

BLETCHINGLEY PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

AUGUST 2010 to OCTOBER 2010

Annual Return – The Conclusion of Audit was received from the External Auditors and went on display on the 12th October for the required 14 days. The only item raised was the fact that we need to record an actual value, such as £1, rather than NIL against our land assets, such as the two grazing fields and the Little Common Lane allotment field. This change will be made for the next set of accounts.

August – was a very quiet month with no meetings. There were no Planning Committee meetings due to the lack of planning applications. The amount of planning applications for Blethingley continues to be very low for the time being.

Allotments - This year has been a good growing year for the allotments, particularly the new site, despite their late start. The allotment cup competition took place again this year with joint winners for the Little Common Lane site, namely Derek Coppard and Barbara Kingsley. Vanessa Brett Davey got the certificate for the Best Newcomer. All allotment holders are reminded of the need to compost on their own plots and to take away any excess produce or rubbish. Please also ensure that the paths and any hedging surrounding your plots are kept neat and tidy. A skip was provided at the Little Common Lane site for the purpose of removing unwanted bulky items such as glass frames etc left over from previous allotment tenants. This was also an opportunity for the allotmentees to remove any excess produce that remained on the plots. Due to the wet ground when the skip was delivered, it was not possible to put the skip far enough in to shut the gate.

Blethingley in Bloom - Once again the small dedicated team successfully achieved a Silver Gilt Award and an additional 8 Certificates of Excellence were awarded. Whilst we are unsure as to their direction next year, the Parish Council are very grateful for their efforts and will continue to support them in their efforts to enhance the village and maintain current projects, whether or not they enter the in Bloom competition next year.

BT Kiosk in Brewer Street – Some of you may have noticed that the BT Kiosk in Brewer Street which was adopted last year has finally received a face lift and is looking like a new kiosk again, minus the telephone equipment. It is proposed to have on display inside the kiosk some pictures and a brief write up of the history surrounding Brewer Street. At a later stage it is hoped to have details of some of the surrounding walks in that location. If anyone would like to do a write up on a favourite walk in that location, giving details of the walk etc, then please do forward these to the Clerk.

Cemetery - The damaged section of a large tree in the cemetery was removed by contractors. Maintenance will continue over the winter months as last year to continue to clear away overgrown vegetation from around the old graves. It is hoped that some additional mapping of the visible graves will be undertaken again this year to continue expanding on the map that was started last year. This has already helped with locating an unmarked relatives grave, which would not have otherwise been found.

Grange Meadow Crossing – SCC had undertaken the feasibility study and plans and specifications were drawn up which were passed to two local contractors and to two contractors from SCC's approved list. SCC confirmed that a local contractor could be sought to undertake the work as long as they completed one of their Contractor forms. We have received informal quotes back from 3 and are awaiting the 4th. An estimated cost for the works is in the region of £50k. The contractors are being asked to attend a site meeting to discuss whether there are ways of bringing the costs down. These suggestions will then be taken back to SCC for their approval. SCC have confirmed they will provide £15k towards

the project which means that the Parish Council and its residents need to find the other £35k. The possibility of another long term Public Works Loan Board loan was considered but it was felt that the repayment cost for this on top of the allotment loan would be over £10k a year and therefore too much. Funding ideas are therefore being sought and any donations towards the scheme are very welcome. This is something that has been raised on numerous occasions, not only by residents but also by the Safe Routes to School partnership and was also identified at the Go Ahead Bletchingley consultation undertaken at this year's Village Fair. Should you have any suggestions or wish to make any contributions, please do contact the Parish Clerk.

Hevers Pond: The Licence is now signed and members are being sought for the Hevers Pond team. SARG (Surrey Amphibian and Reptile Group) have confirmed they are happy to assist us with advice as to work required on the pond and will undertake the plant life survey early next year. We are awaiting their advice as to what work is needed to be done this year. If anyone is interested in this project and would like to know more or get involved, then please contact the Clerk for more details.

Highway Issues – SCC are scheduled to be cleaning all drain gulleys and checking outlets in the Bletchingley area in October as well as doing verge maintenance. The relocation of the 30 speed signs to the beginning of Big Common Lane and Little Common will have hopefully been completed by the end of October. SCC launched a campaign on 4 October to let people know how SCC are prepared for winter this year. It will share advice and suggestions as to how residents can prepare for winter themselves. It will also provide answers to frequently asked questions, such as grit bin locations, gritting routes and how businesses can deal with winter issues. Please visit the SCC website and look for the link "Preparing for Winter". Tandridge District Council also encourage residents to visit their website www.tandridge.gov.uk and join their News Direct service, which means that they will get e-mails sent directly to their in-boxes. Residents are also encouraged to visit a central point on the SCC Highways web pages www.surreycc.gov.uk/highwaysinfoonline for all seasonal information on snow, flooding, potholes and roadworks. Awareness will also be raised about the online form that is available for people to easily report problems with roads and pavements.

Overhanging Trees/encroaching hedgerows – Discussions are taking place with the relevant parties in relation to the cutting back of the vegetation down Church Lane and the trimming of trees overhanging Little Common Lane near William IV.

Minerals: The minerals battle continues: despite all our pleas, the County Planning Authority will not withdraw the Minerals Plan. Next month sees the first of a series of Minerals Plan hearings before a Government Inspector at which your Parish Council will be speaking against the exploitation of sand at Pendell Farm. Before that, we will have voiced our objections about North Park Quarry's dust action plan and dust monitoring scheme, which we feel give our community insufficient protection. These applications are due to be determined by the County in mid-October, so the results will be out before you read this.

Meanwhile, we are about to be updated on the local work of Star Energy. Two years ago we heard that they had struck oil when investigating the Bletchingley Gas Field on Tilburstow Hill. Although the wells are just over our border in Godstone, the gas field stretches westwards across to Outwood Lane. At the end of October there is a meeting to tell us what will happen next. It is expected that in the end, after the oil and gas have been piped away, the empty gas field will be used as a gas storage system.

Website: After a few hiccups the new website is now up and photos are now aplenty! Anyone who wants to publicise a local event or club or has some local news to impart please contact sally.ray@btinternet.com.

Robin Gater – Chairman