

WROTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 05th April 17 AT 8.00pm IN THE WROTHAM PAVILION, HIGH STREET, WROTHAM

Present: Cllr's P Gillin (Chairman), H Rayner, M Coffin, K Denton, C Mills & Mrs B Jackson

In Attendance: Lesley Cox (Clerk), Michael Head Community Warden & 6 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence: Cllr's Beach & Betts

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 06th April 16, approved by the Parish Council on the 04th May 16

3. Opening Address from Cllr P Gillin

Thank you all for attending this evening and I look forward to hearing reports from the various organisations on their activities on behalf of the Community of Wrotham over the previous year.

We have a full agenda, I therefore propose to crack on.

First on the agenda is Community Warden Michael Head, but as Michael isn't here at present we will commence with Friends of Wrotham, Cllr Chris Mills.

4. Reports from various Committees and Organisations:

1. Friends of Wrotham Recreations Ground – Cllr Chris Mills

This year we have had 5 new enthusiastic people join the committee bringing forward good ideas for the event. The weather on the second weekend of June over the last 5 years hasn't been kind to us, resulting in the event only making a modest amount of money. As a consequence, the rally will now only be a 1 day event and will be held on Sunday 2nd July 17. No beer marquee, but instead a Double Decker Bus Bar and less toilets for example, will reduce costs and hopefully bring more money back into the village.

Our flyer has been designed for free by Ravensbourne School students, and continued support from the village is vital to our success. Do come along to help and enjoy the revamped event, with a Country Fayre style market and meet the Hartley Owls.

2. Community Warden – Michael Head

My plan for 2017 is to continue to work in-conjunction with multi-agencies including Circle Housing, St George's Schools Family Liaison Officer and the Police to tackle youth issues, including anti-social behaviour. I am continuing to visit vulnerable people within the village, and am still surprised at the lack of awareness of my role in assisting these individuals. As in 2016, I will again be promoting the role of a Community Warden using local publications. Until the recent issue with the CPA gate closure I had been heartened by how quiet the village had been, even with the lighter evenings.

3. Betenson Trust – Malcolm Wiffen (Report 1)

The trust provides accommodation for twelve residents in the villages of Wrotham, St Mary's Platt and Plaxtol. Each resident pays a modest contribution towards the cost of maintenance and heating. Last year one of the oldest residents in the Wrotham Almshouses had to be transferred to a care home in Essex to be near family. The vacancy was filled by someone with relatives in the village.

There are six co-opted Trustees and three ex-officio members and these are the vicars of Wrotham, St Mary's Platt and Plaxtol. With the retirement of Liz Walker at Platt new incumbents are awaited.

General maintenance has continued this year with all of the bathrooms in the Wrotham Almshouses being upgraded.

The Trust received a very generous donation from Wrotham Fireworks which has helped towards the cost of the bathroom works.

4. Wrotham Bowls Club – Ken Fardell (Report) 2

The club had a good season in 2016, with overall wins a 54.17% improvement on the previous season.

The men's first team maintained a middle position in the First Division, the second team gained promotion to the First Division and our third team narrowly missed promotion to the Second Division, but did gain a semi-final place in the 'Marshall Cup' knockout competition.

The ladies team managed a credible mid-table position in the West Kent League. One of our ladies managed to win the Kent section of the Bowls England national 'over 55's' singles competition and went on to represent Kent.

On a more worrying note we feel that the future of the Club is under threat, bearing in mind the outstanding planning application from the Bull Hotel. This village amenity in its present form was re-established in 1985, although historic maps show, there was a bowls green in existence on this site as far back as 1870.

Wrotham Bowls Club is always looking for new members of all ages, including children of school age, so please remind everyone of our open weekend on 20-21 May from 2.00pm.

We look forward to receiving the continued support of the Parish Council in our efforts to maintain this historic village amenity in perpetuity.

5. Allotment Society – Brian Saunders (Report) 3

At the present time there are 34 plot holders with 5 new tenants during the past year. 3 existing tenants have increased their plot size during the year and have put a great deal of energy and craftsmanship into creating raised beds and fruit cages. We have no vacant plots at this time and 1 person on the waiting list who only wants a small area to cultivate and would be happy to share.

5 plots showed little if any cultivation last year and I wonder whether the clerk would send out a reminder with the renewal invoices.

The summer BBQ was a success and many strong friendships have been made.

