

**Spring
2013**



**The WIGGINTON
ODDY**

*The Annual
Report of
Wigginton
Parish Council*

The Chairman writes:

During the last year, following one resignation, we had two volunteers who were co-opted which has brought the Council back up to strength. Our thanks go to Barbara Burch for her excellent work on the Council. The resulting full membership of the Council and contact details are shown on the back page. The redevelopment of the Sports Field, including a new area of woodland to commemorate the 2012 Jubilee and the addition of new seating, is in progress to encourage leisure use of this area and results from the consultation which accompanied last year's edition of the Oddy newsletter.

The main source of information of the priorities of the community for further new works and facilities are the comments made at the Annual Parish Meeting or at any of our monthly meetings in the Village Hall at 8 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of every month, except August, at which all members of the Parish are welcome.

This year's Annual Parish Meeting will be at 8 p.m. on April 30th in the Village Hall to which you are cordially invited. This is your opportunity to question your council on any aspect of their work to make suggestions and raise other matters of local interest.

We did consider last year if the internet was a viable means of consulting the parish on important matters in the future but, due to a low response to our survey, we have concluded that, should we have something important that we need to communicate, then a newsletter drop is the most effective method. We shall continue to monitor this as it does seem clear that on-line information and means of communication between social, neighbourhood and other common interest groups is increasingly being used and relied on as a source of useful current information. An example is the e-mail group news@newgrapevine.co.uk which is of special interest to those living in hilltop villages. Those of you with internet access can also always consult the Parish council web-site on www.wiggintonhertspc.org.uk

The Village Hall

The Village Hall, leased to the Parish by the Church, continues to provide a greatly valued and used social and activity centre for the community. Following last year's appeal new support has come forward to replace some previously long-serving volunteers, who have retired from managing and administering the facilities on offer.

New government legislation has introduced a right to register key community assets to ensure that these cannot be disposed of without first being offered to the Parish Council or other community organizations via an option to purchase. We have applied to Dacorum to register the Village Hall, Church, Chapel and the Greyhound as key community assets which, if accepted, should ensure some time to help the local interests examine any scheme which might be able to safeguard that asset for the community.

Steve Cannon - Chairman 2012/13

The Open Space

The Sports field

The Jubilee Wood project seems to have established itself well, with children in the village that helped to plant it keeping a keen interest in its continued well-being. We made an additional feature to the area with some big lumps of pine logs, some of which were cut to form seating. These made a stark contrast to the young tree plants and generally are being enjoyed by children as a climbing and jumping attraction. We have now installed the Jubilee Wood plaque on a small oak post in front of the new tree line to commemorate the planting last year.

Just before the beginning of the season we played host to the Chesham football club who used the pitch to play two friendly games, as theirs was being used by the cricket club. They came along and white lined the pitch and supplied the goal netting. The Parish benefited by making a small charge, which went into the general fund.

The Parish Council also gave permission for the Chiltern Hundreds Cycle run to use the village in June as a stop off point during its 110 mile route through the Chilterns. Over 1400 entries took part and many took rest and refreshment at the closed off sports field.

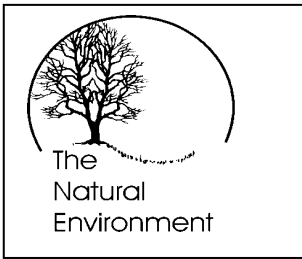
June also saw the Friends of Wigginton organising the Queens Jubilee celebrations for the village, terminating with the lighting of a Beacon. They also, with the agreement of the WPC, put on a spectacular bonfire and firework display in November.

Following the survey last year one of the main requests was for more seating on the field, so we have now purchased, soon to be, installed 3 picnic benches on the site of the old pavilion. These are manufactured from recycled material and fixed with earth anchors. A new bench will also be placed on the footpath between Wick Road and Chesham Road and the warden has installed a disclaimer notice at the car park entrance, to ensure limited liability to the Council.

