

**Spring
2012**



*The Annual
Report of
Wigginton
Parish Council*

The Chairman writes:

Following the departure last year of a number of long-serving councillors I am pleased to report 4 new members have been co-opted as replacements. Contact details, as well as the revised distribution of responsibilities for the full council, are shown on the back page.

The demolition of the dilapidated wooden building previously on the Sports Field advised to you last spring has now taken place. The site has been cleared and is to be re-turfed and some additional provision of amenities to encourage use by the village population is being considered.

As part of this process and in order to get some feed-back from interested users of the Sports-field, enclosed with this newsletter is a questionnaire seeking your views on what, given the strictly limited financial resources, should be done with the restored site and whether you feel that, in addition to the options listed, other priorities should be addressed.

Your council would appreciate it if you could return the completed questionnaire with your comments using the collection box locations listed by 20th May at the latest.

Parish Council

Your council always welcomes comments from people in the village on what issues are important to them. These comments can either be made at the Annual Parish Meeting or at any of our monthly meetings. The Council meets in the Village Hall at 8 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month, except August. Members of the parish, and their comments, are always welcome. This year's Annual Parish Meeting will take place in the Village Hall at 8 p.m. on Tuesday 29th May. This is your opportunity to question your Council on any aspect of their work, to make suggestions and raise any other matters of local interest.

If you also have access to the internet and would be happy to use it to consult the Council's web-site for local information and to view and respond, anonymously if preferred, to on-line surveys from your Council, it would be greatly appreciated if you could add "internet available" to your questionnaire. Coinciding with the up-grading by BT which will shortly offer superfast broadband to the majority of village homes we propose to up-date the website, www.wiggintonparish.co.uk on a regular basis to provide information on Council activities.

The internet, if it is available to a majority of people within the village, could provide a rapid, economical alternative to the relatively slow and expensive consultation questionnaire we are now conducting concerning options for re-development of the Sports Field Facilities. A good indication of the potential greater use of the internet will come from a comparison of the percentage response to the current questionnaire and the number of people confirming their ability and willingness to use the internet to receive information and respond on issues raised.

Steve Cannon
Chairman 2011/12

The Village Hall

Did you know?

The Village Hall is not actually owned by the village; it is leased to us by the Church and managed by a charity run by group of volunteers. Without this management committee to organise and administer the hall it will have to be returned to the Church to do with as they see fit. Having served on the Management Committee for the best part of a generation a majority of the current volunteers are thinking about stepping down and if we do not get "new blood" then the future of the hall is uncertain.

If you don't want to see the hall disappear, as so many of our focal points have already done, then we urge you to get involved. This is not a huge commitment, consisting mainly of a meeting on the 4th Tuesday of each month (except August and December) that lasts about an hour. If you are interested, or would like more information, please contact Ray Desborough on 01442 825756 or Barbara Burch on 01442 891729.

**The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on
Tuesday 29th May at 8.00pm in the Large
Hall of the Village Hall.**

We hope you will be able to attend.

**The Annual Meeting of the Village Hall
Management Committee will take place in
the Small Hall 7.30pm on the same day.**



The Wigginton Oddy – Spring 2012

The Annual Report of Your Parish Council

The Open Space

The Sports Field

We have seen a few changes in our 'open space' areas since our last newsletter. The most visible change is the demolition of the 'hut' and we urge you to complete and return the questionnaire so we can move forward with the site.

Also, in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee this year we have planted a Jubilee Wood. This can be found to the left of the playing field on Chesham Road. The trees have been chosen to attract more wildlife to the area and we hope, given time, that the space will establish well and be enjoyed by all. The council would like to extend their thanks to the children of the Pre-School and St Bartholomew's for helping us plant all 105 trees and also our thanks go to Jamie Burch for all his help on this project.

The Childrens' Play Area

Unfortunately this year we have had to undertake repairs to both the play equipment and the Jubilee bench on the sports field, as a result of vandalism. Whilst these repairs are now complete we are left with graffiti on the play equipment that we are struggling to remove. If anyone knows how this can be removed effectively we would be grateful for your advice.

