

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, APRIL 2019

Hi everyone,

It's hard to believe Spring is here already. A couple of dates that I am looking forward to:

- After not having our Fete last year, I to hope to see many of you on Saturday 4th May, 1-5pm on the Village Green. WOTFun is the new name for the Fete organised by the Pre-School. The Parish Council has agreed to fund some of the entertainment this year in addition to providing the use of the Village Green.
- The Annual Village Assembly will be held on the 21st May at 8:00pm at the Old Stables. This year we will have a special presentation from the Village Plan team on the draft recommendations along with the first presentation of the Whitchurch Award for volunteering.

Elections

As you may be aware there are Parish and District Council Elections on 2nd May. As the Parish Council had 7 candidates submit nominations for the 7 seats available on the Council, the Parish Council election was uncontested and consequently there is no need for a formal election at the ballot box. The six existing councillors will return along with Jon Steward who also submitted a nomination. I know Jon is looking forward to returning to Parish Council work.

Planning Applications:

Since January, there have been at least two planning applications that the Parish Council has strongly objected to that appear to be threats to the AONB we live in:

- **Coombe Park Fence** – the new owners of Coombe Park have installed a new metal fence along a long stretch of Hartslock Bridleway and are proposing to install further fencing behind houses along Manor road. Whilst we understand the need for

the new owners to secure their property, and the old fence was clearly in need of repair, we objected to the design and location of the new fence that is much closer to the bridleway. The fencing that was initially put up without planning permission clearly has a negative impact to the AONB, which is along a very visible section of the Thames Path popular for walkers.

- **Bozedown Yurt application** – the Parish Council also objected to the proposal described as ‘5 Yurts Glamping site.’ The location of the yurts in the alpaca field below the Iron Age fort site would clearly detract from a much-loved view in the AONB. In addition, while the intention of the application is not to plan development of new homes, the proposed yurts would be permanent self-catering structures that could in time be converted to permanent houses and set a precedent for further development in that area of the village.

We are still waiting for decision from the District Council on these applications. The Parish Council supports Coombe Park and the Bozedown Alpaca farm as important parts of our community, and are happy to work with the owners to discuss alternate proposals that would be in keeping with the AONB.

Residents Issues:

The Parish Council has taken the following actions to address issues raised by Residents over the past year:

- Village green grass cutting – the PC approved funding to increase the frequency of grass cutting on the Village Green from bi-weekly to weekly during the peak growing season of April through July, depending on the weather. The Cricket Club has agreed to contribute funding for up to 3 of these extra 8 cuts. These extra cuts should improve the consistency and quality of the Village Green cutting and reduce the size of the clippings.
- Inconsiderate parking on Hardwick Road and High Street intersection – a number of residents have raised concerns about

this. The Thames Valley police are aware of the situation and have indicated that they will consider ticketing in the area. The PC approved a notice that TAPAG plans to issue to the residents of this area warning them of the situation.

- The Boat – improvements are planned to the physical structure of the Boat over the Easter period, including varnishing and painting, with volunteers organised by Leslie Maynerd and MOWS.

Village Plan:

In our March meeting, John Bradon and the TAPAG team presented the draft Village Plan that has been under development for the past three years. There were 20 recommendations covering the following topics:

- Initiatives to address on-going Traffic and Parking issues
- Replacement of the Village Green Pavilion
- Improvements to the Village Hall
- Improvements to the built environment (including pavements improvements, develop & maintain and a village emergency management plan, and a liaison person to maintain drains)
- Open spaces improvements (including the playground, Polish Church memorial site and River access improvements)
- Develop Conservations Area Assessment
- A number of community initiatives

The PC unanimously committed to work to see these recommendations implemented over the next few years. The Village Plan team performed an assessment showing that the overall costs of the recommendations can be achieved using existing Parish Council reserves and projected revenue over the next 3 to 4 years. The Parish Council will also work to reduce the current estimates through additional grants and competitive supplier quotes.

I would encourage everyone to review the draft Village Plan that will be posted on the web-site or come along to a consultation session such as the Annual Assembly on the 21st May.

Best regards,

Jim

DRAFT VILLAGE PLAN AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT

Over a year ago, the Parish Council agreed to create a new Village Plan. A steering group and four working groups were set up and began by:

- Reviewing the previous 2009 village plan – seen to be a success although not all the intended actions were completed.
- Surveying residents views – the results were summarised here in the bulletin about 6 months ago and are published on the village website

We have now written a draft village plan and we'd like your views as we work towards finishing it. We are arranging three sessions (at the 4th May WoT Fun Day, the 21st May Annual Parish Assembly and an Art Café session) where we will present the draft plan and ask for feedback. In the meantime, we are publishing it on the village website and you can ring John Bradon (07789 944676) or email villageplan.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com with comments. By the way, if you need a printed copy of the draft plan, please ring or email John who will get you one.

