

WONERSH PARISH COUNCIL

Record of the Annual Parish Assembly, held on Thursday 24th April 2008 at 7.30pm at Wonersh Memorial Hall, Wonersh

Present at the meeting were Mr R Bawden, Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr M Harding and Mrs C Howard, Vice-Chairmen of the Parish Council, and Parish Councillors Mr N Goodchild, Mrs L Healy, Mr N Morris, Mrs A Powell-Evans, Mr A Shareef.

In attendance, County Councillors A Povey and D Munro, John Hilden Acting Local Highways Manager SCC, Mrs Frere, Chairman of Wonersh United Charities, Mr P Enticknap, Wonersh Village Shop Committee, Sarah Henderson, Countryside Ranger Waverley Borough Council, Clerk of the Council, Mrs J Cadman, Mr A Golden Surrey Advertiser, and 46 members of the electorate.

- Welcome** The Chairman welcomed all present and explained that this meeting is a legal requirement and is chaired by the Parish Council chairman, but is a meeting of the electorate rather than a Parish Council meeting and is the opportunity for residents to raise and discuss local matters.

The Chairman introduced the agenda and the speakers for the evening and drew the meeting's attention to spare copies of the Annual Newsletter, should anyone not have received one.
- Apologies** were received from Mrs Anita Morris
- Report on the Activities of the Parish Council:** The Chairman reported that during the year councillors had responded to several consultations, had attended meetings on subjects that had a local impact, and had also responded to a number of planning applications. This was all done on a voluntary basis and the Chairman thanked his fellow councillors for all their work.

At this meeting last year the Chairman had commended the Village Design Statement to the electorate. It had been found to be an extremely useful document for the Parish Council, as it set a framework. He suggested that if a resident is considering putting in a planning application, or is affected by an application submitted by a neighbour, that they refer to the Statement.

One issue that returned to the Parish Council again and again was that of traffic. There was now a working group in each of the three villages, headed by Mr Nick Morris in Blackheath, Mr Athar Shareef in Shamley Green and Mr David Beevers in Wonersh. The Parish Council was also working on some ideas for the village gateways for Wonersh, based on those in Blackheath, which were quite effective.

The Parish Council had created a Portfolio for Youth for the first time this year, which had been taken up by Nick Goodchild. He was currently looking at ideas. The Chairman asked for volunteers for resurrect the playground committee, as some of the equipment would need replacing before long.

The Chairman wished to pay tribute to Trevor Barlow, who had been Parish Clerk for 17 years and who had died in September of the previous year. The Chairman wished to record the Parish Council's thanks for all the work he had done.
- Wonersh United Charities:** Mrs Frere advised that the accounts for the last financial year were available at this meeting for inspection. They had been approved and submitted to the Charities Commission. The number of beneficiaries had not changed very much, with 37 in July and 39 at the end of the year. It had been agreed last year to consolidate three smaller gifts of £15 into one of £45, in addition to the Christmas gift.

The charity had said goodbye to Brian Ives, and would shortly be saying goodbye to Richard Bawden, who was standing down as Chairman of the Parish Council

The charities' main income came from the Smith Charity, and they were also grateful to the Parish Council for their contribution.

Mrs Frere thanked everyone for all the support they had given the Charities this year.

5. **Wonersh Village Stores Committee:** Mr Enticknap advised that the Gallery was again empty. The man who had taken it on had been obliged to concentrate on his shop in London and could not get down here. A new tenant was sought. The next repayment of the loan was being made, slightly earlier than was expected last year, as there were funds available at present. This might be the last time that payment would be made on time, unless a new tenant could be found for the Gallery. The changes in Corporation Tax would also have an effect, as would the necessity of doing some repairs to the roof of the Gallery, which was leaking. Copies of the accounts and up to date cash flow were available for inspection. A member of the electorate asked if the accounts could be placed on the Parish web site. The Chairman agreed that this would be discussed.
6. **Commons Audit:** Over the last two years Sarah Henderson had recruited volunteers to make an audit of common land in Shamley Green and Wonersh. The final report was now coming together and action plans will follow. Sarah had started her audit of commons in the Borough with Cranleigh, and most of the work was completed there. The draft documents for Wonersh and Shamley Green are undergoing work on presentation. From this draft she had been able to put together a list of work to be done. She advised that common land ownership in Wonersh was divided equally between the Parish Council and the Borough Council, but that most of the work required in Wonersh was on parish land. Work had been undertaken in Shamley Green last year and outstanding work would be completed by April of 2009.
7. **Cllr David Munro: Surrey County Councillor Executive Member for Transport:** Cllr Munro considered this an ideal opportunity for him to set what was happening in Highways in context, and for people to have the opportunity to ask questions. He was joined tonight by John Hilden, Acting Local Highways Manager, as Simon Hall had been co-opted to the Olympics.

Surrey County Council is one of the largest authorities in the country. The Highways Authority covers a considerable number of functions, foremost of which is roads. Surrey is one of the most beautiful parts of the country, the gateway to London, the airports and the south coast. Its inhabitants were generally fairly well off, owning more cars than almost anywhere else in the world. The roads got twice the traffic of the rest of the country, but the Authority only received approximately half the money allocated elsewhere. Therefore, the Authority had to use what money it had to the best of its ability, particularly since recently it had suffered an 8% decrease in its budget, resulting in the need to take some difficult decisions.

A network of Community Highway Officers (CHOs) had been set up. Daniel Payne had just been appointed in this area. A series of community gangs had been instituted, which were regularly rotated around the Borough and who carried out engineering work from lists given to them by local councillors and by officers. The plan was to make the service more responsive, recognising that up to now action had been less than might have been expected.