New Facilities

So looking to the future we will be installing a new bench in the playground area, the old 'hut' site will be regenerated following the results of the consultation and we will continue to maintain our open spaces so that the community can enjoy them throughout the year.

Planning and the Built Environment

As well as working to preserve the appearance and tranquillity of our AONB environment the Council seeks, through its involvement in the planning process, to ensure that, as far as possible, any new development accords with planning regulations and is consistent with preserving our privileged physical environment.

In its reaction to planning proposals the Council considers the compatibility of the new proposal with its existing surrounding built environment and its location within our rural surroundings. The Council can support or object to any proposal, provided the Council's reaction is based on identified planning reasons, or offer no comment, if a proposal is considered un-contentious.

The Council's views are sent to Dacorum Borough Council with whom the final decision rests via a DBC planning official or in controversial cases by a reference to the DBC Development Control Committee (DCC). A conflict of opinion between the Planning Officer and your Council automatically triggers referral to the DCC with the opportunity for public participation.

Planning and the Built Environment...continued

The Parish Council was consulted on nineteen planning applications during the year from March 2011 to the end of February 2012, a considerable reduction in number compared to the thirty three applications considered in the same period the previous year.

Eight of the applications were in the "householder permission" category, to carry out work such as extensions, alterations or garages. The Parish Council either supported or made no objection to four of these, which were subsequently granted by DBC. Objections were raised to three proposals which the Parish Council thought were overly large and/or inappropriate in the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Two of these were refused by DBC, while a third was granted after consideration by DBC's Development Control Committee. At the time of writing, one recent application, on which the Parish Council made no comment, is still under consideration by DBC.

There were four applications for works to trees. In each case the Parish Council recommended seeking the views of the of DBC's Woodlands Officer. Three of these "TPO" applications were granted and one refused by DBC.

The Parish Council either supported or made no comment on the remaining applications. Two proposals covered the relocation of a mobile phone mast, and an extension to a garage workshop. Others involving the addition of a car port to a new-build home for which permission had already been granted, erection of a timber agricultural building, change of use of premises at Champneys and installation of a replacement field gate were all granted by DBC, while an application to demolish an existing house and build a bigger one was refused.

The Dept. of Communities and Local Government has proposed a number of changes to the planning process under the Localism Act which are still being defined but the overall objective is to simplify and reduce the volume of planning regulations and create a presumption in favour of "sustainable development". Any development requiring planning permission must however still be in accordance with the Local Plan established by Dacorum BC, and within the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations June 4th

Friends of Wigginton Invite you all to a **Diamond Jubilee celebration party** at the Sports Field Wigginton on June 4th. Featuring: Cricket, Children's Games for all ages, Tug O' War, Side Stalls, Beer Tent, Food and Refreshments.

The Finale

Wigginton's Official Diamond Jubilee Beacon.

Look out for posters and leaflets for more information nearer the time.

Transportation

Aircraft Noise

The new draft air traffic control regulations from NATS are still awaited, probably now in 2013. Meanwhile plans for a major increase in passenger movements via Luton airport are being developed by the operators. The LLATVC Committee is monitoring the proposals and keeps potentially affected councils advised. If your Council becomes aware of any threat to our relatively tranquil environment it will always seek to avoid or minimise it.

Road Traffic

Traffic speed monitoring by the police continues, but the time dedicated to this is limited by conflicting calls on police resources. Speed control is a matter of concern to most local areas, especially in rural villages which lie on commuter routes within the area. Wigginton is getting a fair share of the police time allocated to speed control and this work has certainly raised awareness among motorists of the increasing likelihood that excessive speed will result in a fine and possibly also a licence endorsement.

For several years now Wigginton has been fortunate in avoiding serious or fatal injuries arising from road accidents. Unfortunately there was a recent fatal accident which occurred on a derestricted area of the A4251 close to the junction with Hemp Lane and New Ground Road when sadly a young man from Tring was killed after his car left the road. The cause of the accident has not yet been made public.

