

**Spring
2015**



**The WIGGINTON
ODDY**

*The Annual
Report of
Wigginton
Parish Council*

The year in summary.

As you are probably aware, the most controversial planning application, I think, that we have ever seen, for a large house on Geary's Hill, was refused but the applicant went to appeal. Thankfully this was finally dismissed by the HM Planning Inspectorate in July. This hopefully will be the end of it but as the applicant still owns the land who knows what may be submitted in the future.

The table tennis table was installed on the sports field in early June. We were able to secure this second hand table via a grant from The Dacorum Community Safety Partnership, together with DBC. We shall monitor how well it is used and perhaps look to fund a new one if there is sufficient use made of it. Hopefully it provides some interest to some of the older children.

The survey that we distributed with the Oddy last year provided an opportunity for residents to let the Parish Council know what they might wish us to do on their behalf. We only saw about a 10% response rate which, while disappointing, still gave us some ideas for the future. We broke the suggestions into "Things we can change/move", "Things we can recommend", "Things we can't change", "Need more data", "Don't need to do anything", "Needing clarification" and "Items to include in the Oddy Newsletter". Please see the note on this later in The Oddy.

One of the suggestions was for some outdoor gym equipment and we are actively looking at equipment and funding for this. We also had a request from some young lads in the Village about providing skateboarding facilities. We had looked at this in the past but the costs were prohibitive. We have looked again at this and while we hope to be able to do something in the future, the lads with the idea might be too old to want to use them by then. It was great though to have the suggestions from such a young group and I hope we can support them before too long.

The Parish Council web-site on www.wiggintonhertspc.org.uk and the 2 official notice boards continue to be the main site for distributing information from the Parish Council. Increasingly the internet in general and the web pages offered by the Streetclub are a more efficient way to push information out there for those who are signed up but we realise that not everyone uses the internet.

Triggered by the sudden and tragic death in January of Jez Collier there was a concerted effort on the part of his friends to mark his passing by obtaining a defibrillator, in his memory, to help in cases of massive heart attacks. This has now been acquired and will shortly be positioned on the outside wall of the Greyhound.

We are hoping to arrange a litter picking event in the future. Dacorum will loan the necessary grabbers and supply bags and arrange collection. It is a sad fact of life that due to the lack of consideration of others it is unlikely that this will be a one-off event.

As a reminder, if you own hedgerows that border a path or footpath could you please try to ensure that the hedge and brambles do not impede the pedestrians.

The Annual Parish Meeting is at 8p.m. on 20th May in the Village Hall at which all residents are welcome. This will provide an opportunity for members of the Parish to question your council on any aspect of their work and to make suggestions or raise other matters of local interest. Please remember that we welcome residents to every Parish Council meeting not just the Annual Parish Meeting.

Finally our thanks and best wishes from all on the Council to David Davies who retires from the Council in May.

The Open Space

The Sports Field

The Parish Council continue to fund the maintenance of the football pitch and surrounding open areas. The pitch is available for rental but we now have regular users, Berkhamsted Raiders, who are happy to take the pitch for the season and pay the rental in advance.

Occasional use may still be possible and enquiries whether for football or other open air activities should be made to the Parish Clerk.

The Children's Play Area

Maintenance and safety inspection of the installed equipment accounts for a significant share of the Parish's spending but is rewarded by frequent use of the facilities with the youngest children supervised by their parents. Due to some vandalism and also the age of the fencing it is currently in a poor state of repair. We are urgently looking to put new fences in.

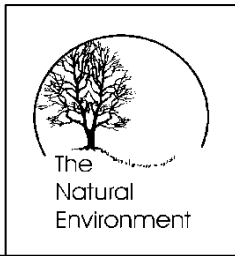
The Recreation Ground

The on-going maintenance programme for this central facility off Vicarage Road covers the chestnut trees lining the area and the goal posts and periodic ground clearance. A recent inspection of the trees by an arboriculturist has shown some trees are coping with the fungal disease that they are infected with. Others however are coping less well. Some pruning and felling will be necessary. We will soon be looking at replacing some of the gaps with trees less prone to the disease.

**The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on
Wednesday 20th 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 at 7.30pm on the same day.**



The Open Space..continued

Footpaths

The wet weather over the past couple of years has highlighted the need for repair and maintenance to try to keep the paths usable and safe. Work has been done on the Ridgeway path by using some of the grant available through the Parish Paths Partnership. We also aim to have some work done to improve the footpath opposite “The Brewhouse” on Chesham Road. The first part of this path can be a quagmire.

