

West Ashton Parish Council

Chairman's Annual Report May 2018/2019

The Parish Council for the year was as follows:

The members are as follows:

Chairman	Richard Covington
Vice Chairman	Simon Alford
Councillors	Helen Barrow Steve Molloy Horace Prickett (Wiltshire Council Southwick Division)
Clerk	Nicola Duke
Resignations	Margaret Workman

Prospective Councillor

There is a vacancy for a parish councillor.

The Parish

At the time of writing there are 285 properties and 367 Electors in the West Ashton Parish. The Precept 2018/2019 was £6,842, increasing to £7,350 for 2019/2020 – 5%, which in reality is from 3p to 9p per week.

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:

- Neighbourhood Plan which is ongoing but stalled at the time of writing waiting on decisions by Wiltshire Council regarding the need for an SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)
- Highway maintenance on the roads in and around the village
- The Parish Steward
- Community Speed Watch (CSW).
- West Ashton Magazine
- West Ashton Website
- Meetings:
 - Neighbourhood Policing Team – Welcome to Mellissa Glover who has taken over from Ellie Porter. Ellie has been accepted by Wiltshire Constabulary to become a WPC.
- Area Board
- Community Area Transport Group (CATG)
- Planning Committees - Western Area
- Other includes
 - White Horse Alliance (WHA) still meets regularly to discuss development issues

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Matters of Interest

1. Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is chaired by Richard Covington and supported by Carol Hackett. Members of the group are: Richard Covington, Carol Hackett, Horace Pricket and Ron Pybus.

Thank you very much to everyone who responded to the various community engagement events / consultations and in particular the Site Selection Questionnaire. Together with the Scoping Report – a collection of evidence about our Parish, produced by our Planning Consultant at PlanningStreet and the Steering Group – the information gathered so far has been fed into the creation of:

- Scoping Report
- Site Selection Report
- Draft Consultation Statement
- Draft Neighbourhood Plan

These documents can be found online at

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan contains the following policies:

- Protection of our rural setting from development
- Encouragement of sustainable transport
- Design of any new development
- Employment and rural economy
- Conservation of key Local Green Spaces
- Sustainable Housing
- Infrastructure Priorities
- Bat Protection

There are also a number of informal policies or 'Community Aspirations', a Vision and a set of Objectives.

The Plan no longer allocates housing sites for reasons that will be explained in detail in the Plan documents.

Sadly, the Plan is presently stalled, waiting on decisions by Wiltshire Council regarding the need for an SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). This process is known as Screening. We are expecting a conclusion to this long drawn out process in June.

If Screening indicates the need for HRA and SEA, then these reports will have to be produced by specialist consultants. They are essentially 'health checks' on the plan, ensuring that its impact on the environment will be positive.

After Screening or Screening followed by SEA / HRA if required, our planning consultant will finalise the draft documents. We will then proceed to the formal 'Regulation 14' Consultation. This 6 week consultation will provide local residents and other people/organisations with an interest in the village their first chance to review all the draft Neighbourhood Plan documents based on the earlier research and consultation, and provide a way to make any comments. At this point, a suggested strategy will be clear, but also the evidence and arguments to support it. However, the documents will then be

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amended again to reflect the community's views and suggestions. More information will be provided about this stage of the process, and how to be involved, in good time.

Finally, the Plan will be submitted, Examined by an Independent Examiner and then put back to the community for Referendum. If the majority of the community are in favour, then the Plan will go to Wiltshire Council to be adopted and to sit alongside the Wiltshire Core Strategy. It will provide the village and its environment with strong legal protection for the first time and for years to come.

Information on the Neighbourhood Plan is posted on the West Ashton website:

<http://www.westashton.org.uk/np.html> .

2. Traffic Calming

AS stated last report, the traffic calming measures having been installed does not seem to have achieved the desired effect along Bratton Road. It is also apparent that the Bratton Route is being used as a short cut (Rat Ran) resulting in an increased volume of traffic. The Parish Council has applied to Wiltshire Council for a substantive grant to add further traffic calming measures. This may also include, if approved a 20mph restriction on Bratton Road and potential cooperation with Trowbridge Town Council for the use of a Speed Indicator Device (SID).

3. Parish Boundary Issue.

Rumours abound that Trowbridge Town Council are still intent in subsuming the new Ashton Park development into Trowbridge. However the overall effect has somewhat changed now that the issue of protected Bat species has meant the business parked destined for North Bradley will now be in West Ashton and the corresponding equivalent area of housing development moved to North Bradley.