The general condition of our highways has improved over the last 2 years. Maintenance such as repairs and drain clearance can always be reported to Herts Highways on 03001234047 or on-line to www.hertsdirect.org/highway faults. For removal of fly-tipped waste please contact Dacorum on 01442 228000. Requests for action are usually resolved quickly or placed in the on-going programme of repairs.

Bus Service

Despite the withdrawal of funding by Dacorum BC in 2010, Herts County Council continues to fund the 387 bus service providing a vital link to Tring, schools and county and national bus and rail services. This service has been recognised by Herts C.C. as being of high social importance and is especially valuable for non-car users who should make use of it whenever possible to confirm its value to them.

Herts County Council have, however, proposed a charge for school transport payable where pupils live within 3 miles safe walking distance of their nearest state school. Your Council has registered a request to recognise that there is no safe pedestrian access for Wigginton children to Tring School and that they should therefore be exempted from charges for bus services to and from this school when the charges apply, expected to be from 1st September 2012

Community Transport

Dacorum Community Action group are currently investigating the need for supplementary transport, in addition to what public transport is available, within Wigginton and the rural villages of Dacorum. Your Council will be kept informed of this work and any aspects of it which could benefit our community will receive our support. Please see the note below.



Community Wheels, a service of Community Action Dacorum, are a registered charity based in Hemel Hempstead. They operate a fleet of ten minibuses, which are hired out to community groups based in or serving Dacorum. They also offer a social car scheme with volunteers using their own cars to help individuals to access a range of locations, such as Hospital, GPs, hairdressers, shops, friends etc. We are undertaking a comprehensive exercise to understand the needs in relation to public/community transport. Community transport is a wide range of transport solutions developed to support local residents un-met local transport needs. It can provide the connectivity needed to get to a range of destinations helping to develop sustainable communities and contributing to social inclusion.

Community Wheels continued...

The research will focus on the Market Towns and rural areas of Dacorum; therefore we would like to speak to the residents and community groups in Wigginton to understand what transport services are being used, the support available within the community to assist someone isolated due to not having their own transport and what the community transport needs are.

As a Council for Voluntary Service, Community Action Dacorum believes in bringing people together to achieve more in their communities and improve quality of life. Public transport cannot be easily accessed by everyone and there is a role community transport can provide to ensure people do not become isolated.

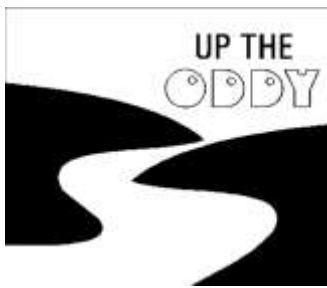
If you belong to a community group such as a Residents Association, Day Centre, Club for Older People, Scouts, Sports Clubs or are generally concerned with transport and the needs of your community we want to hear from you. You can either complete a survey questionnaire online via www.communityactiondacorum.org.uk or contact Deborah Fogden, Community Transport Researcher on 01442 253935 or email Deborah@communityactiondacorum.org.uk to arrange a meeting or chat. We look forward to hearing your views.

Financial Matters

As in previous years this piece is written before the end of the financial year (on 31st March) and before the accounts for the year have been drawn up. However, we can be certain of most of the numbers, especially those on the Parish Council's income and we will be fairly close on the expenditure figures. In any event, copies of the unaudited accounts will be available at the Parish Meeting on Tuesday 29th May, when we will be able to discuss any issues surrounding the Parish Council's finances. As usual, the accounts will be available for discussion in a meeting of the Parish Council later in the year when we receive the auditor's report. The audited accounts will also be displayed on the Parish Notice Board.

The Parish Council's income for the financial year ending 31st March 2012 will be just over £15,688, very close to budget. A break-down of the figures shows that the precept of £8,500, set by the Parish Council for the current year (2011/2012), was £109 higher than that set in 2010/11, although this was still £185 lower than the 2008/2009 precept. The Council also received £6,455 from Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) under the concurrent services scheme (the same as the previous year) and an additional grant of £638 towards the cost of the Village Warden service (reduced by 25% compared to the previous year).

