BLETCHINGLEY PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting is to be held on Thursday 17th May 2012
at the Community Centre at 7.00 pm

A G E N D A

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4 April 2011
3. To receive the Accounts of Bletchingley United Charities for the year ended 30 September 2011 – Presented by David Martin
4. To receive the Accounts of the Village Hall (Bletchingley) Trust for the year ended 31 December 2011 – Presented by Robert Trotman
5. To receive the BAGaged Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2012 and update on the progress of the Skate Park – Presented by David Holland and James Holland
6. To receive White Hill Residents’ Association Report
7. TAG A25 / Roads - Update by Cllr Ann Butler
8. CCTV - Update by Chairman Sally-Anne Ray
9. An opportunity to ask questions of the Parish Council. All reports from Councillors areas of responsibility are contained in the Annual Report which is available at the meeting or in advance from Longhursts or by contacting the Clerk. Copies of the accounts are also available on request.
10. Local Housing for Local People

   • Speaker - Nick Hughes of English Rural Housing Association on Affordable Housing schemes across Surrey & Sussex - 15 minutes
   • Speaker – Cllr Robert Trotman – Local Housing Options for Bletchingley – 20 minutes.

Open up to the Floor for Questions and Comments
Chairman’s Report

The last year has certainly been a full one for the Parish Council as you will see from the individual responsibility reports within.

In May 2011 we were delighted to welcome five new councillors to our team. Between them they have brought a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the council in the last year in topics as far ranging as planning, finance, education, speedwatch and allotments. While the installation took a little longer than we had initially hoped for we were all delighted to see the completion of the Grange Meadow Crossing in the Autumn and our thanks again go to all those villagers that supported the project. We were also very pleased to be able to confirm our support for BAGaged during 2011 by pledging £10k towards the new Skate Park at Grange Meadow. We are hoping this will be in place during the Summer of 2012.

October saw the formation of a new Action Group – TAG (Traffic Action Group) comprising members from the parish councils and residents’ groups of Nutfield, Bletchingley and Godstone which has been set in response to parishioners concerns about the increasing levels of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) on the A25.

Looking forward, the Summer of 2012 promises to be even more exciting than usual for Bletchingley, with the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations in early June. Look out for the Diamond Jubilee Flower beds in Grange Meadow that have just been planted but should be in full bloom by June. These celebrations are followed quickly afterwards by the Olympic Torch being carried through the streets of Bletchingley on the 20th July followed by the Big Village Sports Day in Grange Meadow. For those of you that want more details of these events see our Village Website (http://www.bletchingley.org.uk/) for the latest up to date information.

Lastly I would like to thank the rest of the Councillors for the time and effort they give to the community and in particular to our Clerk for her commitment, organization and dedication when supporting council work as well as her drive in setting up and supporting local youth projects such as the Bletchingley Youth Club.

Councillor Sally-anne Ray, Chairman

Allotments

The Council is currently responsible for 2 Allotment sites. There are 23 Allotments on the Little Common Lane site and 12 Allotments on the Old Allotment Field site. Both sites have standpipes with water supplied free of charge to all plot holders. Parking is available at the Stychens Lane site via key only entry. The rental charge for each plot is £30 per annum which should be paid by 1st April each year. At the start of the new growing season 3 plots remain vacant and available to rent.

Allotment Competition - The Council ran the annual Competition for the Best Kept Allotment. The show judge, Len Stebbings made two visits to the sites – one earlier in the season and the other shortly before the Horticultural Show. Last year’s winner was B Kingsley of Plot 19, with 2 runners up receiving Certificates.

The council will be running the competition again this year and it has been decided that ALL plot holders will be entered automatically unless they inform us that they do not want to take part. Letters will be sent out shortly to all plot holders informing them of the new rules.

The Village will not be entering Bletchingley in Bloom this year.