4. Traveller Site on the A350

This site has continued to expand, an all too typical process of bit by bit expansion, which one might conclude is contrary to the initial permission granted for a single gypsy family out of concern for their blighted situation.

5. Community Speed Watch

Community Speed Watch (CSW) has ceased since Margaret Workman resigned but we are trying to reinstate it but as always we're short of volunteers. The remaining three members of the team hope to start gain but are awaiting return of the kit from Wiltshire Police.

6. Recreation Area

The recreation area is in good shape and has a range of play equipment and appears to be widely used.

7. 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.

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8. Biss Barn Tree Felling –

There was an appeal by the owners who successfully argued that the woodland was in fact a garden and therefore the restocking order withdrawn. The matter has been raised with Wiltshire Council (Legal) and Andrew Murrison MP.

9. Highways

The planned re-routing of the A350 has been held up because of wildlife but there are signs that things might start to happen e.g. soil samples being taken. Therefore the proposed works may finally be started; the forecast is early 2020, the allocated funding has to be used by 2021.

10. West Ashton Magazine (WAM)

The West Ashton Magazine was edited by Jo Watkins who picked up the reigns again in June 2018. The team has kept the magazine going for the past twelve years and continues to be supported by Paul Workman and Tim Le Mare who prepares the copy for printing. Geoff Watkins has continued to secure the sponsorship necessary to keep the magazine free. A particular thank you should go to those who deliver WAM: Carol Hackett, Sylvia Preston, Jean Covington, Geoff Watkins, Paul Workman, Andrew and Lucy.

11. School Footpath

There was a meeting held in the village hall on the 14th May attended by a few villagers. The various options proposed were refined. The original details were circulated by email and the meeting date posted on the notice board. The Wiltshire Council rights of way officer will produce the preferred option. It will then be followed by a formal consultation process.

12. School Parking

Wiltshire Council published a notice to introduce Parking Restrictions on the Bratton Road Monday to Friday between 8am to 5pm. This appears to have been in response to public complaints, which were not made via the Parish Council. The application is to revoke The County of Wiltshire (Parishes of West Wiltshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting, Taxi Rank Clearways and On Street Parking) Consolidation Order 2016, to re-enact it in the above Order 2 and to formalise the School keep clear entrance marking outside of West Ashton C of E School with the restriction No Stopping Mon-Fri 8am-5pm on entrance markings on the north side of Bratton Road – from the eastern boundary of No. 31A Bratton Road for a distance of 36 metres in a south easterly direction.

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Finances for 2018/2019 (see last page 5 more detail)

<u>Income in 2018/2019</u>	£11007.12
<u>Expenditure in 2018/2019</u>	£7973.33
<u>Balance carried forward</u>	£48346.00
<u>Fixed Assets</u>	£18546.00

Thank you

I wish to thank all Councillors and Villagers who have helped me in my role as Chairman in 2017/18. In particular I would like to thank:

- Parish Clerk - Nicola Duke who has provided invaluable support and guidance in the formal matters of the Parish Council. However due to other commitments has decided to leave us after the AGM.
- Margaret Workman for organising the Community Speed Watch and deal with planning matters along with contribution about school issues and processes. Whilst not part of the parish council responsibilities a particular thank you for organising 'Friday Coffee Mornings' in the village, which has been a great success in both meeting villagers and its financial contribution to the village hall funds.
- Tim Le Mare for continuing to publish WAM and support the website.
- Horace Prickett, WAPC and Wiltshire Councillor for helping with the issues confronting the council and calling in, when necessary to the Western Planning Committee a number of the more planning applications. As Community Action Transport Group (CATG) chairmen supporting grant applications.
- 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.
- Geoff Watkins for continuing to secure sponsorship to keep the magazine free.
- Simon Alford for taking on and identifying tasks for the Parish Steward, the scheme that has been reinstated by Wiltshire Council having contracted with Ringway for Highway services. Latterly the installation of the Welcome to West Ashton flower box and for planting the flowers. Thank you Simon Jo Alford
- Thank you to Melissa Glover (PCSO) for taking on the role in West Ashton. However Melissa is now moving on and Matt Tilling, Trowbridge PCSO is taking on the area along with his existing beat in Trowbridge.

Richard Covington
Chairman
May, 2019