**The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on
Tuesday 30th April 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 at 7.30pm on the same day.**



The Open Space..continued

The Children’s Play Area

Following the annual RoSPA inspection a number of issues were rectified. Our attention was drawn to the wood chip landing areas which needed to be raked over. The grounds maintenance contractor has now been made aware and will be doing this 3 times a year.

A new bench has been placed inside the play area, and we have replaced the No Dog sign. Further work needs to be carried out as a result of graffiti and the gate had to be re-fitted to ensure safe access.

The Recreation Ground

Our on-going maintenance programme of the trees bordering the recreation field in Vicarage Road requires some to be cut back and trimmed. The general condition is good and we intend to plant up replacements where some have had to be cut down.

Planning and 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.

The Parish Council was consulted on twenty seven planning applications during the year from March 2012 to the end of February 2013 (one of which was withdrawn by the applicant), compared to the nineteen applications considered in the same period the previous year. In two cases the sites concerned were just outside the Parish boundary.

Many of the applications were in the “householder permission” category (FHA), to carry out work such as extensions, alterations or garages. The Parish Council either supported or made no objection to ten such applications, seven of which were subsequently granted, one was refused and the remainder are still under consideration by DBC. One application that the Council objected to because it felt that the proposed development was too large and not in keeping with nearby properties was granted by DBC after being considered by its Development Control Committee (DCC).

Planning and the Built Environment.. .continued

In one case that was refused by DBC, the Parish Council supported the principle of the extension but had reservations about a proposed change to the access to the property.

The Parish Council also raised objections to another proposal for a large extension with a change to the access to the property, which was refused by DBC (although an application for an amended scheme has yet to be determined).

There was one application for felling trees, which the Parish Council supported, provided DBC’s Woodlands Officer confirmed that this was necessary. This application was granted by DBC.

The Parish Council either supported or made no comment on the remaining applications. Three proposals to demolish existing buildings and build replacement dwellings were all granted by DBC. A proposal for conversion of existing buildings to residential use was referred to the DCC, which recommended approval subject to the signing of a s106 agreement. Other applications to build stables and associated structures, to erect a stock fence and to provide an access track were also granted.

The efforts of the Government via the Dept. of Communities and Local Govt. to simplify the planning controls continue, aimed at increasing the speed and reducing the cost of planning application proposals. The aim is to establish a presumption in favour of “sustainable development “within the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) and in keeping, in our case, with the Dacorum Local Plan on which public consultation has now been completed.

Our Local Plan covering housing development in Dacorum until 2031 identifies the areas where this will be concentrated and confirms general protection for green belt areas and specific limits on development in small villages within the Green belt with added protection for AONB areas. The main objective of the local plan is to facilitate economic growth and employment whilst providing a steady increase in new housing (an average of 430 p.a. net additional dwellings over the period to 2031) but protecting the green belt and reserved areas including AONB. The overwhelming majority of new housing is planned for land to the east of Hemel Hempstead with just over 10% around Berkhamsted and less than 5% west of Tring.

The Localism Act 2011 is designed also to encourage local input to planning the environment and offers the opportunity for neighbourhood groups to promote projects of local value but these must be in accordance with the principles of the National (NPPF) and local Dacorum plan. Any new housing development in green belt and AONB areas is strictly limited and must include a proportion of “affordable housing” for people with a local connection. An example of this is the recent development in Fieldway of 2 flats, one of which has been made available for shared ownership operated on behalf of Dacorum BC, with priority given to applicants with a local village connection .

Transportation

Aircraft Noise

New draft air traffic control regulations are still, after more than two years delay, awaited and will probably not be forthcoming until the future of airports in the area, and in particular Heathrow, becomes clearer. Meanwhile no change is expected in the prevailing rules governing over-flight of our area. However Luton Borough Council have now received a planning application to allow a further major increase in passenger flights from the airport, which is also owned by them.

Your council, in support of a proposal by the helpful and vigilant LLATVC monitoring committee, have recommended to the DCLG that these proposals should be the subject of a national planning inspection as a major strategic infrastructure project rather than be left as a local decision for Luton Borough Council as owners of the airport

We will continue our support for LLATVC's valuable work in protecting our environment and will always seek to avoid or minimize any perceived threat to its relative tranquillity.