.... Continued on page 4.



The Wigginton Oddy

Spring 2012



Financial Matters continued from page 3.

Until recently hiring out the sports field and pavilion contributed significantly to the Council's income (about £500 a year). The pavilion building was demolished in July 2011 and the demise of the soccer club meant that no income was expected from the sports field, although in fact a donation of £50 was received following the use of the field by a cycle club. Bank interest is expected to be even lower than anticipated: only £22 (compared with almost £500 in 2008/2009). As things stand, forecast expenditure for the year will be just over £17,000, some £700 over budget.

As expected the largest category of expenditure is that on open-spaces, at just over £5,900, inclusive of the £400 grant to the Parochial Church Council toward the cost of maintaining the churchyard. This is however £1,500 more than had been anticipated in the budget. As well as the usual routine expenditure on grounds maintenance, it has been necessary to top up the play area bark (last done five years ago) at a cost of nearly £1,200 and a new bench was also purchased for the play area. Nearly £1,000 needed to be spent on necessary renovation and repairs to the village entrance signs, the Millennium bench and the finger sign post at the crossroads. This overspend was to some extent countered by reductions in expenditure in other budget areas. Demolition of the pavilion meant that expenditure on halls was considerably reduced, with an overall saving of £250 (the cost of the actual demolition was met from an earmarked reserve), while the removal of the need to insure the building, combined with a change of provider, resulted in an overall reduction of £180 in the Council's insurance costs. It is always difficult accurately to predict the cost of street lighting as the County Council revises costs in October, however an under spend of some £130 is anticipated this year (£2,270 compared to £2,400). Elsewhere in the Council's budget, we anticipate a saving of about £190 on the budgets for administration and audit and salary provision, which in total will be about £5,700. The budget for the Village Warden was reduced last year from £850 to £750 in the current year but is expected to come in at about £820.

The Council has agreed an expenditure budget of £16,830 for the new financial year of 2012/13, compared with the 2011/12 provision of £16,310. At £6,075, the largest category of expenditure is again likely to be open spaces. The diseased horse chestnut trees at the Recreation Ground on Vicarage Road are due for re-inspection (in 2010 the combined cost of the inspection and resulting tree work was £1,850). The open space total does however also include £800 for improvement work to footpaths, which should be met in full by a grant under the Parish Paths Partnership scheme.

It was necessary for the Council to earmark £10,000 from its limited reserves for the demolition of the pavilion and re-instatement of the ground. The remaining reserves are too low to cover any major unexpected event and the Council will seek to re-build these reserves, over the next few years, using the precept and good financial management of the annual budget.

The Council has again requested a concurrent services grant from the Borough Council of £6,450 and a contribution of £638 towards the cost of the Village Warden service. Apart from the Parish Paths Partnership grant mentioned above, income from bank deposits and any other source is likely to be extremely low and only £28 has been assumed in the budget.

The Parish Council has agreed to set a precept of £8,925 for 2012/13 (2011/2012, £8,500). The Council estimates that the corresponding Parish levy on a "Band D" property holder will be £12.92, an increase of forty-eight pence (3.9 %) compared to 2011/12.

Wigginton Parish Council 2011-2012

Chairman	Steve Cannon
Planning	David Davies
Budget and finance	Andrew Smith
Highways and transport	Glen Adams
Leisure and recreation	Barbara Burch
Health and education	Mike Siveyer

Parish Clerk	Claire Crouchley (01442 863781)
email	wpc@crouchleyp.freemove.co.uk
Village Warden	Mike Sear

Wigginton PC web site	www.wiggintonparish.co.uk
Dacorum BC web site	www.dacorum.gov.uk

Wigginton Poors Allotment Charity - Enquiries about the Charity and the availability of allotments and related matters to Mrs Crouchley - see above.

Hardings Wood Charity manages almost six hectares of mixed woodland with an entrance off Crawleys Lane. The Charity's web site is www.hardingswood.org.uk.