On the back of a very strong turnout of volunteers to help with the fireworks bonfire we hope we may be in the running for grant to be used for fertiliser.

There has been no theft or criminal damage reported during the year and following a tool marking morning, most wheelbarrows have been post-coded.

Thanks to the Parish Council supply roadstone for the parking area all the muddy areas caused by the hedge cutter have been covered.

We will be holding our AGM on the 15th April.

6. Borough Councillor – Cllr Martin Coffin

It has been a busy year for T&MBC with major changes to Council Tax billing. A system of fairer charging has been implemented, resulting in the T&MBC element of the tax reducing and the Parish Council's element increasing. In most areas with the exception of Tonbridge this has resulted in only a small overall increase in annual Council Tax charges.

The Leisure Trust is working extremely well, making savings of ½ million in its first year, with more use of the centres at no extra cost and continued investment into the facilities.

The borough refuse contract is under review, currently 41% of plastics are re-cycled but the target is to re-cycle in excess of 50%. Under review as part of the contract negotiations is kerb side collection of both plastics and glass.

In an effort to find the £1.9m lost from Central Government funding, T&MBC are looking into sharing their Revenue & Benefits departments with Gravesham to drive down costs.

On local matters, I put forward the village arguments at Area 2 Planning Committee against the monstrous buildings proposed for St George's Court. T&MBC officers will now continue the fight at appeal.

T&MBC is working on a borough wide Public Space Protection Order that replaces the old individual orders covering dog control and alcohol free spaces. The order is necessary due to new legislation but doesn't actually change anything already in place, but at cost of officer's time and tax payer's money.

WPC has provided details to T&MBC of the areas covered by their individual dog control order for inclusion.

There is a lot of local interest in the emerging new Local Plan, with the proposal put forward for a housing development between Wrotham and Borough Green. T&MBC are currently objectively assessing all proposals and the actual housing requirement for the borough.

Question – John Potts

What is the impact of the fairer charging changes to Council Tax payers in Wrotham?

Answer – Cllr Rayner

For properties rated band G, an increase of around £1.88 a week.

Question – John Potts

With the plastic re-cycling facility now removed from Borough Green, how do we re-cycle plastics?

Answer – Cllr Coffin

Currently the nearest facility is located in the village hall car park in Igtham, but if negotiations progress well, T&MBC are looking at kerbside collection within the next two years.

Question – Brian Saunders

As we have a known problem with alcohol consumption in public areas being associated with anti-social behaviour, could an alcohol ban be incorporated within the proposed Public Space Protection Order

Answer – Cllr Coffin

The area would have to be acknowledged as a problem area by local authorities, and even if included as part of the order, it doesn't come with enforcement.

Question – Brian Saunders

Refuse collection of sealed sharps boxes used to be via the local Doctor's Surgery, but now collection is provided by T&MBC by an individual man in a van, collecting directly from households. Isn't there a more cost-effective way that these collections could be managed?

Answer – Cllr Coffin

I am not in a position to answer this directly, but I will make enquiries

Question – Cllr Rayner

My understanding was that previously T&MBC re-cycled a high percentage of waste, has there been a problem with the waste facility at Allington?

Answer – Cllr Coffin

T&MBC currently re-cycles 90% of all waste through the Allington plant, so no reduction in percentage but doesn't meet current guidelines on certain materials.

Question – Cllr Rayner

Does T&MBC have reservation over the Borough Green Garden 'City' proposal?

Answer – Cllr Coffin

The call for sites brought forward numerous proposal based on 'Developer Aspirations' This particular site was initially rejected by T&MBC as undeliverable, in response the developers have put forward new arguments as to why they believe it is deliverable; T&MBC has to assess these arguments. I would add that the current sites under consideration provide between 30 – 40% more housing than required, as a result a number of sites will fall.

Question – Cllr Gillin

The Local Plan document 'The Way Forward' was published with recommendations and a short listing of sites. Why was this produced without any site analysis?

Answer – Cllr Coffin

T&MBC applied the criteria set out by Central Government, which has resulted in the current listing.

7. Friends of St George's Church – Malcolm Wiffen (Report 4)

The Friends of St George is a Registered Charity the aim of which is to raise funds for the maintenance of the fabric of the Church.

Current membership is 172 plus an additional 13 members who no longer live in the village but continue to pay their subscriptions

The committee arrange a number of fund raising events throughout the year, which in 2016 included a very successful flower festival.

