

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, JULY 2019

As I write this report, Hardwick Road is finally due to be closed to traffic for the gas mains work after a 3 week delay. The work started on time in June but the critical Hardwick Road closure was delayed and reduced from 6 weeks to 2 to 3 weeks in total. This has had a lower level of impact to traffic than many feared. There has been some disruption, including two large holes in my front garden and those of other Hillside residents, but I believe the OMJ contractors are generally doing a very good job at communicating the impacts of their work to residents. I'd also like to thank Richard Wingfield for the excellent work he has been doing to communicate the latest road works developments on the website. Things have been changing day-by-day and the website is the best place to get the latest information.

Some changes to the Parish Council Team:

- I am sorry to say that our Clerk Ina Chantry is leaving us for personal reasons. The role is advertised and interviews will be held late July/early August. We hope to have someone in place ahead of our September meeting.
- I would also like to welcome Jon Steward back to the council after an absence of about two years. He joined us in May after of submitting a nomination in the recent elections so he is filling the vacancy left by Sarah Hanfrey.
- A complete list of councillor responsibilities and point of contacts for particular committees and working groups is maintained on the Village web site.

At our annual Parish Assembly in May I highlighted a number of areas that have been progressing well with close cooperation between the Parish Council and volunteers from the community. It's volunteers that help us make the improvements we want to see and keep things in our village ticking over and is one of the things that makes Whitchurch-on-Thames such a great place to live.

Village Plan – You will be aware that John Bradon is now Chairing the Village Plan Team, after being a key member of the Village and Neighbourhood Plan teams over the past couple of years. The Parish Council has endorsed the draft recommendations that cover the priorities of the village after much consultation. I look forward to seeing the final report being issued in the next few months.

Traffic and Parking issues have been highlighted as the highest priority issues facing the village in the draft Village Plan. There are several members of TAPAG that have been working with Cllr Rachel Hatcher from outside the council that I would like to mention: Will Barclay, Dave Baty, Robin MacCaw, Ben Riordan, and Diana Smith. They have engaged a consultant from Mode Transport Planning, and are working with her on the detailed design of the first phase of recommended changes to parking restrictions on the High Street intended to better manage the flow of traffic through the village. Further consultation with OCC and residents of the village will take place once the design is ready.

New Pavilion – Neil Huntington has been taking a lead role in development of the new Pavilion, working with Cllr Warren Beard and others to form a New Pavilion Working Group (NPWG). The PC has delegated much of the responsibility for leading the fundraising and construction activities to the NPWG to ensure it can be done in an efficient manner. The main goals between now and the end of September are to get detailed cost estimates from a Quantity Surveyor we have engaged, and to complete a fundraising brochure that will include a simulated photo of the new pavilion.

Village Hall improvements – Jean Marc Grosfort has been doing an outstanding job working with Cllr Keith Brooks on the Village Hall refurbishments. I am pleased to report that Jean Marc has recently raised over £8,000 in grants to refurbish the Village Hall. Jean Marc led a team of volunteers from Reading to paint the interior, has replaced the blinds and a completed a much-needed upgrade of some of the lighting. A number of other grant proposals are already in place for things such as the upgrade of the kitchen facilities, Wifi installation, and an on-line booking system.

o Jean Marc is also hosting regular Afternoon Tea and Cakes at the Village Hall on the second Thursday of each month. Everyone is welcome, particularly those who may not be able to get out often or travel far. Apparently Jean Marc is a talented cake chef and the items on offer have included a rather tasty raspberry millefeuilles.

Manor Road Playground refurbishment – Cllr Keith Brooks and John Bradon have been organising a number of working parties to tidy up, clean, and repaint many aspects of the Manor Road children’s recreational facility. One working party was organised by Henry Leadbeater-Hart as part of his DOE. I’m sure that any users of the facility will have noticed the significant improvements that have been made as many had commented that the facility had been looking a little “unloved”.

Village Green/Maze maintenance – Thanks to Pete Woolhouse for repairing the stile at the fence by the football pitch. This was unfortunately damaged from an act of apparent vandalism. Pete’s handiwork around the village is much appreciated and is in addition to the regular working parties he leads with Leslie Prater and others to keep the Maze in such great shape.

High Street planters – Perhaps the most visible contribution is the work that Leslie and Dave Maynerd and others do to maintain the planters at the church entrance that are now in glorious full bloom given the weather we have had. I’m sure people have noticed the improvements to the appearance of the boat planter (with help from Iain Tolhurst and Peter Woolhouse). Leslie and Dave also recently replaced the bark around the planters with more stable and attractive slate stones.

