

Appendix to the Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2015

City Cllr Robert Thomas

Annual Parish Meeting

Councillor Robert Thomas Report

As we come to the end of the first year of a new council term there has been much change to report. Almost a year on from the local election in 2015 we now have 39 councillors (down from 50) we have a new Leader of the Council and a new model of governance (the committee system has replaced the Executive system). Needless to say things could have been bumpy with a change in governance style but so far so good I think many people would agree. It's worth pointing out for those who are concerned with the cost of politics that the budget for councillors allowances and expenses was approximately halved following the above changes.

At the start of the council there were a few issues to resolve left over from the last council and indeed one change of policy which was to reverse the previous decision to sell the Mill Centre in Bridge as it was felt that this community facility was needed by the residents and could be managed by a management team rather than by the council.

Moving through the year there has been many changes which can be summarised as follows:

- A new **Corporate Plan**, highlighting the Council's plans for the next four years, has been agreed.
- A **balanced budget** was passed for the 2016/17 with an annual increase of £5 for a Band D property for the CCC element of council tax
- A major joined up piece of thinking on **transport and public realm improvements** was announced with the trialling of Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology (barrier system) in the four car parks with the aim of rolling out the scheme across most of the districts car parks if successful. The cost of which was met with a four year plan of parking charges in Canterbury. Monies raised would also go to upgrading various city centre areas, footpaths and cycling routes. Additionally a plan to rationalise car parking by increasing Station Road West Car park by at least 140 spaces and new retail units (subject to planning consent) with some of the smaller car parks adjusted so that there is a zero net loss in spaces.
- **Commissioning Reviews** and **Digital Review** are underway to continue to put in place modern methods of working practise and ensure that the cost of providing councils services are at least as efficient as those provided by external organisations. The aim being to provide the services wanted in the modern world and within the resources available to the council
- Ensuring **fair funding for parish councils** has always been of concern to rural councillors and I'm pleased that we managed to agree a new scheme of support (concurrent function funding) with the support from parish councils from across the district.
- Despite the financial pressures the Council has been able to continue with ambitions plans too with the **upgraded Reculver Country Park** and agreeing to provide Active Life with a **new leisure facility** at the Amphenol site in Whitstable which should be open in the next twelve months. Whitstable Harbour has also had an upgrade with its **award winning disabled toilets and South Quay improvements**.
- The Council has agreed to set up a **Herne Bay Regeneration** Working Group to oversee the continued project which has had significant investment and behind the scenes work over the five years I've been on the council. Further to that the Council has agreed to fund a feasibility study for a new marina which will report back on cost, viability and overall

market conditions. Similarly as events gather pace, such as funding agreed in principle for a new offslip off the A2 Dover-bound the prospect of reigniting the **Wincheap regeneration** gathers pace and while still too soon to formally set up a regeneration working group there are works happening in the background to help keep this moving along.

Moving forward there continues to be some uncertainty created due to the big reduction in government funding still to come, the unknowns from the fallout of the EU referendum and also a big push from Government to get local councils to seek new combined authorities with elected mayors in the radical plans for devolution. The future of local government in East Kent could be very different in the years ahead! Additionally the Council will have to finally adopt its Local Plan and Transport Strategy, subject to any changes yet to be decided by the planning inspector, and we shall also be agreeing a new Quality Bus Partnership (between CCC, KCC and Stagecoach) about future provision and service level of buses within our district. Having previously agreed a development at Kingsmead (old coach park) at the end of the last council we hope that the developer can obtain planning permission for a scheme which could include a new cinema as well as retail and restaurants on site in the near future too which is another example of the big development applications the city council continues to receive across the district.

On a personal note I have been serving as Chairman of Audit and Governance, Vice Chair of Regeneration and Property, Vice Chair of the Rural Area Advisory Committee and a member of the Planning Committee. I was also tasked with a project for most of the year to see how the council could increase its income which will report to Policy and Resources Committee in April 2016. I was also appointed as Director at Active Life, as a trustee at Canterbury Relief in Need Charity and as the representative to Action with Communities in Rural Kent as part of the Council's Appointment to Outside Bodies process and look forward to helping these organisations enhance what we do in the district.

Robert Thomas
Councillor
Chartham and Stone Street Ward
Canterbury City Council

WSRA – Report by Terry Martin

The Waltham Sports and Recreation Association (WSRA) has undertaken a number of fundraising events and maintenance activities on the park/recreation ground over the course of the last year.

Events

WSRA organised the following events:

- Quiz Night in May 2014
- Summer Party on the Park, which included music, bar and BBQ in June 2014;
- Halloween/Bonfire Night in October 2014

The events were successful and the feedback was positive from those that attended.