As you'll see the draft is still incomplete and a bit rough, however the Parish Council have in principle agreed the key recommendations which are:

- Manage parking better to improve traffic flow (without making parking more difficult for residents)
- Improve road safety (20mph speed restriction, better arrangement at The Ferryboat)

- Replace the Sports Pavilion
- Upgrade the Village Hall
- Develop maintenance plans for Open Spaces. Add no new facilities. Apply the good-practice guidelines
- Complete and implement the Community Emergency Plan and the Flood Avoidance Plan
- Help fund and complete a Conservation Area Assessment
- Resurface pavements when funds allow

We hope you will be pleased with it too and will want to follow up the suggested opportunities to get involved.

John Bradon

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

The last speaker before the summer, on May 16th, is Richard Fortey who purchased a small part of Lambridge Wood (near Greys Court) and observed there the passing of the seasons and investigated its geology and ecology. However he does much more than that, as he uncovers the history of the area, and his book “The Wood for the Trees” is a much admired study of man and the natural world.

We meet in Goring Heath Parish hall in Whitchurch Hill and welcome non-members, who pay £3 per evening, to include coffee and biscuits. Coffee served from 7.30pm, meeting starts at 8pm. Membership just £12 a year – a bargain.

In the summer we go on two outings.

Vicky Jordan

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Our visitors from La Bouille in Normandy will be with us for the first bank holiday in May. We'll be at the Whitchurch fun day, holding a reception and dinner and visiting the Savill Gardens and taking a boat cruise with cream teas.

Vicky Jordan

WHITCHURCH AWARDS SCHEME

Whitchurch is fortunate in having many residents who contribute their services voluntarily for the benefit of the community. We all know someone who has made a valuable contribution and we are grateful to them.

A 'Whitchurch Award' is now being introduced to give recognition to those who have given exceptional service to the community. The scheme will be administered by the Whitchurch Society in conjunction with the Whitchurch Web, supported by a small committee. The first award is expected to be made at the Annual Parish Assembly in the village hall on 23rd May this year.

Next year, and in following years, village residents will be invited to nominate someone they consider deserves this special recognition. There may be more than one award per year.

Parish council chairman Jim Donahue says: *"We are very lucky in our village that there are so many residents volunteering their time in the community in so many ways. I think the Whitchurch Award is an excellent idea to honour at least some of those individuals and show the value we place on their work."*

Peter Smith, Chairman, The Whitchurch Society

Richard Wingfield, News Editor, Whitchurch Web

THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S & ST JOHN'S (an independent charity)

Plans for this year's major project for restoration of the St Mary's Church clock are progressing well. It has been quite a challenge to find a suitable company to carry out the work but that has now been achieved and work will commence about mid-July. Thanks to generous support from members of the Friends and others, the Trustees have sufficient funds to complete the works.

The Friends are also supporting work at St John's churchyard which will involve clearing some areas and renovating the railings alongside the main road.

In support of the improvements to the churchyard, the Friends have arranged a 'workday at St John's churchyard' on Saturday 18th May starting at 10am. All are invited to join in – just bring along tools to clear brambles etc. and hopefully, a good bonfire will get rid of the debris.

Various smaller projects have been suggested and the Trustees are considering priorities and costs.

With regards to social events, we continue to support the Artcafe at The Old Stables on the first Saturday every other month (May, July, September etc.)

The Friends plan to hold a celebration event at St Mary's church on completion of the clock's restoration. It is expected that this will be held towards the end of the summer. We aim to have a quarter peal of bells and live music with drinks and snacks.

Our annual main music event is being arranged for late October at St John's church.

Details for both of these events to follow.

As always, the Friends are keen to welcome new members so do contact me if you would like to join (minimum £10 annual membership).

Keith Williams, Chairman Friends of St Mary's & St John's, Whitchurch
0118 984 1139 (email: keithc.williams@btinternet.com)

PANGBOURNE TENNIS

The tennis club is now in full swing for the summer season, with coaching for adults and juniors and club play all underway.

Back to Tennis Programme – starts Tuesday 14th May

New for this year is a dedicated course for anyone keen to get back into tennis, or take the first steps to play. Maybe the last time you played tennis was at school, or you've not been on court for many years, or you've never played but want to learn a new sport? Our Back to Tennis programme is for you. Run by our club coach Damian Lane who is very experienced in developing players of all standards, the eight week course will (re)introduce you to the basics of tennis in a supportive environment. The course starts on Tuesday 14th May at 18:30 and runs to 2nd July. The fee for the course is £65 for members and £105 for non-members.