Opportunities to volunteer – There will be more opportunities for other people to get involved in some of the new initiatives identified under the Village Plan. This will include the formation of a new ‘Green Team’ to support improvements to, and maintenance of, the village open spaces. We are also planning to form an Emergency Readiness Team, and the need for someone to ensure our drains

are cleared by OCC on a regular basis to avoid flooding.

Significant planning applications in the past quarter include:

- **Eastfield House planning application appeal** – The Parish Council has re-iterated our strong objection to the demolition of Eastfield House as part of the appeal Ross Healthcare has raised to the SODC rejection of their planning application. I know that a number of residents also provided their views on the appeal. My understanding is that the Planning Inspectorate will now make a decision based on the information available. Final comments were due on 8th July and no date for a decision has been communicated.
- **Coombe Park Fence** – the Parish Council strongly objected to the retrospective planning application of the new metal fence along a long stretch of Hartslock Bridleway earlier this year. No decision has been communicated, but I understand that the SODC Planning Officer is having discussions with the Coombe Park owner on what location would be acceptable for the new fence.
- **BP Facility development** – I attended an open day review of early plans for making improvements to their facilities on the 10th of July. BP are proposing to replace a number of small office buildings with a new consolidated modern office building and to modernise some of their labs. The purpose of these changes is to “modernise their facilities and attract the best talent as they focus efforts on electric and hybrid vehicle technology.” There appears to be no impact to traffic in the village from this change as the changes do not add any more staff or change the number of car parking spaces.

Wishing you and your family a great summer holiday and hoping that the glorious weather continues!

Jim Donahue

Chairman

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council



Goring Heath Parish Charity
Regd No 1056772

Goring Heath and Whitchurch

Autumn Show



Saturday 7 September 2019

2.30 pm to 4.00 pm

Goring Heath Parish Hall

**Enter your finest flowers, fruit, veg, floral arrangements,
handicrafts, artwork, baking and photos.**
**Or come along to view the entries & enjoy homemade cake, tea &
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This year's Arts and Crafts classes:

Handicraft

A knitted scarf
A drawstring bag
A good luck card

Art

A Doorway
Still Life
A Dead Tree

Full schedule of classes and entry forms will be available

on:

www.whitchurchonthames.com

www.goringheath.com

phone for a printed copy:

Judith Johns on 0118 9842816

Liz Gibson on 0118 984 2012

Sally Trinder on 0118 984 2610

Sue Sexon on 0118 984 4236

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES HABITAT STUDY GROUP (WOTHABS)

WILDLIFE WALKS

The programme of walks led by Sandra Parkinson in conjunction with WoTHabs continued in April with the second walk, held on the 28th. This walk coincided with a visit from the Abingdon Naturalists Society who had booked to see the Chalkhills Local Wildlife Site areas last year, in order to see the cowslips. Not much recording of birds and insects took place as the flowers distracted us, including Chalk Milkwort in full bloom, Horseshoe Vetch flowers appearing on the single food plant of the Adonis Blue butterfly, Common Spotted Orchids, White Helleborines, and Yellow Rattle. The Cuckooflowers were also in full bloom, in the only damp area of all the pastures at Chalkhills (by the 8th May these had all been eaten by deer). The St George's Mushrooms found on the March walk were still showing, one of the longest lasting fungi.

The May walk date was taken up by the Bioblitz (see below).

A short additional walk was held in mid-June in order to look at all the different orchids at Chalkhills, while at their best. There are few orchids in the secluded Local Wildlife Site area, as these are eaten by deer. Deer avoid spending much time in the lower fields visible from Hardwick Road, which is where we found an abundance of Pyramidal, Bee, and Common Spotted Orchids. One White Helleborine plant (in fruit by then) was found in the south field where it had never been recorded before, as it is really a woodland orchid. We even found a Bee Orchid on the road verge.

The end of June walk was held in Bottom Wood, on the Hardwick Estate, where we attempted to find as many of the ancient woodland indicator plants as we could on a short walk into the wood from the Path Hill entrance.

The next walk will be on 28th July and will also be at Chalkhills. If you are not already signed up for the walks programme, please email sparkinson7@googlemail.com

Sandra Parkinson



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THE BIOBLITZ

On Sunday 26th May, we ran our first ever BioBlitz, at the Whitchurch Maze. The aim was to identify as many plants, trees, insects, birds, animal signs, etc. in the area as possible.