Notice Boards

Both the main notice board by the Village Hall and the one by the Play Area have now been refurbished and strengthened. These are good places to publicise items of local interest. We would ask that only drawing pins are used to fix things to these notice boards, however you may need to use the longer pins to ensure the notices stay in when it is windy.

Planning and the Built Environment

Our parish lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the heart of the Chiltern Hills and our priorities in considering planning applications are based on support for proposals that respect the existing built and landscape environment and planning regulations, but which allow occupants to improve the use and amenity of their own property without prejudice to that of others. Proposals that do not meet these criteria are generally opposed with the reasons for this given to the Dacorum local authority.

A notable example of a proposal, which was opposed, occurred when the owner of a newly acquired piece of land adjoining Geary's Hill applied for permission to build a new dwelling in open country and full view of many areas of the village.

Our objection to this proposal was supported by Dacorum; however, the owners decided a year later to appeal against our decision. This appeal was then referred to the National Planning Inspector, who, following an on-site inspection, finally endorsed our opposition to a totally inappropriate proposal in the summer of 2014. We hope that developers and their advisers who are tempted to challenge local decisions designed to protect and preserve our privileged environment will take note.

The Parish Council was consulted by Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) on thirty seven planning applications during the year from March 2014 to the end of February 2015 (one of which was withdrawn by the applicant), compared to the thirty two considered in the same period the previous year.

There were thirteen applications involving fairly major works, erection of new structures or change of use (designated FUL), one of which was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant). The Parish Council supported or made no comment on nine of these applications designated FUL, five of which were granted by DBC, one was refused and three have yet to be determined.

Objection was made by the Parish Council to three such applications: for the demolition of a bungalow and its replacement by the construction of a large new house; for the construction of a completely new house following the demolition of a storage building; and for the change of use of a piece of amenity land to become part of a residential garden. These three cases were referred to the DBC's Development Control Committee, which decided to grant approval.

Planning and the Built Environment.. .continued

Fifteen of the applications were in the “householder planning consent” category (FHA), to carry out work such as extensions, alterations or garages for which planning permission was required. The Parish Council either supported or made no objection to all but one such application, eleven of which were subsequently granted, (the remainder are still under consideration by DBC at the time of writing).

Two applications were of the type LDP (certificate of lawful use for development for proposed use or development i.e. where the applicant was asking DBC for a formal view on whether planning permission would be needed or not). DBC concluded that planning permission was not required for one of these (the other is still being considered by DBC). There were also two applications of the type ROC (for the removal or variation of conditions attached when planning permission was granted), both of which were granted by DBC.

There were five applications for works to trees (TPO). The Parish Council's usual comment in these cases is to defer to the opinion of DBC's Woodlands Officer. Three of these applications were granted and one was refused (one is still under consideration by DBC).

Village Survey Report

THANK YOU - for replying to the Village Survey 2014
10% of villagers replied to the survey last year which, in marketing terms, is a great response.

With regard to Communication, many had not heard of the council's web site nor the village Facebook page but they have now and the majority wanted a local email group to share village news and what's on. We have set up www.streetclub.co.uk to help villagers share news and at the time of going to press there were 94 members - do join to find out What's On In Wigginton.

Under Road Safety, speeding was understandably your biggest concern and consequently we have asked the police to do more regular speed checks. On police advice we have written to some local businesses asking them to inform their staff of the village speed requirements. There has been recent discussion over poor visibility due to parking by the junction of Wick and Chesham roads.

The Highways Department with Nick Hollinghurst (Herts CC) will be reviewing appropriate action in coming weeks. The Environment questions raised a number of issues, mainly potholes and fly-tipping. The quickest method to resolve these issues is for **anyone to report a fault on** www.fixmystreet.co.uk.

The majority said they used the village footpaths and this year we managed to obtain funding to improve the Ridgeway path toward the A41. We have asked if this year the path behind the Tring Park houses towards Wick Road where it dips could be improved and we will also try and obtain funding for the path opposite the Vicarage on Chesham Road.

Village Survey report continued.

Villagers asked if there could be more events in the village. This year the annual Firework display was an even bigger success - thank you to the Friends of Wigginton, they also organised the Big Picnic Lunch in June attended by more than 250 people. The Film Society was also established this year, running regular films in the village hall which helps with the hall finances and our hats go off to them.

Over 30% said they would like to use outdoor gym equipment on the sports field, we are currently choosing the best gym equipment company and hoping to raise the funds for 5 pieces of equipment which will be placed near the picnic benches. We have already received a positive response for some of the funds.

