

West Ashton Parish Council

Chairman's Annual Report May 2015/2016

The Parish Council was returned on 18th May 2014

The members are as follows:

Chairman	Richard Covington
Vice Chairman	Tim Le Mare
Councillors	Margaret Workman Pauline Hume (rejoined in 2016)
Clerk	Nicola Duke
Resignations	Ian Robertson Angeline Nicholson (from March 2014) Denise Butterworth (from September 2015) Dave Richardson resigned because he was moving from the village to Westbury

Prospective Councillor

We now have vacancies for four parish councillors.

The Parish

At the time of writing there are 285 properties and 547 Electors in the West Ashton Parish. The Precept and grant for 2016/2017 is £6,507.55 and £20.95 respectively...

Activities

The Council's activities cover a variety of issues that arise but in the main are about keeping a watchful eye in the Parish. This includes engaging with other organisations to provide and improve services in the Parish. Typically these are:

- Highway maintenance on the roads in and around the village
- The Parish Steward scheme is to be reinstated now that Wiltshire Council has contracted with Ringway for Highway services.
- Community Speed Watch (CSW) continues with a new three week share with Bratton. There are four members of the team. The existing councillors and Carol Hackett. A Speed Indicator Device (SID) is to be shared with other parishes but the precise details are as yet to be agreed.
- The West Ashton Magazine editorial team has changed and is in the process of redesigning the magazine format and presentation of articles.

It is with great thanks to the team that kept the magazine going for the past twelve years; Jo Watkins (Editor) and the person who got news and articles from many villagers; Paul Workman

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for his contribution to articles and views on keeping a balance in the articles published; Geoff Watkins with his persuasion got the sponsorship necessary to keep the magazine free; Peter Hughes who patiently and diligently worked in the background and published the magazine and without whom we would not have had the finished product.

- West Ashton Website has had a makeover this year thanks to Tim Le Mare and now looks much more professional and provides more information about the parish.
- Meetings:
 - Parish Council Liaison Group – WAPC has taken responsibility for these meeting and Nikki, Parish Clerk has kindly agreed to minute these minutes as well.
 - Neighbourhood Policing Team
 - Area Board
 - Community Area Transport Group (CATG) – WAPC has been successful in its applications for grants towards traffic calming with the potential for a further substantive grant from CATG. The traffic calming is specifically in Bratton Road where we are seeing an increase in traffic volumes and speed. The options are for raise pillows or pads at the Bratton end of the village and near the village hall and white fencing either side of the road at the Bratton end of the village. Sadly the different schemes will cost in the order of £26,000. Matched funding from CATG / Area Board is £8,000 plus a potential £6,000 substantive grant, which still leave WAPC to find £12,000. This project is one of the reasons why the precept was raised this year so that this priority issue can be addressed.
 - Planning Committees
 - Western Area
 - There has been a lot of activity this year in Planning
The land behind Bratton Road has now been sold and partitioned.
Two new houses, the builder of one was involved with the above land purchase. The other house is still under construction despite being opposed by WAPC and refused by the Western Planning Committee. It was however approved by the Inspector, which clearly ignored any views by local residents.
 - Planning
 - The more recently application for the Travellers site on the A350 has also been refused by the Case Officer and is now subject to Appeal along with the preceding Enforcement Notice.
 - Further festival events are being planned on Grange Farm fields, which WAPC has little power to u=influence decisions for the benefit of the community.
 - Other includes
 - Wind Farm – With the latest change in central government this appears to be very unlikely to be resurrected in the near future.
 - Fracking and the potential harm it could cause in the area now the latest environmental concern
 - Network Against Wiltshire Sprawl has been wound up
 - White Horse Alliance (WHA) still meets regularly to discuss development issues

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Matters of Interest

1. Core Strategy

This is Wiltshire Council's strategy for development in the County to 2026 was finally signed off in January 2015. Although the gypsy – Traveller site provision has yet to be completed. We already see this lengthy tome being tinkered with to allow more housing provision and it would appear a significant number is earmarked for Trowbridge.

2. Wind Farm

The inspector struck out the safeguard provided by separation distances and we are yet to see any additional guidance proposed by Wiltshire Council. One crumb of comfort is that the planning application for a single turbine at Thoulstone has been refused. Of course the applicant can still go to appeal but it is good news for now.