Despite the rather uncertain weather, our team of five 'experts' were joined by a good turnout of eleven adults and nine children. We felt it was a worthwhile and enjoyable exercise, stimulating the children's interest and enthusiasm and at the same time finding some very interesting creatures. Notable finds were a juvenile Common Newt, a number of White Helleborine Orchid, at least two *Daphne laureola* plants in the 'wood' area, and a Bryony ladybird, which is at present usually only found around London and in Surrey.

We fell short of our aim of 250 species but even so, the final count of 132 species was a good and varied 'bag'. If you would like the full Data Report that we have compiled, please get in touch.

Sally Woolhouse

VILLAGE GREEN

There has been steady growth since the beech trees were cut to hedge height in February 2018. Not only is the beech hedge flourishing, but the amount of light now reaching the south end of the village green has encouraged the growth of a variety of wild plants and shrubs. In this relatively small area - extending just from the beech hedge to the mown area of cricket field - species counts on 21st and 23rd June by our local botanist, Sandra Parkinson, revealed 83 species – and we're still counting.

There were some immensely tall Sow Thistles, and those - along with a number of other plants which tend to dominate - we decided to pull out and did so. But nature is about diversity and that is what we hope to encourage in this part of the village green. The greater variety of plants will in turn provide habitat for a variety of insects, including butterflies, moths, bees and other pollinators. It

will also provide food supplies, as well as habitat, for birds and small mammals. And this is for us all to enjoy, especially the children.

A Working Party is needed to tackle some maintenance tasks; notably hedge trimming, weeding and digging up a few small shrubs to replant where needed. All pretty straightforward and good exercise too!

Please see under Village Green Working Party on website for date/s and time/s.

Gill Goodwin

WHITCHURCH ART & CRAFT EXHIBITION

The weekend of 16 - 17th November 2019

Whitchurch-on-Thames Village Hall

Don't forget to put this VIP date in your diaries! It will come around sooner than you think so now is the 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 and everyone in Whitchurch and Goring Heath parishes is 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! Also, we would love to have more entries in our new video section for the Brazil Award which was introduced in 2018.

The details of how and when to enter in all the categories will be posted on the village website by the end of July. 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

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

The workday at St John's churchyard in May was most successful with a turnout of 13 volunteers who managed to clear a large amount of bramble and debris. The church and churchyard are now much more visible from the main road. The railings are being professionally cleaned and painted which will lead to a tidy and well presented setting at St John's.

Preparation work for the St Mary's church clock restoration has been completed and the detailed repairs will begin in mid-August. It is hoped that we shall have a fully working clock once again by mid-September. This work will include a new mechanism which enables the hourly ring of the bell to be switched off during the night hours (say from 10pm to 7am).

The Friends are currently arranging a celebration event at St Mary's church following the completion of the clock restoration. This is planned for Saturday 5th October and details will be circulated shortly.

Our main music event will be held at St John's church on Saturday, 19th October at 7pm and will feature the Maidenhead Concert Band. Drinks and 'nibbles' will be served after the concert. Further details and ticket arrangements will be announced shortly.

Don't forget our regular social event at the Artcafe, Old Stables on the first Saturday every other month (September, November etc).

The Friends continue to contribute towards the Whitchurch community and as always, we are keen to welcome new members (minimum £10 annual membership). Do contact me if you would like to join.

Keith Williams

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

INTRODUCING RIKI THE TRICOLOUR SMOOTH HAired COLLIE



Hi! My name is Riki and I am one of the most recent additions to the fabulous Whitchurch-on-Thames canine community.

I live with my wonderful two legged parents, two cats and a brood of hens right in the heart of the village. I quickly settled into my new home and haven't ever looked back.

My name was changed from Black Elfstone, (Terry Brooks fans you know who that is) to Riki. If I am honest, I much prefer my new name. I have been named after a very special human called Eric who, as I understand it, writes books about dog walks in this area. He has a rather beautiful Labrador called Molly whom I think has the best job in the world testing out all the walks! I am really proud to be named after Eric because he is an extremely friendly human and always seems interested in my parents. He always has, or should I say makes time for a chat whilst I have a sniff around. Molly says she has the kindest owner in the world but I think mine take some beating; maybe it is something about the people who live in this village? I want to be like Eric when I grow up. I feel really connected

to him because I arrived in the village on the same day as he got a prize for being an extra special human. Maybe if I am good at my dog training classes on Whitchurch Hill I will get a prize one day! When I am one year old I am going to go to agility classes. I can already run through a tunnel. It is so much fun.