With regard to the Elderly and the Young, you particularly asked us to ensure the **Bus service** was maintained. It will remain during the day and we have asked for the Tring station bus to be kept running in the early evening in order that public transport is available to commuters.

There were mixed views over affordable housing, certainly it would depend where it was proposed to build but there are currently no plans to further develop the village.

Transportation

Aircraft Noise

Since the last change in air traffic flight paths the volume of air traffic noise does seem to be significantly reduced over the village. We continue to maintain support for the London Luton Airport Town & Villages Committee who keep a close eye and informs all the communities of changes that Luton Airport may want to make that could impact us.

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. We 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.

Bus Service

The 387 bus service provides a vital link with Tring and other public transport and schools, for non-car users. There is currently a consultation on reducing the service such that the last bus would leave Tring station at 7.30pm. We have asked that this be extended until after 8pm allowing cheap day ticket holders to get the first of the off-peak trains. (Cheap day tickets are not valid leaving Euston between 16.50 and 19.01).

Wigginton Pools Allotment Charity

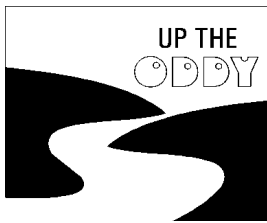
These allotments are located to the left of Chesham Road by the chicane. The plots are available to members of the community for gardening use. At present several plots are available to new applicants at rentals starting at just £22 p.a.. Interested applicants should contact Claire Crouchley on 01442 863781 or claire@crouchleyp.freeserve.co.uk

Police & Crime Report prepared by Martin Leadbitter, one of our Police Community Support Officers for Wigginton who will be covering for Lorraine Horsted with Nigel Waldron while she is on maternity leave. Martin has been a PCSO for almost 6 years and has always worked in Tring. Nigel has only been a PCSO for a few months also only working in Tring. Martin and Nigel are happy to be contacted: PCSO Martin Leadbitter 6112

martin.leadbitter@herts.pnn.police.uk and PCSO Nigel Waldron 6277 nigel.waldron@herts.pnn.police.uk. Tring Police Station, 63 High Street, Tring, Herts, HP23 4AB. Office tel: 01442 271 226. In 2014 the number of burglaries increased slightly to 10, 4 of which were one afternoon along with 3 in Aldbury. A male was later arrested in connection with these. The church was hit again and a male was later arrested in connection with this. Another male was also arrested in relation to one other burglary. Covert operations (cameras, plain clothed patrols etc.) and overt operations (high visibility patrols and ANPR - Automatic Number Plate Reader - operations) were used by police to combat crime and led to one of the arrests. 2014 saw a reduction in the amount of thefts from motor vehicles to only 2. Incidents of theft have reduced in 2014 to only 3 in the village when compared with 8 in 2013, however Champneys have reported 7 incidents over the period relating to theft of burglary. Other offences include only one drugs possession, one drunk in charge and one criminal damage where all offenders were arrested. Overall this sees a reduction in crime in Wigginton in 2014, however below are a number of tips to help combat burglary and vehicle crime.

Following these five basic tips to combat burglary can really help to secure your home making it less appealing to thieves. 1). Make a habit of checking that ground floor windows and doors are closed and locked when you leave the house or go to bed. Upstairs windows should be locked when the house is unoccupied. PVCu doors must be locked by lifting the handle and using the key to ensure all the security features are in place. 2). Car and house keys should be kept out of sight in a safe place. Don't leave them on display on window sills, in porches, hallways or kitchens. 3). Secure your rear garden by shutting and locking any gates. Burglars can use garden tools to break in, so make sure you securely lock away any tools after use. 4). Why not be a good neighbour - if they are out, help deter burglars and give their home the lived-in look by putting away their emptied rubbish bins. You can also help by keeping a look out for unusual callers in your neighbourhood, and call the police if you see anyone acting suspiciously. Keep a pen and some paper handy. The car number you jot down may be just what the police need to catch a burglar. 5). Why not sign up to Neighbourhood Watch? Or sign up to: www.owl.co.uk, or call the police non-emergency number on 101. And here are a few tips to help avoid becoming a victim of vehicle crime

1) It might sound obvious, but make sure you lock the doors and shut the windows and sunroof whenever you leave your vehicle unattended. 2) Remove your Sat Nav and its holder, and wipe away any suction marks as these could suggest to a potential thief that a Sat Nav is stored in your vehicle. 3) Never leave any valuables in your vehicle - not even in the glove-box or boot - and keep ALL other possessions out of sight. Even if you know that there is nothing valuable in your coat pocket or bag left on the back seat, a thief may try their luck. 4) Use an approved steering lock or gear clamp, and remember to set your immobiliser and alarm if you have them. 5) Register your stereo, laptop, Sat Nav and any other property on the free online property database at www.immobilise.com. It only takes a few minutes and could help police trace your property if it's lost or stolen.



