



# *Wickham Bishops Parish Council*

## ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

| YOUR COUNCILLORS  | AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY  |
|---|--|
| Cllr. Iain MacGregor<br>Chairman                        | Finance Committee and BHSA Trustee<br>Amenities and Emergency Planning |
| Cllr. Mandy Mickelsen<br>Vice-Chairman                  | Finance and Planning Committees<br>Emergency Planning                  |
| Cllr. Henry Bass<br>District Councillor                 | District Council Liaison<br>Environment                                |
| Cllr. Peter Bates                                       | Website Manager<br>Publicity   |
| Cllr. Richard Mundell                                   | Finance Committee  |
| Cllr. Stephen Nicholas                                  | Highways<br>Public Rights of Way                                       |
| Cllr. Tilly Pink CBE<br><i>(resigned February 2017)</i> |  |
| Cllr. Barry Sayers<br><i>(resigned February 2017)</i>   | Planning Committee Chairman  |
| Cllr. Ian Wardrop                                       | Planning Committee<br>Speedwatch and Traffic Calming                   |
| 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

Approval was granted in February, for a telecommunications mast to be installed on the BHSA sports field at Great Totham Road. It will bring improved access to 2G, 3G and 4G services to residents in the coming months.

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

At the start of the year Mr Richard Mundell was co-opted to the vacant seat. Cllr Mundell has since developed the Neighbourhood Plan structure and is overseeing the Parish Council's move onto social media and a new email platform.

In the course of the year we lost the services of Councillors Barry Sayers and Tilly Pink, who between them had 55 years' experience in serving Wickham Bishops Parish Council. Thank you sincerely to both. Recently, we had the sad news that Tilly had succumbed to a long-standing illness. Mrs Tilly Pink CBE was honoured for her long-lasting and selfless commitments to the community, including her presidency of the Maldon Golf Club and the luncheon club which she set up in the 1970s and still attended regularly. Tilly was the county organiser for the Women's Royal Voluntary Service and represented Maldon on the Essex Association of Local Councils, and will be remembered for her wit at Parish Council meetings as much as her continuous 41 years of involvement. The Parish Council has since co-opted Mr. Paul Edwards and Ms. Jane Williams to bring the Council up to its full complement of nine Members.

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. More immediate notices can be found on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WickhamBishopsParishCouncil/>

A report from the Council highlighting a few matters of interest or concern, and meeting dates and contact details, are included each month in the Parish Magazine.

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 in the library. The dates of these meetings are available on the noticeboards, the website and in the minutes of the monthly meetings.

## AMENITIES REPORT

At the Parish Council's request, in May a handrail was installed along the access ramp to One Stop. In June, the Council obtained 30mph speed limit stickers for residents to apply to their new wheelie bins. These are freely available from the Parish Clerk.

The Parish Council continued to benefit from the voluntary services of Mr. Chris Cooke as Village Tree Warden. Chris has considerable knowledge and advises the Council on proposed works to trees with Protection Orders.

The Parish Council has obtained a Community Initiative Fund grant from Essex County Council (ECC), and has achieved legal completion of a rent-free lease of the neglected air raid shelter within the library grounds. It will now be put to use as a bagged road salt store and a historical relic. All are welcome to help at the 20th May tidy-up day.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In January, ECC provided an electronic timetable to the Witham Road shelter. ECC has also agreed to the repositioning of the Maldon-bound Snows Corner bus stop, due in April. The Parish Council will now look to replace the bench which was damaged beyond repair by an unidentified vehicle.

## PLANNING

Mackmurdo Place, named after the renowned local architect and founder of the Essex Rural Community Council in 1929, is nearing completion. Provided by the modern-day RCCE, the community-led development of affordable housing is available to those with a local connection.

The Parish Council and its Planning Committee have considered sixty-five applications in the last year, which is similar to the previous year, showing the continued interest by developers in Wickham Bishops in particular.

The size of applications has increased, with five-dwelling proposals and greater not uncommon. The largest, being the Church Road proposal for 52 dwellings, was generally agreed to be greatly inappropriate, and the Parish Council hired a Chartered Town Planner as a planning consultant to fight the unwelcome January appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. When the appeal was eventually allowed, the Parish Council and many residents decided to fight on. With the support of Maldon District Council (MDC), District Councillors Henry Bass and Mark Durham and Witham MP the Rt Hon. Priti Patel, the villagers and the Parish Council pledged funds and sent sufficient letters and emails of complaint, to bring about a case for a judicial review. Residents and Councillors are delighted that, at the time of writing, the Secretary of State and the applicant have decided not to defend the case. Whilst the application may come back in a revised form, the development for now will not go ahead as planned.

In the interim, MDC's Local Development Plan progresses closer to approval, with the crucial 'five-year land supply' requirement gaining material weight. It is hoped that the LDP will be approved before any further speculative proposals are tabled.

Residents can keep abreast of planning applications and decisions in the village by opting to receive the Parish Council's regular planning email. Please email the Parish Clerk [info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](mailto:info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org) to be added to the list.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Parish Council is leading the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan and has established a Steering Group, led by Ms. Jane Williams and with Councillor and community representatives. Once adopted, the District Council and Planning Inspectorate must consider the Plan when determining planning applications in Wickham Bishops. It is the best method we can have to shape our village and prevent inappropriate development. More volunteers will be needed to complete the Plan, for example, in delivering surveys, obtaining information and analysing and presenting data — please contact the Parish Clerk if you can spare any time.

As part of gathering the evidence for the proposed planning policies, a Housing Needs Survey was carried out in December— thank you to all residents who responded. The 37% return was high, giving the results real strength. The data and conclusions can be found on the Parish Council's website. Work on the draft plan continues with obtaining data from national and local organisations in the areas of environment, infrastructure, housing, facilities and traffic.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

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.