Councillor Val Leonhardt
CCTV

After the breakdown of our roaming metal mickey CCTV camera in the Autumn of 2011 which would have cost over £5k to repair, we undertook a market review and concluded that our CCTV systems needed a thorough overhaul to take advantage of the latest IP technology. This will not only increase the recording time to up to a month before overwriting (as opposed to 96 hours now) but also allow quicker and easier access of data as required and at zero cost (as opposed to the £90 that we have to pay now per call out).

As a result we are currently in a tender process to upgrade our current systems with at least 3 fixed cameras throughout the village but with the option to then add cameras in future years as further budget becomes available. As an added benefit local residents or business's will also be able to 'sponsor' a camera for their street or area and therefore become part of our CCTV IP network which will of course act as a further deterrent against crime and anti-social behaviour across the village as a whole.

If you have a view of where these fixed camera's should be placed and / or would like to know more about helping to fund a 'camera' for your street or local area please contact our Clerk.

Councillor Sally-anne Ray

Cemetery

The deficit in the Cemetery Accounts for the year decreased by £680.

Expenditure decreased by £235 and there was an increase in income of £445.

The contractor responsible for the maintenance of the Cemetery had only slightly increased their cemetery charges to take into account the rise in fuel prices.

As before, maintenance continues throughout the year, with the winter months being taken up by clearing nuisance growth and the plotting of visible graves onto a database. However not as much progress with the latter took place during this year, as grass cutting continued much later into autumn because of the mild weather.

Councillor Patricia Ann Glenn

Finance

Bletchingley Parish Council have pleasure in submitting the agreed accounts for the year ended 31 March 2012, at the same time expressing our thanks to the Clerk for her continued dedication in maintaining accurate accounts which will be available for public viewing following audit by the internal and external auditors. The Clerk will post the dates for public viewing of the accounts on the Parish Notice Board at the appropriate time.

The Parish Council have examined in detail the budget prepared in November last year to ensure that the demands being placed on them have been carefully costed. We reviewed the current precept and agreed that it was not necessary to increase it for the coming year.

The Parish Council has during the past four years provided a number of new projects following public consultation, including the purchase of the Little Common Lane Allotment land from Thames Water Authority, secondly, with the aid of donations the Parish Council have supported the creation of the new playground at Grange Meadow and thirdly the island crossing at Grange Meadow. The Parish Council have also continued to support Bletchingley in Bloom and thank the volunteers who work extremely hard to maintain the village for the benefit of residents and visitors. The Parish Council discussed in detail the contractual procedure for the island
crossing at Grange Meadow. As a result of these discussions it was decided that all the donations received would be passed to Surrey County Council and they would take total responsibility for the construction contract. An amount of £24,087.45 was paid over which included the Parish Council’s contribution to the project.

The income during the year has slightly fallen from allotment rents, the website and the cemetery. The Parish Council assisted at the Village Fair by providing a Hog Roast, which was well received by the public. This cost £172 after sales were taken into account.

During the year the Parish Council borrowed an additional £9,975 to cover its contribution to the Grange Meadow Island Crossing making the Councils total borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board £27,000. Capital repayments of £5,239 have been made during the year leaving a balance to be repaid of £18,479.

The Parish Council during the year under the category S137 made donations towards ST. Catherine’s Hospice, the poppy wreath, Victim Support and CPRE membership.

We have also donated sums to the Citizen Advice Bureau and Toddlers Group and Surrey Crimestoppers.

**Councillor Anthony Cock**

Footpaths

Surrey County Council remains the responsible authority but there is now even greater reliance on local people and the Parish Council to be their eyes and ears.

Clearance of rights of way is the responsibility of landowners unless the footpath has been adopted by SCC, as is the case with the back path - Footpath 506. Various obstructions and broken way-marking signs have been reported during the year and the Parish Council is grateful to those who take pains to do this.

Footpaths adjacent to highways are the responsibility of SCC Highways Department and problems relating to these should be reported directly to that Department, or alternatively to the Clerk to the Parish Council. Problems with other footpaths or bridleways should be reported to the Clerk or to the SCC Footpaths Officer for this area who will be Sarah Jenman (tel 01737 737332).