Financial Matters

This piece is written before the end of our financial year (March 31st) and before the Parish Council accounts have been finalised. However Wigginton Parish Council's income figures are largely confirmed and the projected expenditure costs given here will be very close to actual year-end figures.

Copies of the unaudited accounts will be available at the Annual Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 20th May 2015. Audited accounts will be displayed on the Parish notice board for 14 days and available to view for 20 days.

Income for the 2014/15 financial year was £18,238, some £1,067 above that budgeted. The additional income came from two sources. Firstly a grant from the 'Chiltern Society Don Millar Fund' – this enabled us to put up a new Parish Council Notice Board next to the playground on the sports field, to replace the existing one, which was damaged and showing signs of wood rot. Secondly an additional £560 of unbudgeted income was raised from the season fee for regular use of the football pitch, by the Berkhamsted Raiders CFC, together with the use of the car park by the Chiltern Hundred Cyclosporive group. We are pleased that the football club has taken a highly responsible attitude to the care of the pitch and the clearing of litter after the games. Additionally the Parish Council successfully applied for another Parish Paths Partnership (PPP) grant of £1,000 for repairs to local footpaths. This year this grant was used, together with help from Dacorum Borough Council (DBC), to refurbish the Ridgeway between 'The Twist' and the A41 footbridge, which is used by many walkers, DoE groups from local schools and also many local residents to walk to Tring Railway Station and back each day.

Our Income is made up primarily of a grant from Dacorum Borough Council (41% of our budgeted income) and the local village council tax (the Precept), which represents just over 50% of our income budget. The grant from DBC has remained constant for the past 4 years as part of their drive to responsibly control the overall council tax budget. Your parish council has actively pursued grant income over the past few years to fund a number of improvement projects in our village. Projected expenditure for the 2014/15 financial year is expected to come in around £16,812 some £359 under that budgeted. This saving, together with the unbudgeted income mentioned earlier, will enable us to replace the fencing and gate around the playground area to ensure the ongoing safety of children playing there. This work is expected to begin in late Spring this year and of necessity will involve a temporary closure of this area whilst the work is carried out. Major items of our expenditure include the routine maintenance and improvement of our open spaces, namely the Sports Field and Recreation Ground (36%), local Street Lighting in the village (16%) and the funding of our Village Warden (4%). We also give a grant of £450 to help fund the upkeep of the Churchyard, which is also used by many community groups and local societies.

Your Parish Council continues to rigorously review all costs on an on-going basis for potential savings and efficiencies, and consistently over the past years has made savings in insurance costs, administration & audit. This year these costs have come in a combined £691 behind budget and saved some 4% of our total budgeted expenditure.

The Parish Council has agreed an expenditure budget of £17,437 for the next financial year 2015/16. This includes a provision for a PPP grant of £1000 for remedial work on FP80 and to resurface the start of the footpath FP7 where it meets Chesham Road (requested by residents).

Many of our budgets have been kept constant or reduced this year, particularly our 'Open Spaces' budget which benefits from the fact that the next inspection of the Parish Council's trees is not due until late 2016.

In May this year, concurrent with the General Election there will need to be a Parish Council election in Wigginton. Although some costs can be shared on the day, it is anticipated that your council will need to budget £500 for an uncontested election, or £2,300 if enough people come forward from the village for the election to be contested. We have included £500 in the 2015/16 budget and will use our reserves to cover the additional £1,800 if needed.

Wigginton Parish Council has requested a Concurrent Services grant of £6,450 from DBC and a contribution of £660 towards the costs of the Village Warden. We have agreed to set a Precept of £9,063 for 2015/16 which we estimate, at this stage, will represent an annual charge of £13.49 per Band D household (2.6% increase). If the one-off cost of the Parish Council election is removed, the Precept actually declines by 1.9% year on year

Wigginton Parish Council 2015-2016

- Chairman
- Planning
- Budget and finance
- Footpaths
- Leisure and recreation
- Communication/Police Liaison
- (Responsibilities will be allocated at the May meeting)*
- Parish Clerk** Claire Crouchley (01442 863781)
- email** wpc@crouchleyp.freereserve.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
- Join our village email group:** www.streetclub.co.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.