Get in touch at info@pangbournetennis.org to find out more and register your interest.

Junior Tennis Coaching

The first week of the junior coaching programme takes place on Friday 26th April for children from 4 years and upwards. Starting at 16:15 for the youngest children up to 18:30 for teenagers, each session is 45 minutes under the expert coaching of Damian Lane. If you have not yet registered your children, please do get in touch at juniors@pangbournetennis.org to see if there are any places left. This year we are particularly keen to encourage teenagers to come along to develop their tennis.

Adult Tennis Coaching and Play

We are running two sessions for adults this year from 19:30 to dusk:

- Friday evening sessions from April 26th to 5th July
- Tuesday evenings from 14th May to 2nd July

Damian will be running skills coaching and drills, followed by match play. The standard fee is £10 per session, with discounts for advanced booking. Members not involved in the coaching are very welcome to join at 20:30 for the match play (for free, of course!)

Club Open Afternoon: Sunday 19th May 2-5pm

Not sure if tennis is for you? Do your kids want to have a go but you're not sure how to get started?

Come down to the club on Sunday 19th May for our open afternoon. There'll be the chance to get on court with Damian (racquets will be available), play some fun games (adults and children!) and have some refreshments in the club house.

The club is located between the river and the railway on the Recreation Ground and we share the club house with Pangbourne Bowls Club. The subscription for adults is just £45 per year. We also offer a family membership for £100, which covers up to two adults and three children.

Please do get in touch to find out more about the club, by either coming to the open afternoon, one of the club sessions or emailing us at info@pangbournetennis.org

Pangbourne Tennis Club Committee

WILDLIFE WALKS (WOTWALKS) – WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES HABITAT STUDY GROUP

WoTHabs is pleased to announce that a founding member of our group, Sandra Parkinson, is starting a programme of monthly walks in the parish. These will give everyone in the village a unique chance to visit the special woodland, chalk grassland and meadows that are rich in bio-diversity at Chalkhills farm, Hardwick Road. Later in the year we will visit other parts of the parish, including within the village itself, to look at what a rich area this is for wildlife.

These walks will be family oriented, (though children must be accompanied by an adult), informal, complete amateurs very welcome, but with the aim of encouraging local residents to learn a little more about the wildlife around them. Those who have particular hobbies (eg bird watching) will be particularly welcome, so they can share their knowledge. These walks will normally be held on the afternoon of the last Sunday of each month though this may be changed to another Sunday if the date clashes with other local events or public holidays. We might also organise 'special' walks, for example, to listen to the dawn chorus, or watch for bats at dusk.

If you are interested or would just like to know more, please email Sandra (at Chalkhills) at sparkinson7@googlemail.com putting "Whitchurch Walks" in the subject line and she will put you on her mailing list. You will then be sent full details of each walk about a week beforehand – there is no commitment to attend every time and no charge! The details will tell you where and when to meet, if car parking will be available, what we hope to see, how steep the walking might be, how long the walk will take, whether dogs will be allowed (on a lead) etc. Please note that it would be very helpful if you register your possible interest now, so that Sandra can gauge whether there is enough potential enthusiasm to keep this initiative going.

The first of these walks took place at Chalkhills on Sunday 31st March, on a bright, clear afternoon, heralding early spring. There were eight of us in total, including two children. We walked up the valley, then into the wood called The Skippetts, across the top of

the steep-sided valley and along to the trig point, returning through the New Plantation woods and back for tea and cakes. It was very enjoyable and leisurely, and along the route, Sandra specifically explained how to identify the 4 different species of violet that are growing on her land. These are the Hairy Violet, Sweet Violet, Early Dog Violet and Dog Violet. We saw a great variety of flora and fauna (both wild and domesticated!) and of course the view from the trig point looking south across the village and the Thames never fails to delight.

One of the more curious things Sandra showed us was a large cauliflower fungus, growing in a heap of wood chips. This is classified as edible, so after our walk, Sandra tried eating it. She says as she had a cold at the time, she couldn't really taste it, but suspected it is over rated as an edible fungus (as are many). When freshly cut it did smell slightly of cauliflower, which might explain its name as it looks more like a sponge when cut than the vegetable.

So, do consider joining us for a future walk – you never know what you might see!

Sally Woolhouse

THE WHITCHURCH MAZE

The first working party of the season was held on Sat 30th March. A team of five volunteers did the strimming, edging, mowing and sweeping to get the grass area in and around the bricks looking smart and tidy. It was a lovely morning, and it was a pleasure to be working in this special place. The blackthorn was in full bloom, the alkanet, violets and primroses were flowering, and we saw 3 species of butterfly (Brimstone, Orange-tip and Holly Blue).