Road Traffic

Speed control is a major factor contributing to the safety of road users and police monitoring, with the ability to impose immediate fines for recorded excessive speeding, is seen as the most effective means of securing compliance. Your council will continue to try to ensure that Wigginton gets a fair share of the limited police effort available for this work. Happily no major road accident has been recorded in the last year.

Given the periodic severity of recent wintry weather, efforts to ensure major access routes have remained open have been successful. However the after-effects of the harsh weather have meant that further repair /resurfacing work is still needed and this continues. Necessary work can be requested by reporting problems to Herts Highways by 'phone to 03001234047 or on-line to www.hertsdirect.org/faultreporting. This is a re-launched service now designed to give improved response and includes smart-phone compatibility and the option to see and receive updates on faults that have already been reported. Fly tipping of rubbish on roads or verges is still an occasional problem but if reported to Dacorum B.C. by 'phone on 01442-228000 is usually dealt with promptly.

Bus Service

The 387 bus service provides a vital link with Tring and other public transport and schools, for non-car users. Problems particularly for Beech Park residents caused by the previous operators and their driver's lack of consideration have been resolved by a welcome change of operator which it is hoped will lead to increased use of their service which has been recognized and funded by Herts CC as having "high social importance". The more it is used the more secure will be the future continuance of this service.

Wigginton Pools Allotment Charity

These allotments are located to the left of Chesham Road by the chicane. The plots are available to members of the community for gardening use. At present up to 3 plots are available to new applicants at annual rentals between £20&£ 22 p.a. . Interested applicants should contact Claire Crouchley on 01442 863781

Financial Matters

This piece is written before the end of the financial year (March 31st) and before the Parish Council accounts have been finalised. The Parish Council income figures are however largely confirmed and the projected expenditure numbers given here will be pretty close to actual year-end figures.

Copies of the unaudited accounts will be available at the Annual Parish Council meeting on April 30th. Audited accounts will be displayed on the Parish notice board for 14 days and available to view for 20 days.

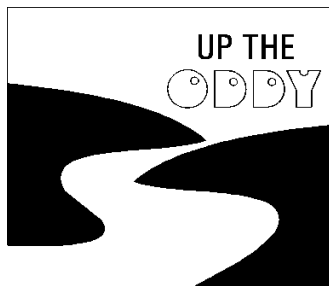
Income for Wigginton Parish Council (WPC) for the financial year ending 31st March 2013 will be £17,940 - almost £1,100 above the £16,841 budget. The excess income comprises an unbudgeted £1,000 Diamond Jubilee Grant from Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) and £100 from unbudgeted events run by Chesham Town Football Club and Chiltern Hundred Cyclesportive for use of the football pitch and car park respectively. The main components of income were £6,450 (38% of budgeted income) from DBC under the Concurrent Services Scheme (kept constant for the last 3 years), an additional grant (£638) for the services of the village warden and the precept of £8,925 (53% of budgeted income) set by the Parish Council. The Council is also expected to receive some £16 in interest this year. WPC were also successful in applying for a Parish Paths Partnership grant of £800 for identified repairs to local footpaths.

Projected expenditure for the financial year ending March 31st 2013 is expected to come in at around £16,600 – some £1,340 (7%) below our income for the year. The largest element of our budgeted expenditure remains that spent on Open Spaces at £6,075, which represents almost 35% of our costs. This includes a grant of £400 towards the cost of maintaining the Churchyard. Routine maintenance and on-going repairs to the play area, sports field and surrounding trees makes up the bulk of this expenditure.

However, WPC was also able to support a variety of activities and projects in the village this year. Reseeding of the site of the old pavilion site (£780) has been successful and the council has used the balance from the previously earmarked £10,000 for the old pavilion demolition (2011/12) to order three picnic tables/benches (£1,197) to be fixed in this area, early summer 2013. This was in response to a survey sent to every house in the village, which showed that seating/picnic tables were the most popular suggestion for use of this area. Additionally, a new bench has been fitted in the play area.