**Councillor Patricia Ann Glenn**

Environment & Mineral Issues

The Surrey Minerals Plan section on sand quarry sites has been completed, and, as recorded here last year, although we had opposed the inclusion of Pendell Farm as a suitable site for silica sand extraction, that site is to remain in the Plan. Following this, in March the application by Sibelco to extend their sand quarry to Pendell Farm was finally granted permission, despite Sutton and East Surrey Water Company’s objections, and ours, on the grounds of risk of pollution of the aquifer. Your parish council is represented on both Sibelco’s community Liaison Group and the Quarry Observation Group, which together won agreement for a stand-off between quarry faces and residences of at least 100 metres, for the finish of sand extraction at North Park Quarry within 18 months of the start of work at Pendell and for a dust management scheme to cover the entire quarry. Sand from Pendell will travel to the processing plant at North Park Farm, crossing the road on an overhead conveyor, and leave by the haul route at Godstone, so at least there should be no increase in road traffic.

In March the hearing on the Aggregate Recycling Document of the Surrey Minerals Plan was largely completed. We had objected to the inclusion of an Aggregate Recycling Centre at Copyhold Works on Cormongers Lane. Although this site lies outside our immediate area in east Redhill, currently heavy
lorries from Cormongers driving along the A25 contribute to the traffic problems in our village and this potential development could generate more. Last year, the Traffic Action Group for the A25 (TAG-A25), comprising members from the parish councils and residents’ groups from Nutfield, Bletchingley and Godstone, was set up to campaign against increasing levels of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) on the A25. A new traffic survey commissioned by TAG-A25 provided clear evidence of significant recent increases, and this evidence was presented to the Government Inspector at the hearing. Consequently he has requested more information from the County Council and his final report is awaited.

Star Energy continue work on their appraisal bore-holes at King’s Farm off Tilburstow Hill Road. It is still uncertain whether larger-scale oil-production there will be commercially viable.

Councillor Ann Butler

Neighbourhood Watch/Police Liaison

Once again all households in the village will have received a “Newswatch” newsletter, which is published by Bletchingley Neighbourhood Watch and financed by the Parish Council. This document details what we do and what’s happened locally.

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators are greatly valued for they provide advice and reassurance and keep residents updated with the latest crime related information. The Parish Council thank them for their loyalty and commitment.

PC James Green and PCSO Lorraine Wells continue to provide a visible presence in the village, talking to visitors and residents, visiting the local school, shops and clubs giving crime prevention advice, as well as handling speeding, underage drinking, youth disorder, burglary and anti-social behaviour.

During the past year nuisance crime has been a constant irritation particularly the random catapult attacks on houses and cars, theft from unsecured cars and theft from sheds. This has affected Tandridge as a whole not just Bletchingley and the police have been working hard to identify the culprits. The Parish Council are grateful for the dedication they have given to this task. During the past year the Neighbourhood Panel meetings have been held on alternate months, with Street Surgeries being held on the third Wednesday of each month at Bletchingley Post Office.

The Parish Council is updated each month on reported crimes, a précis of which is included in the minutes of the meeting.

Residents have continued to complain about vehicles exceeding the permitted speed limit, particularly along the A25. Trained volunteers have been using equipment from the Police Road Casualty Reduction section in order to reduce traffic speed along the A25 and Speedwatch has been extended to include Outwood Lane and Rabies Heath Road. There is however an urgent need for more volunteers to be trained so that the current Speedwatch team can continue.

A very important project in the village which PCSO Lorraine Wells has been instrumental in setting up has been the Bletchingley Youth Club. This has been a great success, and with the help of fully vetted volunteers this Club continues to offer a safe and structured environment for youngsters aged 10-16. They make new friends, enjoy themselves and learn new skills. PCSO Lorraine Wells and the volunteers are to be congratulated on providing and running a club which is an essential part of our village life. Sadly as with Speedwatch new volunteers are urgently required.