The working party dates (all Saturdays) for the rest of 2019 are as follows:

27th APRIL, 1st JUNE, 6th JULY, 3rd AUG, 7th SEPT, 5th OCT, 2nd NOV starting at 10am

Put these dates in your diaries and PLEASE make a resolution to come along to at least one session this season – your help would be much appreciated. All tools are provided.

As you know, Leslie Prater led the second restoration project on the Maze, which was completed successfully last October. There are now three generations of bricks in the circles – the originals dating from 2004, the first restoration ones laid in 2013, and the most recent ones laid in 2018. When both the restorations were undertaken, new ones were laid and also replacements for frost damaged originals. The net result is quite a complicated ‘history’ which is supported by 3 lots of order forms and spreadsheets – all in different format! I am keen to do a full audit of all the bricks at this point in time. This would make it much easier for future reference and for when it comes to the time when another restoration is planned. If anyone would like to help me with this task or would be interested in becoming the ‘Maze Archivist’, please get in touch with me.

Finally, a small team of us is planning to design, order and install an improved and updated Maze information board on the lectern. The existing one has deteriorated and the wording is out of date. Again, if you have any fresh ideas about the design or wording, then please get in touch.

Sally Woolhouse
0118 984 4365
sally.woolhouse@gmail.com



WHITCHURCH ART & CRAFT EXHIBITION

The weekend of 16 – 17th November 2019
Whitchurch-on-Thames Village Hall, Manor Road

Here is an important date for your diaries! The Whitchurch Society’s Annual Exhibition will be held as usual in November – it may seem a long way off but it is now time to start planning your imaginative creations, ready for this year’s show. If you have never entered before, why not make 2019 your first time and I guarantee you will

get hooked! We welcome all types of art, craft and photography on any subject – it is an enjoyable, friendly event, not an elitist showcase! Everyone in Whitchurch and Goring Heath parishes are eligible to enter. Also, children who attend the Whitchurch Pre-School Group, Whitchurch Primary School or The Oratory Preparatory School are all eligible to enter, regardless of where they live.

The theme this year for the Joyce Voysey class is **'Masks'**. This separate class is open to all age groups and the entries can be in any media – art, photos, sculpture, crochet, video – whatever inspires you!

The details of how and when to enter will be posted on the village website shortly. Meanwhile, start working on your entries and help make this year's event the best ever!

If you would like to get involved with the planning and setting up of the exhibition, please do get in touch – all offers of help are gratefully received.

Sally Woolhouse
Chair of the organising committee
0118 9844365
sally.woolhouse@gmail.com

WHITCHURCH SOCIETY SPRING WALK

This year's Spring Walk will commence at 11am at the Art Gallery corner on Sunday 12th May.

This is a 6.25 mile walk to Elvendon Priory taking in the picturesque hamlets of Coldharbour and Blackbird Bottom and the Great Chalk Wood. There should be a good display of Bluebells as we leave the Wood en route to the Priory. Dogs are welcome but as we will be traversing fields with lambs and calves, they will need to be under control at certain points.

Richard Williams

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2019

All Residents of Whitchurch on Thames are invited to join their Parish Council on Tuesday 21st May 2019 at the Old Stables at 8.00pm.

Wine and refreshments will be served from 7.45pm

This is an opportunity to come and meet members of your Parish Council and your Local and District Councillors. This year there will be two special topics:

- **Presentation of Draft Village Plan 2019 recommendations – John Bradon, TAPAG, and the Village Plan Team**
- **Presentation of the first Whitchurch Awards for Volunteers**

There will be an Open Forum during the meeting to allow you time to ask questions and time to talk informally before and after the meeting.

For more information or to be involved please contact the Parish Clerk: Ina Chantry parishclerk.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com

GORING HEATH & WHITCHURCH SPRING SHOW

A few facts: there was a total of 28 entrants, 5 more than in the summer show, with a total of 130 entries. (129 in summer). The Whitchurch Hill trophy for most points overall was won by Sarah Dragonetti who won most points in the Flowers Section and the Baking and Preserves Section.

I was very pleased with the entries considering that most of the daffodils were over, but people still managed to find some. The high number of fruit cakes (11) was very encouraging.

