses, and their associated drains, pipes and culverts, within the parish.

The information gathered is being incorporated into a reference map for the parish, to use for monitoring watercourses and their impact on the local flood risk, and in the understanding of riparian responsibilities. When added to the maps of other parishes it will also enable the County Council to see the wider picture relating to the drainage network which is so important in flood control. The Parish Council would like to express its gratitude to Mr. Alan Sargeant, for his kind help in this project.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The half-hourly #90 bus service to Witham and Maldon has been continued and the Parish Council has discussed repositioning the Snows Corner Maldon-bound bus stop. Once agreed, the Parish Council will look to replace the bench which was damaged beyond repair by an unidentified vehicle.

## TRAFFIC CALMING

Despite the optimism felt last year for a speedy implementation, the requested traffic calming measures are still awaited.

The extension of the 30mph zone in Church Road to Mope Lane and Station Road, agreed by the joint ECC-MDC Maldon Local Highways Panel (LHP) in March 2015, is now expected to be allocated finance for 2016/17. Similarly, the Speed Indicator Devices are now earmarked for early in 2016/17. Other measures such as road narrowing and village gateways are still being considered by the LHP.

The Parish Council is concerned about the delays, particularly given the commencement soon of the North Heybridge Garden Suburb which is expected to bring additional traffic through the village, and remains in frequent contact with the LHP and its members.

The petition calling for improvements at The Mitre junction, recently circulated in the village, has been passed to the Chairman of the LHP and the Parish Council has sought a meeting with the Chairman to discuss our concerns. At the time of writing a date for the meeting had not been arranged, however the Chairman's attendance at the Annual Parish Assembly is expected to provide more information.

## SPEEDWATCH

The Parish Council is grateful to the volunteers who have kept Speedwatch active during the year. A total of 88 checks were carried out, resulting in 1,007 vehicles being reported for exceeding the speed limit. A monthly summary is posted on the Parish Council noticeboard outside One Stop.

Essex Police has reported an improvement in traffic speeds through the village and ascribes this to the endeavours of the Speedwatch team. The team will continue with the checks through the coming year, concentrating on those roads where speeding remains a problem.

## POLICING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

The Parish Council maintains contact with your local District Commander and Police Sergeant on policing-related matters, however policing cutbacks have resulted in limited presence of PCs and PCSOs. Crime and anti-social behaviour levels remain low with Maldon being one of the safest districts in the County.

Regrettably, the parish currently has no active Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) program since the previous co-ordinator moved away. Interested residents wishing to volunteer for this important role should contact the Parish Clerk.



## DID YOU KNOW?

You can view the locations of all Public Rights of Way on Essex County Council's website. Visit [www.essexhighways.org](http://www.essexhighways.org) and select *Interactive Maps and Live Travel* then the *Highways Information Map*. Click *Assets* to display the routes.

## PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Work is due to be undertaken by the Beacon Hill Sports Association to improve the drainage along the Kelvedon Road-end of Handleys Lane (BW10), to alleviate the flooding there.

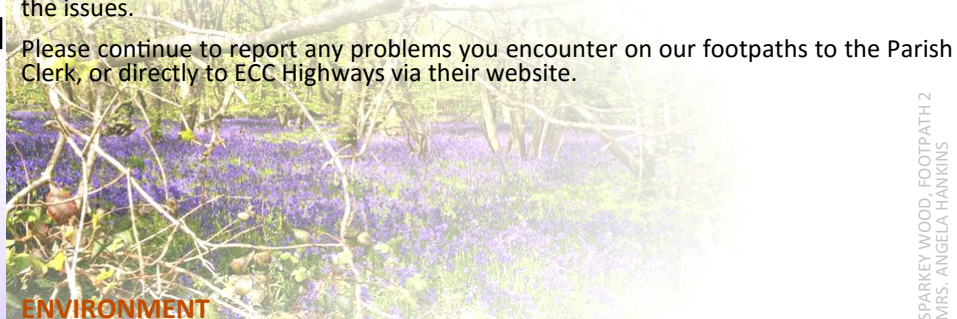
An unauthorised diversion of Footpath 17 and an obstruction of Footpath 22 were investigated and reported to the County Council this year; FP17 will be returned to its lawful path after crop harvest and FP22 is now subject to a formal diversion proposal.