## TRAFFIC CALMING

Despite pressure from the Parish Council, some of the traffic calming measures expected during the year were not delivered by the Local Highways Panel. The extension of the 30mph zone in Church Road to Mope Lane should have been implemented by the end of March; no explanation has yet been given as to why this has not happened. It is now four years since this scheme was first agreed and two years since it was approved for delivery.

The feasibility study into road narrowing at The Street, promised following the petition to the Local Highways Panel last year, has been deferred because of other priorities elsewhere. A request for a 40mph buffer zone in Witham Road from Mope Lane to the start of the 30mph zone is still under consideration by Essex Highways. Your Parish Council will be taking up with senior management this continual failure to deliver on agreed undertakings.

Two Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) were delivered, albeit not the promised type with smiley and grumpy faces. New poles have been put in at The Street, Beacon Hill and Kelvedon Road and the two existing poles at Birch Rise and Maypole Road will be re-used. The two SIDs are currently positioned at The Street and Kelvedon Road and Essex Highways has yet to advise on the process for rotating them from site to site.

## SPEEDWATCH

A total of 92 checks were carried out during the year, with 1106 vehicles reported for excess speed, averaging over 12 vehicles per session. The increase over last year is mainly due to the team's concentration on the busier sites where speed was clearly a problem.

Following concerns expressed by residents, two sites, in Tiptree Road and Great Totham Road, were requested and have been recently approved for checks. The Parish Council is grateful to the Speedwatch volunteers, some of whom have now served for over three years. More volunteers would be welcomed.

## POLICING

Policing cutbacks have resulted in limited contact between the Parish Council and the Police Service. A presentation to Parish and Town Clerks highlighted the move from proactive to reactive policing methods, driven by the cuts, but did also demonstrate the Police Service's awareness and prioritisation of rural crime.

Your District Councillors remain in contact with your local District Commander and will also take up any issues that are reported to the Parish Council.



## DID YOU KNOW?

You can report highway and footpath problems directly to ECC on its website: <http://www.essexhighways.org/transport-and-roads.aspx> or via telephone to 0345 603 7631. It is recommended you also report them to the Parish Clerk.

## HIGHWAYS REPORT

A number of potholes and drainage problems were reported to Essex County Council. The manhole cover at the corner of Wellands and Witham Road, which had been lifting in heavy rains, has now been repaired and a blocked ditch in Church Road has been added to County Highways' jetting programme. ECC has unfortunately prioritised other activities over several remaining problem areas.

The difficult parking situation at the junction of The Street and Great Totham Road was improved following intervention from the District Council's Enforcement team.

BLUE MILLS BRIDGE

## PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

A number of footpaths (FP) were walked to ensure they have not been obstructed, and to check for encroaching undergrowth and surface issues. FP1 (Mope Lane to Blue Mills bridge) was waterlogged and FP7 (Station Road to Spring Lane) and FP22 (Station Road to Langford Road) were overgrown; the problems were reported and remedial actions agreed with ECC. The re-routing of FP13 across Ballards' field was agreed by the Secretary of State.

## 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 the 2017 village litter pick day. Remember that pink recycling bags are always available at the start of Parish Council meetings, and food waste and recycling bags are free from the library during normal opening times.

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Tree Warden was successful in applying to The Woodland Trust for a large quantity of young trees, for planting around the village and at the BHSA sports ground, to commemorate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Led by the Wickham Bishops Tree Warden and Councillors from Wickham Bishops, volunteers from the Rainbows, Brownies and Beacon Hill Football Club planted all 420 whips, creating an avenue along Rainbow Field and a new copse.

Disappointingly, dog fouling continued to be a nuisance and the District Council's Dog Warden was called in three times to patrol the affected areas. **Please** dog owners, eliminate this problem. There are ample dog waste bins around the village.



## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

If you have a few hours to spare why not join the Speedwatch team, or get involved with the Neighbourhood Plan? Perhaps you would like to coordinate the Neighbourhood Watch?

## YOUTH

The youth club is held every other Friday at St Bartholomew's Church Hall during term time. It is now a parent-run club and has not required financial support from the Parish Council this year. Grants continue to be available to community-led groups on application to the Parish Council.

The biennial village picnic which had been rescheduled due to poor weather, was held on May Day, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016 at the BHSA's Great Totham Road sports ground. A children's fancy dress competition with a 'Royal' theme was held, with informal games and the services of a caricaturist.

## WELFARE

Wickham Bishops Parish Council is nominated as a rescue co-ordinator in the event of a local emergency. The Parish Council works 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.

## FINANCE

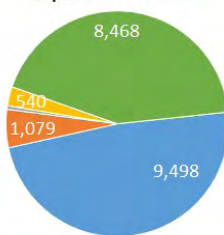
### Accounting Statement 2016-17

|                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Opening Balance      | 16,462          |
| Precept & LCTS Grant | 12,000          |
| Other Receipts       | 5,569           |
| Total Expenditure    | -19,685         |
| Closing Balance      | <u>£ 14,346</u> |

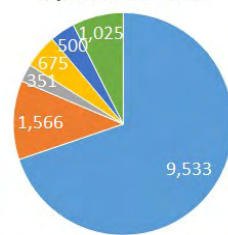
### Accounting Statement 2015-16

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

Expenditure 2016-17



Expenditure 2015-16



- Subscriptions, Printing & Administration
- Neighbourhood Watch & Speedwatch
- Youth Group
- Street Furniture & Grass Cutting
- Audit & Insurance
- Parish Projects

## 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*