

BLETCHINGLEY PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

FEBRUARY 2008 to MAY 2008

Community Speedwatch: There has been little activity over the last few months due to the inclemental weather. PC Moira Cocks is aware of 2 more volunteers who will hopefully be going through the training process in due course. Recent outings have however proved to be very successful, including a speedwatch manned by Surrey Police. If you feel you could give up a couple of hours once or twice a month and would like to join the team of volunteers, please contact either the Parish Clerk or PC Moira Cocks of Surrey Police for further details. Full training will be given.

Policing Issues: The bi-monthly Police Panels now held in the Doctor's Surgery in the Village Hall on the 2nd Monday of the relevant month from 7pm until 8pm have proved to be better attended than at the previous location. There is scheduled to be one in August. Check the Police and the Parish Website for confirmation.

Neighbourhood Watch: The three Area Co-ordinators and co-ordinators are maintaining the Neighbourhood Watch network. The Bletchingley and Nutfield Beat and Countryside Alert newsletters written by PC Shrapel can now be located on the Parish Website at the bottom of the Neighbourhood Watch section. A copy will usually also be placed on the noticeboard and/or on the Post Office noticeboard. Contact details of your Area Co-ordinators will shortly be available on the website as well. Please endeavour to remain vigilant and report any problems to your Co-ordinators and if necessary to the Police.

Dog Fouling: This is still a very big problem in several locations. Could all dog owners please act responsibly and ensure that they clean up after their dog.

St Catherine's School: The signage issue has not been forgotten and is still being pursued, including the possible location of a sign below the existing St Catherine's Cross road sign. St Catherine's is now included as a feeder school to Oxted County.

Bus Shelter: The Parish Council had the bus shelter outside the Whyte Harte repaired. However, it appears that someone has once again damaged one of the panes of glass. If this problem continues, the Parish Council may have no alternative but to remove the glass and leave it open in future.

Allotments: All allotments are let with 2 now remaining on the waiting list. The Best Kept Allotment competition will be running again this year. The judges of Bletchingley in Bloom have this year requested access to view the allotments on judging day so it is hoped that all allotment holders will take up the challenge. Enquiries are ongoing in relation to the use of the bottom strip of "composting area".

Bletchingley in Bloom: Judging day is scheduled for 1st July 2008 and it is hoped that as many people as possible can go and view the progress of the team and helpers in the Village Hall on the day. The bed has been planted near the Red Lion pub, planting at the Skills Centre adjacent to the Adult Education Centre has also now been completed. Planting of a copse of trees at St Catherine's school has been undertaken. The village sign is due to be unveiled on the 24th June 2008. The railings in the High Street in front of Brittens Bank Cottages are scheduled to be painted by the Surrey Probation Work Team. A litter picking day has been organised for the 28th June and it is hoped that as many people as possible will come out to help clear the village. The Parish Council have purchased 10 litter pickers to be provided to regular litter pickers. A further number have been secured from TDC on a loan basis for future litter picking days. Discussions are underway with the owners in relation to the future maintenance of Hever's Pond.

Cemetery: Various maintenance and clearance work has been undertaken and still needs to be done. Enquiries are being made into the repainting of the gates and possible further clearance work of overgrown vegetation. Discussions took place in relation to opening up a new section for the cemetery. However, infrastructure costs were likely to outweigh the demand. New regulations are also in the process of being drafted, which will allow the reuse of burial grounds. Details of how this will work are as yet unknown.

Minerals Issues: North Park Farm: Over the past few weeks, your parish councillors have been joining members of the Quarry Observation Group (QOG) and supporters demonstrating outside the North Park Quarry gates against WBB, for their encouragement to Tarmac to build their DSM works within the Quarry. Continuing the protest, with all the other local members, we have resigned from the WBB community liaison group.

Tarmac's application finally came before the county planning committee at the end of May. Following the voting debacle at County Hall in February, we were unsure what to expect. The committee voted 11:4 against the application - a marvellous victory. The main grounds were the inappropriate industrial development within the Green Belt. On behalf of all the villagers of Bletchingley we particularly thank QOG for their hard work and dedication. However, Tarmac have six months in which they could lodge an appeal, so we must continue to wait and see.

Meanwhile WBB's retrospective application to retain their unauthorised processing plant should be on the agenda for the June or July county planning meeting. We have strongly opposed this plan. It does not include any of the mitigating factors which were originally planned to prevent sand being blown from the stockpiles. Since 2006 when that processing plant was built, many residents have suffered from the horrendous quarry dust storms. So, again with the valiant help of QOG, we are fighting WBB's new plan.

Star Energy: The first gas appraisal well drilled at King's Farm, Tilburstow Hill Road has been completed and a second well is scheduled for drilling early this summer. Your parish council will have joined a site visit planned for June. If sufficient gas is found to warrant extraction, Star Energy plan to develop a gas extraction and storage plant. The site is in South Godstone, but beside the Bletchingley border. As such a development could seriously affect the environment to the east of our parish, it is being carefully monitored.

Footpath 506: Following a Court Order in favour of Bletchingley Parish Council on the 6th of January 2005, the Council is still pursuing the recovering of its awarded costs. A Freedom of Information Complaint was brought to the Parish Council by the ICO. The resultant decision is available on the ICO website. The Parish Council were found to be not at fault, although they were required to be more precise with responses.

Community Centre: You may have already noticed that the Community Centre has now been redecorated.

Website: This is now receiving visits from all over the world and is continuing to receive a high number of returning as well as new visits. The Village Hall has certainly noticed an increase in interest through the site and it is hoped that advertisers have also felt some benefit. The diary and news sections are regularly updated when information is provided. New sections have been added to the Parish Council section. Financial Accounts are now available on the website once finalised. Various statutory documents are already available and others will be available in due course. The LORDS form for reporting lorry nuisance is available on the website. Please complete the form and forward to the contact details provided at the bottom of that form, including a copy to the Clerk. Please contact the Clerk if you have any questions or wish to add something to the website.

Planning: The Planning Committee now meets regularly on the last Monday of every month, unless there are no applications to be heard. Any residents wishing to comment on a planning application need to notify the Clerk in advance of the meetings. A draft Planning Policy, outlining what the Parish Council's role in planning is will shortly be adopted and made available on the website.

CCTV: We have heard that the CCTV camera has been purchased for the new CCTV system to be monitored by Surrey Police. The infrastructure has however yet to be finalised and put in place. Updates will follow in due course.

Annual Parish Meeting – This was well attended by residents. Each councillor reported on their area of responsibility for the past year. Various financial accounts were reported on. This meeting was followed by the AGM for the Village Hall Management Committee, which ran smoothly with its new Chairman and Secretary and Harry Townsend was appointed as the new Treasurer to replace the exiting Paul Sale.

Parish Council Vacancy – There is still a vacancy on the Parish Council. Anyone wishing to find out more about becoming a parish councillor, please contact the Clerk for more details.

Robin Gater – Chairman