

BLETCHINGLEY PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

NOVEMBER 2010 to FEBRUARY 2011

Allotments – 2 allotments have recently been relinquished and handed over to new tenants. Renewal reminders will be sent out early March. Anyone who knows that they will not be continuing with their plot should please contact the Clerk so that it can be forwarded on to the next person on the waiting list so that they can get into the growing season early. There are currently 5 on the waiting list. Could we please remind all allotmenters that they are required to compost what they can on their own plots or remove the waste. Bonfires will only be allowed under supervision over the bonfire night weekend. The area surrounding your plots need to be kept neat and tidy. The water will be turned back on around the middle of March depending on the weather. Please report any problems to the Clerk.

Annual Parish Meeting – In light of the fact that it is election year for Bletchingley Parish Council and that 5 members are standing down, it was felt appropriate to bring the Annual Parish Meeting forward to allow any interested members to come to the meeting and learn about the council and its role. The date set is Monday 4th April in the Community Centre for 7.00pm for tea and coffee and refreshments and the meeting starting at the usual time of 7.30pm. It is hoped also to have a member of Surrey County Council (SCC) Highways attend the meeting to answer those burning questions about winter maintenance. There is also likely to be information available about the progress of the Grange Meadow Crossing.

Bletchingley in Bloom – The small team will be continuing this year with their regular work parties on the 2nd Saturday morning of every month to maintain the various projects. The Parish Council continue to support the team in its efforts to maintain the appearance of the village. These agreed work parties will now be covered under the Parish Council public liability insurance when using tools provided by the Parish Council.

Cemetery - The maintenance programme has continued throughout the year, with winter maintenance and additional mapping of grave locations.

Parish Elections 2011 – 5th May 2011 is election time for a number of parishes in Tandridge, including Bletchingley. It is known that 5 members of Bletchingley parish council will not be restanding for election for various personal reasons. In order to keep up the good work of the Parish Council, we need to ensure that we have a full compliment of elected members on council after the 5th May. If anyone is interested in becoming a councillor, please contact any of the council members or the Parish Clerk for more information about what is involved. The Parish Clerk has literature and dvd's available for prospective candidates. Nomination forms will be available from the Clerk or TDC from the beginning of March and need to be handed in to TDC by noon of Monday 4th April.

Grange Meadow Crossing – Fundraising for the £42k required for this project is still ongoing. The Parish Council have received confirmation of their borrowing approval for £15,000 to cover any shortfall in the fundraising should it be required. At the time of writing this, the outcome of the Race Night held on the 19th February is unknown. The next event is the Promise Auction to be held on the 12th March at Bletchingley Golf Club. Following receipt of detailed quotes, the contractor, Conway FM has now been approved. We are still awaiting final details of the partnership working between SCC and the Parish Council to be drawn up by SCC. Detailed drawings of the proposed pedestrian island crossing will be available for viewing at the Annual Parish Meeting. TDC are putting Grange Meadow forward as a site for nomination for the QE II Playing Fields Award. Please look out for further details on this in due course.

Hevers Pond: The first work party, under the guidance of members of SARG (Surrey Amphibian and Reptile Group) finally took place on the 22nd January. We had 6 volunteers from Bletchingley and 4 from SARG. The vegetation near the footpath was cleared and some minor coppicing was done to improve the habitat. Numerous bags of rubbish were cleared from in and around the pond. Some of the cut vegetation was removed, with the rest being left to create habitats for the local wildlife. TDC very kindly removed the rubbish, including the carpet that had been dumped near the pond at some time. Members of SARG are now awaiting the appropriate time to carry out their amphibian and reptile surveys. Hawthorns School are in touch with SARG about trying to arrange for their Eco Friendly group to get involved with the surveys. St Catherines School have also been forwarded the contact details. Historical information about Hevers Pond and information about its inhabitants are hoping to be put together for publication on a notice board to be displayed at the site. Discussions will also be undertaken about the provision of a bench on site. Should anyone be interested in becoming involved in the surveys, which are likely to take place at night, then please get in touch with the Clerk for more information.