A grant of £1,000 from DBC allowed your Parish Council to support a number of events and projects held to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

. Continued on page 4.



Financial Matters continued from page 3

Together with the Woodland Trust, the Parish Council supported the planting of a 'Jubilee Wood' by the children of St. Bart's School and Wigginton Pre-school, at the edge of the sports field. The Council funded a plaque to commemorate the event and the new wood has been registered in the Royal Record of Trees, planted for the Diamond Jubilee. This grant also supported the highly successful and well attended 'Jubilee Fun Day' on the 4th June, organised by the Friends of Wigginton. The day ended with the lighting of the Wigginton Beacon in the Chiltern's highest village, one of a series across the country to mark the day. The Parish Council has also made a grant of £100 to Wigginton History Society to produce a framed photographic montage of people and groups in the village at the time of the Queen's Jubilee. Once complete, this will be put up in the village hall.

Work is to begin shortly to resurface village footpath FP 80 and a new bench (£307) is to be installed next to footpath 9. The £800 cost of these improvements will be fully met by a grant from the Parish Paths Partnership (PPP). WPC has also applied for and been granted a PPP grant of £1,000 for the next financial year 2013/14 to refurbish the steps leading to footpath 12 from Hemp Lane.

We are pleased to report that we were able to have Dacorum Borough Council install, at no charge to the Parish, a new waste bin and bench at the Church crossroads, to replace items that were in a very poor state of repair.

Other items of expenditure are expected to come in under budget, with a saving of over £400 in the costs of administration, audit and salaries, and the cost of the village warden. Street lighting costs account for £2,455, or 14% of our budgeted expenditure in 2012/13. The yearly costs are difficult to accurately predict, as the County Council revise costs mid-way through the year, but invoices are not available until towards the end of the financial year – however, an under spend of close to £400 is expected this year. The Parish Council has debated switching off selected street lights, during the early hours of the morning, but this was rejected on the basis that the potential savings did not justify the reduction in amenity and public safety.

The £10,000 earmarked from the Parish Council's limited reserves, to demolish the old pavilion and reinstate the ground, led to a considerable reduction in our reserves to meet a future major unexpected and unbudgeted event. The year-end reserves for 2012/13 are expected to be boosted by savings achieved this financial year and are projected to be approximately £8,000 at year end, which represents 49% of our anticipated annual expenditure for next year.

The Parish Council has agreed an expenditure budget of £17,060 for the next financial year 2013/14. The salary, administration, audit and village warden budgets have been kept constant. The open spaces budget is again expected to be the largest item of expenditure and is the only 2013/14 budget showing an increase over last year. At £7,361, it is 43% of next year's budgeted total expenditure.

The Parish Council has requested a Concurrent Services grant from DBC of £6,450 for financial year 2013/14 and a contribution of £638 towards the village warden costs – both of these figures show no increase over the last financial year.

The Parish Council has agreed to set a precept of £8,945 for 2013/14, which will show no increase over last year. The Council estimates that the corresponding levy on a 'Band D' property holder will be £12.93 for the next financial year – a 0% increase over this year.

Wigginton Parish Council 2012-2013

Chairman	Steve Cannon
Planning	David Davies
Budget and finance	Andrew Smith
Highways and transport	Glen Adams
Leisure and recreation	
Health and education	Mike Siveyer
New Councillors	Debbie Meech & Steve Walker
<i>(Responsibilities may be reallocated at the May meeting)</i>	
Parish Clerk	Claire Crouchley (01442 863781)
email	wpc@crouchleyp.freeserve.co.uk
Village Warden	Mike Sear

----- Useful Links -----

- Wigginton PC web site www.wiggintonhertspc.org.uk
- Dacorum BC web site www.dacorum.gov.uk
- Village Information: www.wiggintonvillage.co.uk

Wigginton Poores 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.