3. Community Speed Watch

Community Speed Watch (CSW) is continuing, with sessions every four weeks approx. It is fair to say that there has been a reduction in the number of vehicles exceeding the 30 mph limit. When he is able to join one of the sessions the local community policeman has issued tickets, a surprising £100 fine and three points on the licence. However there is still a 'hardcore' that seem to think the speed limit only applies to others. To address this we are exploring traffic calming options, both around the school and at the Bratton end of the village

4. Recreation Area

The recreation area is in reasonably good shape, play equipment is used and trees planted to provide a hedge around the whole area. A new gate at the end of the recreation area has been installed for entry from East Town.

Maintenance of the ground is ongoing, and the monies invested are providing more than adequate income to cover the cost, and the surplus could be made available for any further capital expenditure.

5. Miscellaneous Planning Applications

There have been a variety of planning applications for extensions to property in the parish, and whilst the Parish Council doesn't have to make the final decision, it does raise issues and concerns and submits responses to Wiltshire Council.

There are four applications to hold festivals / music events in 2016 and would appear the licences for 'Temporary Event Notices' have been granted by Wiltshire Council.

6. Highways

The agreed 40 mph on the A350 across the Traffic lights has been implemented but again there are those that ignore both the limit and requirement stop at a red traffic light.

The roundabout on the C49 joining the Eastern Distributor Road finally has street lighting but alas no sign of the distributor road being open, which is conditional on the number of houses built at Castle Mead (and now the Hilperton Gap road, which is due to open in August). Does make one wonder how the house building numbers are going to be achieved in the Core Strategy timescale i.e. to 2026?

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Finances for 2015/2016 (see last page for more detail)

<u>Income in 2015/2016</u>	£7,527.00
<u>Expenditure in 2014/2015</u>	£5,149.00
<u>Reserves</u>	
Held in reserve for the Recreation Area (including £50k investment)	£58,719.74
The Village Magazine	£1,255.22
Contribution to electronic speed indicators	£1,000.00

Thank you

I wish to thank all Councillors and Villagers who have helped me in my role as Chairman in 2015/16. In particular I would like to thank:

- Parish Clerk - Nicola Duke who has provided me with invaluable support and guidance in the formal matters of the Parish Council.
- Ian Robertson – it is with sadness that I have to write that Ian resigned abruptly in January after many years serving the community on the Parish Council. Representing the Council at the Peter Crook Charity meetings held in Steeple Ashton.
- Margaret Workman for continuing to organise Community Speed Watch and deal with planning matters along with contribution about school issues and processes.
- Tim Le Mare for his sterling work in updating the website to look much more user friendly and his contribution to maintenance at the recreation area.
- Angeline resigned for personal reasons.
- Horace Prickett, Wiltshire Councillor for helping with the issues confronting the council and calling in to the Western Planning Committee a number of the more planning applications. Most recently the plot of land next to Beechwood that was refused and both occasions by WC's Western Planning committee but was overturned on Appeal by the Inspector, one person. Hard to reconcile with democracy. The good news is that an application to utilise some of the field behind 'Homefield' for garden and recreation purposes was granted permission by the Western Planning Committee.

I would also like to thank all in the parish that by their hard work and dedication provide the essential support and help to ensure West Ashton is a safe and interesting parish in which to live.

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Finance in more Detail

Year to 31 March 2016	
Receipts	
11 Village Magazine	£ 750.00
12 Recreation Area	£ 1,800.00
13 General Interest Income	£ 1.43
14 Other Income	£ -
15 Precept	£ 4,143.62
16 VAT refund	£ -
17 Grants	£ 832.17
Total Income	£ 7,527.22
Payments	
VAT paid on payments	£ 38.48
1 Clerk's Salary	£ 1,913.55
2 Admin Expenses	£ 192.58
3 Audit	£ 50.00
4 Hire of Hall	£ 120.00
5 Insurance	£ 403.97
6 Recreation Area	£ 0.00
7 Training	£ -
8 S137 grants / donations	£ 167.00
9 Subscriptions	£ 265.88
10 Parish Maintenance	£ 852.00
11 Other expenditure	£ 645.00
12 Village Magazine	£ 500.00
13 Web site	£ -
Total Expenditure	£ 5,148.46

Richard Covington
Chairman
May, 2016