The Friends raised £4,284 in 2015 and £5,784 in 2016.

A major focus for the Church in 2016 was the renewal of the wiring and lighting, to which the Friends were able to provide grants totalling £47,740. The Church separately received grants from Marshall's Charity and the All Churches Trust and well as many local organisations.

The church was placed on the English Heritage Risk list in 2014 and in addition to the works already carried out on the wiring and lighting, work is needed to replace the valley gutters and roof tiling above the Nave.

An award totalling £150,000 has been made by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Phase 2 has just been signed off, with additional grants totalling £30,000 from The Friends of Kent Churches and The Garfield Weston Foundation, work is expected to begin this month. The Friends of St George have pledged £5,000 towards this works.

The committee of The Friends of St George are dedicated, but with an average age of over seventy need to encourage younger people with fresh ideas to join, to provide continuity for the future.

Malcolm Wiffen was thanked for his hard work and significant fund raising achievements.

8. St George's Primary School – David Jones (Report 5)

In the absence of any representative from the club the attached report was read by Brian Saunders.

A vote of thanks was proposed for David Jones and team for running an excellent school for the village.

5. Chairman's Annual Report

Once again thank you all for attending this evening and I would now like to briefly summarise the Parish Council's year.

This is the second year that St George's Court has dominated proceedings. Tonbridge and Malling Planning Committee refused consent for the 60 flats and I am aware that Martin Coffin was pivotal in that decision. So very well done for fighting for our community. That decision is being appealed and the outcome will probably dictate what happens with the covenant. We now have CCTV coverage of the Children's Play Area, the Multicourt and this pavilion, which has resulted in a reduction in anti-social behavior.

The ever-popular Multicourt structure was suffering from rust and general ageing and increasingly being mentioned adversely in our regular safety reports. Over the last 6 months there has been a program of repairs that has included substantial welding, especially around goal mouths and the installation of concrete spurs to support vertical metal posts. At the last inspection we pretty much received a clean sheet, so a big improvement. Due to the sudden illness and subsequent death of his wife, our contractor hasn't progressed the repair to the vandalized flood-lighting. We have however been assured that this work will be undertaken within the next few weeks.

When we built this pavilion, money was extremely tight and the exterior was not fully treated, as we would have wanted. It became blackened by algae and looked distinctly sad. We have completely turned that around with a chemical clean and a micro-porous oil based sealant has been applied to preserve for the future. This summer it will receive a second coat.

Mike Taylor pretty much built the skatepark, which vies with the Children's Play Area in commendable popularity. Wrotham now benefits from extensive youth facilities within our Parish and the Mums that raised the funding for the new play area are to be congratulated. We now manage the maintenance of the skatepark and the Children's Play Area and through an extensive program of refurbishment we are in receipt of some of the best safety reports for some years. We pass on the costs of the works to the Skate Park in an agreed formula between Borough Green, Platt and Wrotham.

Lesley, Harry, Chris and I recently attended a meeting with our new KGG Highways Steward, where Harry made him aware that he is the new Conservative Candidate in the 4th May election. As a result of that meeting road signs and bollards have been cleaned and the broken chevrons on the Whitehill Roundabout, damaged by accident more than a year ago, are about to be repaired.

The Parish Council, in partnership with its very able parishioners, works hard to maintain the quality of life we have come to expect in Wrotham.

Well that's enough from me so thank you all for attending and I hope to see you in the pub shortly, after a final public question time. Any further questions?

6. Public Question Time

Question – Tim Martin

Why is there not one umbrella committee for all the individual community societies in Wrotham.

Answer – Cllr Rayner

WPC as an organisation due to certain constraints would not be able to provide this platform, but is willing to help any of the village societies on capital expenditure projects

Brian Saunders, thanked the Council for all their efforts on behalf of the village.

Cllr Gillin declared the meeting closed at 9.08 pm

.....Chairman

.....Date

THE BETENSON TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT FOR WROTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The Betenson Trust provides accommodation for the benefit of twelve residents in the villages of Wrotham, St. Mary's Platt and Plaxtol. There are four almshouses in each of the villages. Each resident pays a modest contribution towards the cost of maintenance and heating.

Jessie Bodger one of the oldest residents in the Wrotham Almshouses became ill last August and was eventually transferred to a care home in Essex by her grandson, so that she would be nearer to him.