Over the course of this year the WSRA is organising:

- a Summer Party for Saturday 20 June starting at 6.30pm, where we will have live music, bar and BBQ;
- a Halloween/Bonfire Night for October;

- a Quiz Night (date tbc); and
- a Pub Night which will be a joint venture with the Village Hall Committee.

The Committee has also set up a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WalthamSRA> where we will also advertise our events, as well as using PAW News.

Park Maintenance

The following maintenance activities took place last year on the park/recreation ground as part of the concurrent function money from the Parish Council and City Council:

- Regular grass cutting
- Hedge Cutting
- Installation of new lights
- 2 new picnic benches
- Repair of the field shelter which had been vandalised

There was also expenditure incurred on insurance and the annual ROSPA inspection.

Finance

The WSRA is very grateful for the support provided by Waltham Parish Council and local residents in terms of funding and supporting our events. We are also grateful for the concurrent function money from Canterbury City Council which goes towards helping maintain the park/recreation ground. The WSRA will continue to use the funds it has been provided with sensibly in order to maintain and enhance the park/recreation ground for Waltham residents. The WSRA Bank balance at 1 April 2015 was £2,449.99, although there was a £400.00 cheque payment that had not yet come out.

The total expenditure costs on the park totalled £2,873.14, with £2,771 being provided by Canterbury City Council and Waltham Parish Council.

The £2,975 expenditure for 2015/2016 will be spent on the following items:

- Grass cutting
- Tree and shrub maintenance
- Repair of play equipment
- Annual ROSPA inspection
- Insurance
- Repair of seating and shelter

We have just renewed the insurance for the park through Came & Company for £437.32 and will invoice the Parish Council shortly for reimbursement of those costs.

Yoga Classes at Waltham Village Hall – Lynn Saxby

The Yoga classes continue to run throughout the year and in September this year will have been running for fourteen years.

Numbers remain reasonably consistent with the usual peaks and troughs depending on weather and time of the year.

One or two of the students have been coming along for the whole of that time, the majority for several years, with a few new faces joining over the past year.

The classes are enjoyed by men and women with a wide range of ages and fitness levels and enjoy a friendly and sociable atmosphere.

New, absolute beginners or experienced students, are always welcome. As the classes are drop-in it is fine to come along just once to give yoga a try, joining in with as much or as little as you feel able. As well as the opportunity to meet up with locals from Waltham and other villages there are numerous health benefits, including healthy backs and the all important relaxation and stress management.

The village hall continues to be a big asset to the village and the yoga group are pleased to be among the most regular users. I hope to continue to run the classes for many years to come.

Village Hall – Report by Alastair Bailey

Village Hall Maintenance Works:

During the year we have done the following work to the Hall:

- Installed the pull down projector screen
- Reinstalled and repaired guttering and fascia boards.
- Repaired and refixed all external boarding.
- Repainted external boarding to most of the exterior of the hall (a small amount is still to be completed).
- Paved the area to the north east of the Hall adjacent to the storage shed.
- Provided new internal notice boards.
- Installed coir matting to entrance lobby.
- Installed new lighting to Kitchen.

Ongoing work includes:

- Modification of and painting of framework to external main entrance canopy and fixing new trapezoidal sheeting.
- Completion of external painting.
- Completion of replacement and re-bracketing of rainwater downpipes.
- Construction of weatherproof storage box on newly paved area for storage of marquees and accessories.
- Construction of removable access ramps for wheelchair access to main entrance.
- Also, with funds recently granted by Parish Council,
 - installation of projector system at high level with associated cabling and new speakers and amplifier to allow simple computer plug in.
 - Installation of time switches to existing radiant heaters in hall area.
 - Installation of under cupboard lighting to kitchen.

Film Club Screenings From the Beginning

- Gravity
- Saving Mr Banks
- Calvary
- American Hustle
- A Shot in the Dark - Pink Panther
- Big Fat Greek Wedding
- Grand Budapest Hotel

- Eat Pray Love – with church

WALTHAM GARDENERS' SOCIETY – Report by Les Leslie

The Gardeners' Society has had a year of interesting talks, a garden visit and regular events.

The Plant Sale took place in May, this is a vital event in the annual calendar as it is the main source of funds that are used to bring interesting speakers to our meetings and as usual it was a great success.

In June members visited Mount Ephraim Garden, the weather was kind and a great day out.

Later in June everyone was hard at work preparing their gardens for the Best Kept and Prettiest Garden competitions. An excellent selection of entries were visited by our Judge Elizabeth Edwards and she again had a very difficult task of reaching her conclusions. The winner of the Prettiest Garden competition was Philip Harland with the marvelous garden at Anvil Green tended by Philip with support from Claire. Peter Appleby presented the Helen Appleby Memorial Trophy. This year winner of the Best Kept Garden competition was Sue and Les Leslie and Elizabeth presented The Society Challenge Cup.