Once again, the message for all village residents is to continue to be vigilant and not to hesitate to come forward and report crimes, unusual behaviour and occurrences. You are playing an important role and you are valued by our policing team who are dedicated to
maintaining a safe neighbourhood. If you suspect something, report it, let’s make life difficult for criminals to operate in Bletchingley.

Councillor Paul Tarrant

Planning

The Parish Council has statutory rights to be consulted by the District Council on all planning issues determined by the District Council within the parish and, likewise, we are consulted on planning issues, which are the responsibility of Surrey County Council and by other authorities on our boundary.

Planning issues are normally the longest item on the Parish Council agenda and one which is most often of interest to inhabitants. The chairman has always allowed residents to speak regarding any planning issue. The Parish Council is obliged to respond to planning submissions within 3 weeks of the receipt of the application by the District Council and for this reason the Parish Council considers applications at the Full Council meeting (usually the second Monday of each month) and again at Planning Committee meetings (usually on the last Monday of each month).

It should be made clear that the Parish Council does not decide planning issues but rather comments to the District Council using its local knowledge. This can be important in contentious applications as an objection by the P.C. would ensure that an application is then considered by the full planning committee of the District Council and not by the council officers alone.

In recent times there have been some significant changes in the planning system, most notably the introduction of “Permitted Development”. This takes some householder applications out of the normal planning system, although it is wise to consult with the planning authority to ensure that they are satisfied the proposals are compliant and that a “Certificate of Lawfulness” can be granted to avoid any future controversy about the works.

This government’s emphasis on “Localism” also has the potential to bring significant changes by allowing greater control at parish level and Bletchingley Parish Council is seriously considering the possibilities presented by this opportunity to take more control over our future.

All planning applications relating to the parish are held in Howard Cundey Estate Agent’s office in the village and can be viewed by any interested party (except when the papers are taken for review at Parish Council meetings). We are grateful to Howard Cundey and their staff for this service, which saves parishioners a trip to Oxted to see the applications. All planning applications can also be viewed on Tandridge District Council’s website.

Councillor Dick Kiss

Recreation

Under the regulations for Risk Assessment, which all Parish Councils are required to undertake, Stychens Lane playground has been inspected by me on an ad hoc basis, as Councillor responsible for this area. TDC undertake a full playground risk inspection on a regular basis as they do with the playground at Grange Meadow. The surrounding field is regularly checked for bottles, cans, plastic bags and any further rubbish detrimental to children and wildlife. Although the playground is not used to the extent of Grange Meadow, it is still a useful commodity for the children living at the western end of the village.

Councillor Val Leonhardt
**Sports Association**

The Sports Association comprises all the sports clubs that use Grange Meadow. The main part of the meadow is leased by TDC to the Sports Association and TDC appoints 3 local trustees to oversee its use. The skateboard ramp and the children’s play park are not included in the leased area. The officers of the Association are: chairman – Robert Trotman; secretary and treasurer – Christine Bolshaw; and Gill Black is the nominated district councillor for the Association. The 3 trustees are; Peter Friend, Robert Trotman and John Trott.

The clubs currently involved are the football club, the bowls club the rifle club and the model car racing club. At present there is no cricket club but the trustees are keeping the pitch basically maintained in the hope that cricket will return to Bletchingley. The clubs (through the association) pay the rent and rates charges by TDC for the general upkeep of the ground and maintenance of the basic fabric of the buildings (in total over £4,000 a year). Internal maintenance (including doors and windows) has to be provided by the clubs in addition to the costs of their own sports activities (including gas/electricity/water).

Vandalism continues to be a problem, affecting particularly the bowls club, although the installation of CCTV associated with the children’s playpark has improved the situation somewhat. The main pavilion includes a substantial bar area which is leased to a manager to support the football club – the other clubs having their own separate buildings. The bar area is available for hire during the daytime (Tel 742802).