The resultant vacancy was advertised in November in the Village magazines of Wrotham, Platt and Plaxtol, which cover the catchment area for the Almshouses. Five people expressed interest, resulting in three written applications. A lady already living in Wrotham was offered the residency, but at the last minute changed her mind. The vacancy was then filled by someone who has relatives living in Wrotham. One of the applicants was from Dartford, which is outside the area and had no connection with the village.

There are six co-opted Trustees and three ex-officio members and these are the vicars of Wrotham, St. Mary's Platt and Plaxtol. Following the retirement of both Liz Walker at Platt and Tony Powell at Borough Green new incumbents are awaited

General maintenance of the properties has continued this year, but with additional expenditure on the Wrotham bathrooms.

After obtaining four quotations for the work, all of the bathrooms in the Wrotham Almshouses have now been upgraded, with showers replacing the baths.

The weekly contribution paid by the residents remains at £50 but will be kept under review.

The Trust were fortunate to receive a very generous donation from the Fireworks Committee last year which has helped towards the costs of the bathroom works.

Malcolm Wiffen

Trustee

4th April 2017

WROTHAM BOWLS CLUB

April 2017

Report to Wrotham Parish Council

Wrotham Bowls Club had a good season in 2016.

In the mixed friendly fixtures, we won 75% of the home matches and 33% of the away matches, making overall wins 54.17%, an improvement on the previous season.

The men's teams in the Sevenoaks & District League had a good season, with the first team 'Wrotham' maintaining a middle position in the First Division. 'St George's' the second team, gained promotion to the First Division. 'Pilgrims', the third team, narrowly missed promotion to the Second Division, but gained a semi-final place in the Sevenoaks knockout competition called 'The Marshall Cup'.

The ladies team managed a credible mid-table position in the West Kent League despite having only a small pool of players to select from. Our Ladies Captain, Diane Davison, is hoping that she may be able to recruit more ladies to play these matches. One of our ladies managed to win the Kent section of the Bowls England national 'over 55's' singles

competition and went on to represent Kent at Leamington Spa, the home of 'Bowls England'. We hope this will help promote Wrotham Bowls Club's profile in the wider bowling community.

On a more worrying note, we feel that the future of Wrotham Bowls Club is under threat, bearing in mind the outstanding planning application that The Bull Hotel has with the Tonbridge & Malling Council Planning Department. This village amenity in its present form was re-established on an existing green (see the planning application dated 1985) and, as historic maps show, there was a bowls green in existence on this site at least as far back as 1870.

Wrotham Bowls Club is always looking for new members of all ages, including children of school age. Please remind everyone of our open weekend on 20-21 May from 2pm.

We look forward to receiving the continued support of the Parish Council in our efforts to maintain this historic village amenity in perpetuity

Report of the Wrotham Allotment and Garden Society for the
Wrotham Parish Council Annual General Meeting 2017

At the present time there are 34 plot holders with 5 new tenants during the past year. 3 existing tenants have increased their plot size during the year and they have put a great deal of energy and craftsmanship into creating raised beds and fruit cages. Very keen plot holders with highly productive plots

We have no vacant plots at this time and 1 person on the waiting list who only wants a small area to cultivate and he would be happy to share. I am sure we can arrange this in due course.

The time given to cultivation is again very variable depending on the enthusiasm and the time available. 5 plots showed little if any cultivation. For one of these plots this was due to ill health. However I wonder whether I could discuss with the clerk a reminder with the renewal invoice to at least visit the plots to keep down any flowering weeds.

Again we had a very successful summer BBQ and many strong friendships have been made.

Very strong turnout of volunteers to help with the fireworks bonfire and we hope that we may be in the running for a grant which we will probably use for fertiliser.

Pleased to report that we have no theft or criminal damage reported during the past year and one of the plot holders, who is a police inspector, arranged a tool marking morning with our own dedicated colour. Most wheelbarrows have been postcoded.

Thanks to the Council for the recent supply of roadstone for the parking area which was enough to cover all of the muddy area caused by the hedge cutter.

We will be holding our AGM on the 15th of this month.

B.Saunders, Secretary
5/4/17

THE FRIENDS OF ST.GEORGE

ANNUAL REPORT FOR WROTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The Friends of St George is a Registered Charity the aim of which is to raise funds for the maintenance of the fabric of the church building.

