

BLETCHINGLEY PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

MAY 2010 to JULY 2010

Annual Parish Meeting – The meeting on Monday the 24th May went very well. Inspector Elaine Burtenshaw spoke to those attending about Surrey Policing and the review and answered questions from the audience. The police review and ultimate cost savings would result in an increase of 200 police officers on the beat of which Tandridge would see a minimum of 8. Mona Johansson of Surrey Community Action spoke about the results of the survey on Affordable Housing in Bletchingley. It was recognised that there was a need and that the Parish Council needed now to decide whether to take this matter forward and if so, to discuss possible schemes and locations. The Parish Council were keen to look further into the idea of affordable housing where the Parish Council retained control over the occupancy to ensure that it benefited Bletchingley residents.

Allotments and Old Allotment Field: All plots on both sites are fully occupied with 2 remaining on the waiting list. The new site in Stychens Lane was very well received and work on these plots has been tremendous despite the late start to the season. The Allotment Cup competition will be held again this year with an additional cup for the “Best Newcomer” of which there have been quite a few entries. The provision of a skip is being looked into for Little Common Lane allotments, for sometime in September/October.

Highway Improvements throughout Bletchingley – In light of the recent economic climate, Surrey County Council has had its budgets cut along with many other organisations. As a result of this, the scheme for the crossing at Grange Meadow is unlikely to proceed without funding assistance. A feasibility study was undertaken and the estimated likely costs of the works was in the region of £50k. Surrey County Council is being asked to consider whether local Parishes could arrange for their own contractors to undertake some of the works no longer being done due to budget cuts. This is likely to result in lower costs for the works. Funding however still needs to be sourced. The recent petition to have the 30 speed marker relocated to near the new Gateway at the Godstone end was presented at the Tandridge Local Committee Meeting on the 2nd July. It was agreed that subject to funding, a speed limit assessment can be carried out, taking into account the new speed management policy and a report brought to the Local Committee at a later date for decision.

Sutton and East Surrey Water have confirmed that once their works are completed down Sandy Lane/Brewer Street, they will make the relevant reinstatement works to the junction of Big Common Lane and Little Common Lane, including kerb damage and reinstatement of the grass corner.

Bletchingley in Bloom: The small team have worked tirelessly throughout the year on various projects to get ready for judging day on the 9th July. Some residents have renewed their own efforts to maintain their frontages and gardens. Please contact any In Bloom member or the Clerk for more details. New members are always welcome and needed in order to ensure the ongoing activities of the group.

Bletchingley Grange Meadow Play Area – This is being well utilised. The basketball area has had lines painted on it for basketball and 5-side football and there is now a tennis wall up for those who wish to practice their tennis. These additional features were secured thanks to Tandridge District Council and Bletchingley Playground Friends. The Social Club has created an outside serving hatch to make purchasing of refreshments easier for those who wish to remain outside. It is a shame to note that despite the availability of these play facilities which are appreciated by many, there are still a few who feel it appropriate to try to

destroy it. It was only the quick thinking of some local residents who managed to avert a real disaster when a couple of youths attempted to set fire to the skate park.

Hevers Pond: The Parish Council and RH&RW Cluttons on behalf of their client have now finally reached agreement on the licence which will enable Bletchingley in Bloom or another approved group to undertake agreed measures at Hevers pond to ensure its continued survival. This will not only benefit the inhabitants of the pond but also residents and walkers.

Minerals: The new Government is currently setting out new planning regulations and updating mineral requirements. Your Parish Council has been urging Surrey County Council to withdraw the draft Surrey Mineral Plan until the revised figures for local sand production are published. However SCC are pushing ahead and have already submitted their plan to the Government Inspector prior to a Public Inquiry later in the year. We are still trying to get a withdrawal, but if necessary at the Inquiry we will be able to speak out against the Plan and the need to extend our local sand quarry into an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is within the zone providing our drinking water.

Village Gateways: There have been a few complaints about the location of the new sign at Big Common Lane, citing issues relating to sightline. The location was agreed in consultation with SCC Highways and has been tested by various drivers in a variety of vehicles. It is felt that the location of this gateway does make drivers accessing the A25 from Big Common Lane use the junction with more caution and having to physically stop at the junction before proceeding onto the A25. Traffic from both directions can be seen if stopping just before the junction.

Website: At the end of June, the Bletchingley Village website was moved onto a new web platform that will provide enhanced functionality and allow us to upload more photos and even video! We are still working on the new formatting but there is already a new section which provides parishioners with the latest information pertaining to the North Park Quarry Local Liaison Committee (http://www.bletchingley.org.uk/?page_id=832.) Anyone who wants to publicise a local event or club or has some local news to impart please contact sally.ray@btinternet.com.

Power of Well Being: The Parish Council adopted the Power of Well Being at the meeting on 10 May 2010. The Parish Council had recently qualified to adopt the Power of Well Being, which gives the council far-reaching powers to seek finance for substantial projects, which have the approval of the community. The Parish Council will have regard to the sustainable community strategy drawn up by TDC when exercising the power and will seek to engage the community when exercising the Power of Wellbeing through continued public attendance at meetings, publication of minutes and other parish related documents, on the website and through quarterly newsletters in the local Parish Magazine. Our adopted Community Engagement Statement is:

The Parish Council is committed to promote community spirit and pride in Bletchingley by:

- Listening, consulting and acting on residents requests;
- Helping to make Bletchingley a flourishing, pleasant and safe place to live and work; and
- Enhancing and protecting the village's historic buildings and areas of outstanding beauty.

The Parish Council has no immediate plans to use the new power but may consider a number of projects that may require a greater level of expenditure than was previously allowed, following the outcome of the comments received at the "Go Ahead Bletchingley" stall at the Village Fair. One of these could be the crossing at Grange Meadow. However, residents can

be assured that there will always be wide public consultation to ensure that there is agreement with any proposal that may require the use of the Power of Well-Being.

Miscellaneous: - The Parish Council, following a request from residents using Tilgate Common, has installed a new handrail at the access point from Crescent Road. The damaged fence on the high path between the Coneybury Stores and the recycling has also been repaired.

Trees – The oak at the west end of the village by Boterys Cross was inspected by the SCC Tree Warden who suggested the removal of the ivy in the first instance to see if the tree recovers. This has now been done by the DA Landscaping, with the remaining ivy higher up the tree being left to die back and fall off. It is hoped that this will give the tree a chance to recover. It is a shame to see that the old oak in Church Lane is to be taken down due to ill health, but the owners have planted young plants grown from its seeds in their garden and has a further seedling in a plot waiting for another location. More details on this are available on the website and may be in the magazine as well. Following a petition received from local residents in Kenrick Square requesting the raising of the canopy of the Lime trees in front of their property, the Clerk made contact with Turners Hill Tree Surgeons and Tandridge District Council where it was agreed that Tandridge District Council would fund the tree work which has been completed.

Annual Return – The accounts for Bletchingley Parish Council were agreed and signed and an Annual Report produced which is available on the website and at Longhursts free of charge or by contacting the Clerk. The Annual Return has now been sent off to the External Auditor.

Robin Gater – Chairman