The Parish Council has been consulted, and sought local opinion, on both the FP22 proposal and a re-submitted proposal to re-route Footpath 13. The Council endorsed the amended FP13 scheme; it concluded that the benefits of the FP22 proposal would not outweigh its adverse effects and recommended refusal.

The improvements to Footpath 3, previously requested by the Parish Council, were completed by ECC this year. New steps, a handrail and a boardwalk over the waterlogged area have been installed.

Finally, remedial works to the overgrowth and poor drainage of Footpath 1 will be undertaken by Essex County Council following the Parish Council's efforts in raising the issues.

Please continue to report any problems you encounter on our footpaths to the Parish Clerk, or directly to ECC Highways via their website.



SPARKEY WOOD, FOOTPATH 2  
MRS. ANGELA HANKINS

## ENVIRONMENT

At this time of the year hedges grow rapidly. Please check your boundaries and consider if the infirm, wheelchair-bound and partially-sighted will be able to pass.

Thank you to the villagers and Tennis Club members for their assistance on 2016 village litter pick day. In 2015, and for the second time in six years, Wickham Bishops was class winner in the Best Kept Village contest! The parish also placed joint 3rd in the Village of the Year competition. This was an excellent result given that there were a possible 281 candidates.

To commemorate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Parish Council will be applying to The Woodland Trust for a large quantity of young trees, for planting around the village and at the BHSA sports ground. Led by the Wickham Bishops Tree Warden and Councillors from both Wickham Bishops and Great Totham, the working group will be looking for groups and individuals to assist with the autumn planting.





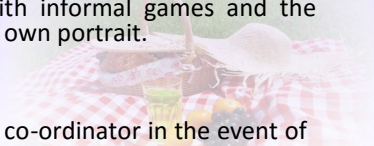
## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

If you have a few hours to spare why not enquire about helping with the Tree Planting scheme? Perhaps you could offer a hand or resources in the case of emergency, or you could help coordinate the NHW?

## YOUTH

The Parish Council made a further donation towards the running costs of the existing youth club at the start of the year.

Unfortunately, the biennial village picnic scheduled for August Bank Holiday Monday was washed out. The event was rescheduled for May Day, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016 at the BHSA's Great Totham Road sports ground. At the time of writing, a children's fancy dress competition with a 'Royal' theme is planned, with informal games and the services of a caricaturist, enabling you to take home your own portrait.



## WELFARE

Wickham Bishops Parish Council is nominated as a rescue co-ordinator in the event of a local emergency. The Parish Council is working with the Beacon Hill Sports Association and St. Bartholomew's Church, to provide the use of their respective halls, should a situation arise. Your assistance in providing tractors, 4 x 4's, generators, first aid skills and helping hands would be greatly appreciated.

The Parish Council is empowered to offer grants to local clubs, societies and worthy causes. For more information, or to offer your thoughts and wishes regarding any further facilities or services in the village, please contact the Parish Clerk.



## FINANCE

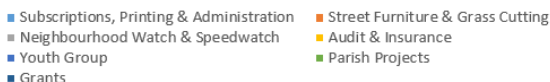
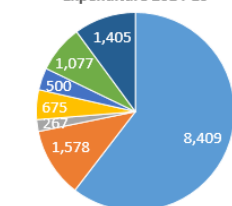
### Accounting Statement 2014-15

Opening Balance	18,389
Precept & LCTS Grant	11,970
Other Receipts	1,001
Total Expenditure	<u>-13,911</u>
Closing Balance	<u>£ 17,449</u>

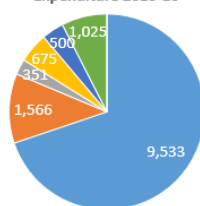
### Accounting Statement 2015-16

Opening Balance	17,449
Precept & LCTS Grant	12,000
Other Receipts	662
Total Expenditure	<u>-13,650</u>
Closing Balance	<u>£ 16,462</u>

### Expenditure 2014-15



### Expenditure 2015-16



## USEFUL NUMBERS

- The Parish Clerk: Liane Rowland 07542 190176
- The Village Hall: Bookings Clerk 07543 033783
- Maldon District Council: 01621 854477
- Loss of electricity supply: UK Power Networks 0800 783 8838

*Best regards,  
The Parish Council*