The current membership is 172 plus an additional 13 members who have moved away but continue to pay their subscriptions,

The committee arrange a number of fund raising events throughout the year, including quiz nights, a plant sale, concerts, and garden safari etc. Also during 2016 there was a very successful flower festival, an event that involved the whole village. The fund raising for the lighting began in 2015 with a well-attended Harp concert.

The Friends raised £4284 in 2015 and £5,784 in 2016.

A major focus for the Church in 2016 was the renewal of the wiring and lighting and the Friends were able to provide grants totalling £47,740 towards this. The Church separately received grants from Marshall's Charity and the All Churches Trust. There were also many individual donations and those from local organisations, such as the Fireworks Committee, Art and Music Festivals.

The church was placed on the English Heritage Risk list in October 2014 and as well as the urgent requirement to replace the wiring, work is also needed need to replace the valley gutters and roof tiling above the Nave.

An award totalling £150,000 has made by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Phase 2 has just been signed off, with additional grants totalling £30,000 from The Friends of Kent Churches and The Garfield Weston Foundation it is expected that work will begin this month. The Friends of St George have pledged £5,000 towards this.

The committee of The Friends of St. George are dedicated to raising funds towards our aims. However, the average age of the members is over seventy and it is important that we encourage younger people with fresh ideas to join us to provide continuity for the future.

Malcolm Wiffen

Chairman

4th April 2017

St George's (VC) CE Primary School
Report to Parish Council Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 5th April 2017 at 8.00pm

Once again, thank you for inviting me to report on the past year's achievements of St. George's CEP School. This is the twenty third annual report that I have been asked to submit on behalf of the school and once again it gives me a great opportunity to reflect on the changes and developments within the school.

I am pleased to tell you about another very successful year for our village school. Our pupil numbers continue to rise with a present roll of **209** pupils with seven classes which is very close to our full capacity of 210 pupils. We now have waiting lists in most year groups which we are currently unable to fill.

This year from a cohort of thirty pupils in Year 6, 14 pupils (78% of those who sat the test or 47% of the cohort) were successful in gaining a selective school placement. There has been an encouraging trend at St. G's of parents opting into the selective system with increasingly positive results. However St. George's continues to be an all-inclusive school and we are proud of all the achievements of our pupils

St. George's like all maintained primary schools are included in the national Key Stage Two Standard Assessment tests which inform the DfE of school performance. I am pleased to pass on that in both attainment and in pupil progress at the end of KS2 ST. George's was judged to be a school **SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE** the **NATIONAL AVERAGE** data. This was especially true in both Reading and maths where the school was 'percentile ranked' within the top 5% nationally. This should be, and was, celebrated by all!

This year we said a sad goodbye to Donna Freeman, our school FLO, after ten years' service to the school and to the village community. During the ten years Donna worked in school she developed numerous links with the community and beyond which benefitted a small number, although needy, families and children. Her smiley face and enduring positive-ness broke down many barriers and although not every single situation was totally successful she did make numerous families and individuals lives better.

Since she departed in late September we have been able to employ a new Family Liaison Officer, Gretel Ikediashi who start working at St. George's in late October. With her background in Social Services and with a thorough induction from Donna Freeman she is fitting in very well already! Although Donna will be sadly missed we feel that Gretel will be an asset to our team here at St. George's.

Our links with St. George's Church continue to thrive and with Revd Edward Wright now being in post for well over a year in his role as a Foundation Governor we feel very much that he is part of the 'school team' and we gain from his presence in school.

We have been delighted to support the church further by participating in the annual Education Sunday Service and a number of other Sunday morning worships. These have included readers and music and the opportunity for our pupils to perform in public is always an opportunity we warmly grab.

Further links with our community include our mini campanologists under the guidance of the Bell Masters, Mr & Mrs David Beech, the village fete last summer held on the school grounds, we contribute to the monthly Parish Magazine, we make Guy Fawkes for the

Autumn Firework Night, producing art work for the bi-annual Arts Festival and flowers for the Flower Festival. We are very proud to support these and be part of the village.

The village community is also important to the school as well as the many unseen heroes who all do their 'bit' voluntarily to support the village school. For example the now annual Festival of Fusion and Light couldn't take place without the support of the Parish Council and the Army Cadets amongst many others.

We thank every member of the wider school community for all their dedication to the school and its pupils and to all the previous members of this very special community.

As always I end my report with the line that St George's School is a village school to be very proud of but can I emphasise this year that we also have many unsung heroes working hard for the benefit of the entire school community and beyond.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Jones
Headteacher

March 2017