I spend most of my days chasing the australorp chickens, or should I say trying to chase them as one of the hens is really mean and gives me a peck if I get too close. The cats just do their own thing; I try to play with them but they just stare at me briefly and slowly look away as if I haven't even registered on their radar. They seem to like to do their own thing, in their own time, and on their own terms. Occasionally I bring them my favourite toys to play with; the plant pot or the broom head but they never join in. It really doesn't matter because thankfully my parents never tire of playing with me and sometimes I just have to lay down and sleep because they have worn me out!

I think I landed on my paws coming to live here. I love it. I even heard my first owl the other evening. The village is so full of wildlife I just love it!

I have to go now because Mum has squeaked the pig. I don't know, but there is something about my plastic pig (you didn't think it was a real one did you?) I simply can't resist the sound of my pig. It always means there is something exciting just about to happen and Mum is so happy when I come to her when she squeaks it.

Oh and one last thing. If you have a pet who would like to star in the magazine just like I have, let the editor know as it is fun being interviewed and it's great getting to read about the animal community here in wonderful Whitchurch on Thames.

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

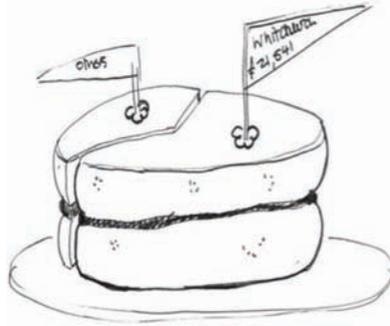
After a summer of visits we will be looking forward to our autumn season of lectures.

We begin on Thursday September 19th when Dr Edward Peveler will speak about the Beacons of the Past project, a unique mapping of all the archaeological sites in the Chilterns, using LIDAR aerial laser techniques. Hill forts are a particular interest, and we hope to be able to view some of the results in our locality.

We shall also be able to appreciate the results of research into Whitchurch parish when we welcome Dr Simon Draper, historian for the Victoria County History, to our meeting on Thursday 17th October. The Victoria County History was a project, started to celebrate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, to write the history of every parish in the country. Some Counties completed their histories promptly, but Oxfordshire has lagged behind, and is just now nearing the end of the work. The Whitchurch chapter will appear in volume xx, alongside other southern Thame-side parishes such as Goring and Caversham.

Our meetings take place at Goring Heath Parish Hall, in Whitchurch Hill, and start at 8pm, with coffee served from 7.30pm. Non-members are welcome to attend, £3, to include coffee and biscuits.

Vicky Jordan



Art Cafe - serving our community

The Art Cafe is open Saturday mornings from 10.30-12.30 in the Old Rectory Stables opposite The Ferryboat Inn. Tea, coffee and delicious homemade cakes are sold on behalf of charity and community groups. Arts and crafts are also on show from local artists.

Gill Williamson, Art Cafe organiser says, "We're thrilled with the response from the local community. The Art Cafe provides a place to make and strengthen friendships - whether you're a visitor or FUNraiser. The good news is that over the past three years together we've raised £32,511 for a wide variety of charities and community groups simply by enjoying tea and cake and browsing art."

Join in the FUNraising

Even better news is that FUNraising groups from Whitchurch and Whitchurch Hill raised £21,541 - two thirds of the total £32,511.

Sue Matthews says, "I run Art Cafe coffee morning FUNraisers for Whitchurch and Whitchurch Hill causes and it's a happy and rewarding way to spend a few hours. Local groups are always on the look-out for volunteers to lend a hand so please get in touch if you can make a cake or help out on the day."

Drop in one Saturday morning and say hello - we're a friendly crowd!"

Contact: gill@artcafe.co.uk



EDITOR'S NOTES

The Autumn edition of the Village Bulletin will be distributed around weekend 26-27th October. Please send any articles/content in Word/PDF format by latest Sunday 13th October.

The excellent Bunkfest at Wallingford is scheduled for the weekend 30th August – 1st Sept and our Autumn Show (details elsewhere in this Bulletin) will be on the following weekend, Saturday 7th Sept, 2:30-4pm at Goring Heath VH.

Richard Williams

rlwilliamsafcw@btinternet.com



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