All the clubs would welcome new members, playing or non playing. Please contact initially Christine Bolshaw, tel 743000 or email chrisbolshaw@hotmail.com

**Councillor Robert Trotman**

**Transport and Community Speedwatch**

There were fewer sessions earlier this year due to the illness of the co-ordinator. Further sessions have now taken place with approximately 20-25 cars clocked for speeding. New volunteers are always welcome. Please contact either, Cllr Leonhardt or D Turner, the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator.

**Councillor Val Leonhardt**

**Website**

Visits to the Bletchingley Village website (www.bletchingley.org.uk/) have increased by over 30% in the last year with the first quarter of 2012 seeing over 1000 hits per month with the most popular pages still being the Village News and Village Diary which are continuously updated. New sections introduced during 2011 include under 'History' the War Memorial and the Hawthorns School and a section under Village Hall detailing what’s on in the Village Hall and Community Centre. Advert revenues have slightly increased to £500 and once hosting costs were taken out, resulted in a net profit of £375 which added to the Parish coffers.

Villagers who wish to be added to the e-letter distribution list or indeed anyone who would like to provide news or give notice of events in Bletchingley please contact sally.ray@btinternet.com

**Councillor Sally-Anne Ray**
Clerk’s update

The Grange Meadow Crossing was finally completed in 2011 and the lights switched on and the old Plough Inn sign changed so as to no longer cause a sightline issue at that location.

Maintenance work on Hevers’ Pond continues to be done on a yearly basis with the help of members of SARG and local residents. The wording for a possible notice board sign has been agreed with quotes being sought for its purchase and installation.

The Youth Club continues to attract new members and currently has an average attendance of 18 each week. We were asked to attend the High Sheriff Youth Awards Ceremony in March 2012 and give a presentation which was very well received. We still require volunteers to help run this club. Please contact me for more details.

Bletchingley in Bloom continue to get the full support of the Parish Council who have contributed to the plants that filled the 4 Queen’s Diamond Jubilee beds that were created at Grange Meadow. Bletchingley Parish Council are grateful to Tandridge District Council for their continued support with the clearance of collected rubbish following the Bletchingley in Bloom work parties held each month.

New lighting columns have been going up around the village to replace the old ones. The Parish Council have recently agreed the design to replace the old “Swan neck” style column’s in the village as the original proposal suggested was not suitable. We await completion of the replacement programme.

Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and Olympic Torch – we look forward to both these two events coming up in the 2012/13 financial year.

I would like to thank all Councillors for their continued support and look forward to another good year.

Clerk Kim Wantling
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**NET RECEIPTS/(PAYMENTS) for the year** | 1,976.71 | 9,745
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011/2012

**Grange Meadow Crossing**
- In conjunction with the Go Ahead Bletchingley Team and the generosity of villagers and local businesses, we helped to raise funds for the Grange Meadow Crossing and then liaised with Surrey County Council to ensure that the Crossing was installed and completed during Autumn 2011.

**TAG A25**
- One of the founding members of TAG (Traffic Action Group) which was set up in October 2011 after concerns raised by residents of Nutfield, Bletchingley and Godstone villages regarding the increasing volume of HGVs on this part of the A25.

**Skate Park**
- Supported and agreed funding in aid of BAGaged for the replacement Skate Park which we hope will be completed during the summer of 2012.

**Highways**
- We were successful in getting the vegetation cut back in Outwood Lane and the hedge near Chevington Villas.

**Diamond Jubilee Beds**
- Supported Bletchingley in Bloom in the creation of the Diamond Jubilee Beds in Grange Meadow.
Don’t forget to come to the

Annual Village Meeting

Thursday 17 May 2012
Community Centre from 7.00 pm

SPEAKERS:

Sally-Anne Ray

“CCTV Plans for Bletchingley”
(including display of proposals)

Ann Butler

“TAG A25”

Nick Hughes - English Rural Housing Association
& Robert Trotman on

“Local Housing for Local People”