Highway Issues – The two drain covers, located near the war memorial and Barfields have both now been repaired by Thames Water. The Parish Council are still in discussion about SCC's winter maintenance programme and how we can assist. In order to get any more salt bins placed on Highway land, the Parish Council would be required to pay £2,500 per bin for a 10 year maintenance agreement with SCC. This was not felt to be cost effective as most of the salt in the bins is removed before it can be used for its intended purpose, at times using shovels and trucks to remove the whole contents of the bin. Therefore there is no point in the placement of a salt bin and salt if it is not going to be available for the purpose for what it was intended. Residents are requested to purchase their own salt to grit their own properties. Details of the salting routes are available on the SCC website. The clerk has forwarded to SCC details of local farmers who are willing to assist with winter maintenance and is also talking to the Nutfield Parish Clerk about possible ways the two parishes can work together for the benefit of the residents. Please see the two links below for more information about what TDC www.tandridge.gov.uk and SCC www.surreycc.gov.uk/highwaysinfoonline do in winter conditions. Any potholes need to be reported direct on the SCC website using their online reporting system in order to obtain a reference number. Please could this reference number, along with details be forwarded to the Clerk for tracking.

Overhanging Trees/encroaching hedgerows – Following a site meeting with the owner of 5 Acres, they arranged for the canopy of the trees overhanging Little Common Lane, originating from their property to be trimmed. This was done in December. It is hoped that by the time this magazine is out that the vegetation down Church Lane will have been cut back following discussions with SCC, the Golf Club and contractors. A temporary road closure will have been necessary and hopefully some remedial road repairs will also have been undertaken.

Minerals: At the recent Surrey Minerals Plan hearing sessions we raised objections on future possible sand quarrying at Pendell Farm, as it is in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and also lies above the aquifer supplying our drinking water. Sutton and East Surrey Water Company stated in agreement that this area should be protected from such possible pollution. We accompanied the hearing Inspector on a visit and thoroughly explored the whole quarry site. We also supported the residents of Nutfield and Oxted by attending the hearing sessions on possible sand quarrying there, where the generation of heavy goods traffic would be the main problem, some of which on the A25 could impinge on us. The Inspector's final decisions on each of these sites are awaited.

Meanwhile at North Park Farm Quarry the sand company has agreed to modify their dust monitoring scheme and action plan to help protect local residents from dust increases. These much-delayed documents will shortly be sent out by Surrey County Council for formal

consultation, as will the final application to quarry at Pendell. We will then submit our comments.

We have met with Star Energy, who are now piping oil from Bletchingley Gas Field on Tilburstow Hill. To ascertain the size of oil deposit they are testing the need to drill up to four appraisal wells. A decision to drill would require a planning application, on which we would be consulted and comment.

Skate Ramps – It was unfortunate that the skate ramps had to come down in January. Upon inspection following the last damage to the ramps at the end of 2010, it was revealed that the internal structure was no longer sound. Independent inspections all came to the same conclusion that the ramp needed to be removed for safety reasons. TDC arranged for this to be done in January. Materials that could be re-used were salvaged and are being stored by TDC for a later date. TDC's own contractors then removed the remaining structure. TDC have had tarmac placed in the footprint left behind, which has now left an even surface. Members of BagAged are working with TDC to try to raise the required funds to get a replacement ramp put in as soon as funds are available. The Parish Council confirmed their support for the requirement for a new skate park. TDC have confirmed that they have no intention to use the site for any purpose other than a skate ramp site.

St Catherines School – The Parish Council have purchased and installed a road sign indicating the location of St Catherines School to be placed under the St Catherine's Cross sign in the place of the disintegrated sign which used to indicate the direction of Lambert Cottages.

Village Hall – We are still urgently looking for someone to take the chair of the Village Hall Management Committee. This is a good way to get involved in the village. The Treasurer, Secretary and Booking Secretary are all continuing but a new Chair will be required to take over at the Annual General Meeting to be held after the Annual Parish Meeting on the 4th April. Please contact the Parish Clerk for further information or one of the Village Hall Management Committee members.

Website: This is being regularly updated with events and news. A new section will be included shortly to include details of walks in and around Bletchingley. Please take time out to have a look at what is happening in your village. 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