The show would of course not be possible without the small band of willing helpers: Sarah Hanfrey who does all the computer work and replenishes the stationary stocks, Sally and Chris Bergman who help set up the tables, Peter Dragonetti who helped put away all the tables and Denyse Williams who helps sort out the entrants and mans the door on show day as well as helping to pack up. Of

course the show would not be possible without the tireless efforts and hard work of fellow committee member Liz Gibson. I must also thank the other members of the committee: Judith Johns and Sally Trinder who took over serving teas (as well as providing cakes) with calm assurance. My sincere thanks to all who helped and last but not least to the judges who gave of their time and expertise.

The summer show is on the 7th September.

Sue Sexon

PANGBOURNE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

Did you know that Pangbourne Boathouse Surgery has a *Patient Participation Group*? Do you know what it is? What is it for? And who can join?

Since January 2003, all NHS bodies have had a legal duty to involve and consult the public about the running of local health services. Patients can now have more say and greater involvement in health and treatment decisions than ever before. One way we can make our voices heard is through our Surgery's Patient Participation Group (PPG), which enables us to:

- Work with GPs and practice staff to improve local services and the quality of care
- Improve communication with patients
- Promote health and wellbeing
- Ensure practices remain accountable and responsive to patients needs

Who can join the PPG? Any patient can ask to join their local PPG, as can staff employed by or associated with the practice. Ideally, the membership should be representative of the practice population, and should aim to include a broad cross section of patients, including underrepresented and seldom heard groups. The Pangbourne PPG is a large and friendly bunch of people who are committed to helping the practice provide the best possible service to the entire patient population.

We hold a meeting every two months and, for those who are able to do more, there are other activities to get involved with as well.

What do we do? We are all patients, so we are able to provide feedback to the practice about the patient experience. For example, a few years ago we pressed the surgery to install an automatic entrance door to make life easier for patients with buggies, and wheelchair users. We were involved with the redesign of the reception area, ensuring that patients' concerns were addressed. We help at the flu clinics, we review the practice website and we occasionally fundraise for specific equipment.

Like to know more? Have a look at the practice website. The PPG has a whole section, including meeting minutes, so you can get a feel for who we are and what we do. In future articles I'll be covering some of the issues we are currently discussing, and some of the things we are involved with. Stay healthy!

Sarah Dixon

HOME VISITING FOOT HEALTH PRACTITIONER

~~***Patricia Spender MCFHP MAFHP***~~

~~Tel: 01189 841132 mobile 07733320702~~
~~email pat.spender@gmail.com~~

Nail cutting, corns, callus, ingrown toenail nails.

WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL

Only two terms left for our rising fives before they graduate to Primary School! The Monday afternoon sessions are invaluable in preparing them for the next step, with more focus on writing, numbers, listening and understanding rules. The children have had a brilliant term, enjoying their amazing new dinosaur area, career advice from a doctor, Spanish lessons, French lessons, nature walks and obstacle courses, as well as baking cookies and making smoothies.

The Thursday science session run by Mini Professors has been very popular: this term our pre-schoolers have been introduced to a wide variety of topics, from acids and bases, to bubbles and marine life. We are accepting registration forms for September starters, so please email Kathleen on whitchurchpreschool@me.com if you would like to apply.

The children are already looking forward to the annual Rushall Farm trip when they return from their Easter break, and of course we're all hugely excited about the Whitchurch on Thames Fun Day on Saturday 4th May (1–5pm on the village green), which promises to be a fantastic event as well as a vital fundraiser for the pre-school. See you there!

Elizabeth Multon

EDITOR'S NOTES

There are a number of forthcoming events this Spring. The Village Fun Day, as mentioned elsewhere in this Bulletin, is 1-5pm Saturday 4th May. The day after, Sunday 5th May, is the Woodcote Festival 3-9pm and the Around The Boundary festival (11am-11pm, tickets £20) at Kidmore End. Further afield the popular Yattendon & Frilsham Fete is on Monday 27th May (1-4pm) whilst the Pangbourne Village Fete is on Saturday 8th June.

The deadline for articles for the next (Summer) Bulletin is Sunday 14th July. Content can be sent to rwilliamsafcw@btinternet.com in Word or PDF format. As usual, any local photographs for the Edition's front cover are welcome but will need to be in portrait format.

Richard Williams



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Join us for...

Whitchurch-on-Thames FUN DAY

Stalls - BBQ - Bar - Tea Tent -
Kids' entertainment -
Grand Prize Draw with amazing
prizes - lots more!

1-5pm, Saturday 4th May
Whitchurch-on-Thames
Village Green, Eastfield Lane

Organised by and in support of



Registered charity 1027416

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A beautiful 18th Century country style pub and restaurant nestled in the small riverside village of Whitchurch-on-Thames, just a few yards from over the Whitchurch toll bridge, a short walk from the car parks in Pangbourne.

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