David Munro referred to LORD (Lorries off Rural Detours), which was an organisation of Parish Councils, but which the County were heavily involved in as well. Largely due to Satnav, some of which systems did not differentiate between roads that were fit for purpose and those that were not, lorries were using roads that were highly inappropriate for them, and the organisation was trying to get road haulage companies to work with them to rectify this. At present it was compiling lists of roads that are inappropriate, with the intention of giving these lists to satnav companies and Ordnance Survey. Cllr Munro asked people to report lorries that were using inappropriate roads to their companies, or to the Parish Council who would act on their behalf.

As a Borough Councillor, David Munro was pleased to advise that Waverley had pioneered a Community Infrastructure Fund. This involved applying a levy to each new house or development throughout the Borough, of between £10,000 to £15,000 per house, which would be paid by the developer, and which would be used for projects such as building schools, local facilities, playgrounds and transport projects.

Cllr Munro noted that the Community Speed Watch in Shamley Green was very successful and said that he would like to see many more community speed watch projects.

Questions

1. *Paul Rollison: a lot of roads in this parish needed resurfacing, particularly the road through Wonersh.. Would it be possible to have it done, and for the new surface to be the type that made less noise, as had been laid in Shalford.* Cllr Munro recognised the county wide problem of deteriorating roads and advised that County intended to put more money into resurfacing, but had to deal with roads in the order of priority. The road through Wonersh was not currently a priority, but when it did finally come to the top of the list, this proposal would be taken on board. Not all roads would have quiet surfacing, as it was very expensive, but roads through villages would take priority.
2. For the last 15 to 20 years the people in Shamley Green have been trying to get something done about the potholes on the road from Wonersh through to Cranleigh. Although they were filled in on a regular basis, the repairs did not last very long. Mr Hilden responded that he hoped that people would see things happening more quickly now. He acknowledged that there was a problem with the quality of reinstatements and Highways were working with the contractor to ensure that these were improved. When emergency potholes are reported, they are filled in within 24 hours, and the standard of repair was often not good. He asked that people use the pothole reporting line, as it was very helpful to have potholes reported quickly. Or even better, use the website and report electronically.
3. Peter Betlam: Most children seemed to go to school by car, as the roads were not safe for them to cycle, and not enough was done to make safe cycling lanes. Cllr Munro acknowledged that this was the case, whilst pointing out that cars are a great convenience. SCC is committed to giving people a choice of transport, for instance walking buses, and provided cycle lanes wherever possible, as well as the 'safer routes to schools' programme. There were the Pegasus, state of the art, buses, with a person on board whose job it was to look after the children. These were very expensive to run.
4. The telephone number of the Community Highway Officer was requested. Cllr Munro advised that it was a policy decision not to give out telephone numbers of officers, as the danger was that they would spend too much time on the telephone rather than out on the job. He requested that residents use the contact centre, on 08456 009 009. If the call was made out of hours, the caller would be redirected to the emergency depot. The website is surreycc.gov.uk
5. James Thompson: a cyclist, asked why the footpath between Wonersh and Shamley Green had not been reinstated. Mr Holden had discussed this with the Rights of Way officer and understood that this had been looked at for some time, and that a scheme had been worked up, but that it was too expensive to implement.

6. Michael Band: SCC had done some fine work repairing potholes, but no-one dealt with the drains, so water floods down the roads and washes out the filling. There was a need for departments to work together. Mr Hilden agreed that when the community gangs were next in the area they would pay attention to the drains.
7. Athar Shareef: When utility companies were filling in after doing some work, they sometimes did a good job and sometimes a poor one. He knew of a couple of situations where the work had been so bad that it needed doing again within a couple of days. He asked if Highways could put pressure on them to do work of a better quality. Cllr Munro confirmed that SCC had the statutory power to force utilities to do the work correctly, and perhaps needed to use this power more often. Part of SCC's improvement programme was to work with utilities to ensure that they left the highway in the condition that they found it. Mr Hilden advised that the CHOs would be instructed to inspect the work done by utility companies. Sometimes a company would do a temporary repair if they intended to return to the site to complete work on a problem. This also applied if the work was done out of hours.
8. SCC's views on 20mph speed restrictions in some areas were sought: Mr Hilden said that the problem would be in enforcing this. In Farnham there was a 20mph limit in one area, but no-one observed it so it was no use at all. He believed that if there were too many areas where the limit was 20mph, it would be ignored. They would be best used outside schools. He also advised that too many vehicle-activated signs could be counter-productive.
9. Nick Goodchild: noted that SCC were talking about repairs rather than resurfacing, and stated that he had no confidence in the authority getting on top of road resurfacing. Cllr Munro advised that it had been estimated that £200 million was needed to bring roads up to a good standard. However, work was starting now on getting on top of the backlog, with £30 million invested in this current year.
10. A resident of Shamley Green complained about the amount of work being done to reinforce the bridges at Elmbridge and Runfold Common. They caused a problem with HGVs which detoured through Shamley Green because the bridges were too narrow, and he believed that they should be demolished completely. Mr Hilden advised that the Downs Link ran under one bridge, and in addition the cost of demolition would be very high.

8. **Parish Matters**

Rev'd Sally Davis, Shamley Green, thanked the Parish Council, the Borough and the County for the responsibility that they carried on the residents' behalf. She recognised that a great deal of hard work had been done over the last year, and that the councillors were committed to the service of their communities.

The Chairman acknowledged that a forum such as this was invaluable for raising issues. He reminded those present that the parish office was open on a Thursday afternoon, and the Parish Council could also be contacted by e-mail and telephone.