In July we welcomed Steve Edney the Head Gardener at Salutation Garden at Sandwich who provided a wonderful walk through the development of this iconic garden.

The Annual Show on 1st August was a riot of colour and vegetables and fruit of every hue. Our Show Secretary Mary Streater did a masterful job assembling the exhibits, organizing the judging and documenting the results, a very big thank you to her and Tim for a brilliant Show.

In September a duo of Brian and Jean Waterman provided an entertaining talk on The Thrifty Gardener with tips on utilizing all sorts of items to save time and money.

The Annual Dinner in October was held at a new venue of the Chequers Inn on Stone Street who provided a very good meal with great service.

The Annual General Meeting in November was well attended with excellent participation in crafting the programme for the coming year and ideas to enhance attendance at meetings.

The New Year commenced with a Question and Answer session with members which was most entertaining and productive.

In March Dusty Miller provided expert advice on Growing for the Show, followed by Janet Bryant returning in April with her talk on Colour in the Garden.

This year is the 75th year since the Society was founded and will be marked by a Garden Party on Sunday 19th June at Philip and Claire Harland's Garden at Anvil Green.

We hope to see you all there.

Lastly a big thank you to all of the members without who coming to the meetings, entering the Show and Garden Competitions and helping at the Plant Sale there would not be a Waltham Gardeners' Society.

WALTHAM TOWER REPORT 2015 – Report by Brian Law

We have the same number of members as last year and 3 learners.

I am still a member of District Committee. In June, Waltham is hosting a District Meeting. There was a “Ring for England” on the evening of 23rd April and also there is ringing on 9th May for VE Day. We hope there will be a peal rung in Waltham this year for a Waltham 70th Birthday.

We have 1 wedding to ring for in Waltham plus 4 weddings at Petham to ring for. We have new ropes in both towers.

Waltham Church Council - Report by Daphne Ten Hove, read by Pam Cox

As you are aware, St Bartholomew’s Church is now one of the three churches in the Parish Upon the Hills, the other two being St Mary the Virgin, Hastingleigh and St James the Great, Elmsted. The inaugural meeting was held last July 2014 and we have just had the APCM for this year. Mrs Roz Bacon and Mrs Daphne Ten Hove are the two elected Wardens. During the past year the position for House for Duty/Assistant Priest was advertised and two candidates interviewed. The Rev. Lorraine Lawrence from Gravesend was appointed. She moved in to the Vicarage at Hastingleigh with her husband Drew and their daughter and family in January 2015. Her licensing and Installation were held on the 4th February. She now takes at least one Sunday Service per month in each church. The Rev. Graham Whittlesea and Rev. Chris Duncan and other Benefice clergy assist with other services. As we no longer have a service on the 1st Sunday in the month it has been arranged that the 1st Sunday 9.30am service should rotate in turn round the three churches plus All Saint’s Petham. Miss Jill Metcalf has retired from taking services so Waltham is joining Elmsted for its 4th Sunday service, a 9.30am Holy Communion. Our organist for our 9.30am Family Communion Service is Miss Ruth Goodsell on the 3rd Sunday; 8am said service of Holy Communion on the 2nd Sunday is also at St Bartholomew’s.

Much time has been spent over the proposed alterations to the church to install wc facilities and a kitchenette. Our plans have now been given the “Go-Ahead” and have just this week commenced. Thankfully the money required has been obtained through grants and from various fund-raising events which have included Cream Teas, Poetry Evening, Wine and Wisdom, Film Night, Summer Lunch, Play Reading and Carol Singing round the village. Our grateful thanks are due for all the support given by the parish and local community. All being well building works will be completed by the end of July if not sooner.

We had one funeral and Memorial Service last June. There are two weddings booked for August and one for September. There were three Christenings last year and we have just had one on the 19th April and another is arranged for the 17th May. Our Easter Sunday Service started at 7am and was attended by 28 people.

Even more clearing has been done in the churchyard thanks to Mr Les Leslie and his valiant helpers. Mr Chris Tanton continues to keep our grass trim and our thanks are due to the Parish Council for their invaluable donation towards this. We only had one Lent Lunch this year, much enjoyed by those who came – about 11. Village Teas continue on the 1st Tuesday in the month. These are well attended and appreciated, and are usually attended by about 24 people per month. This is a social afternoon and much enjoyed.

Local Police - Report by PCSO Aaron Newell, read by Cllr Oram

My name is Aaron Newell and I have been the Police Community Support Officer for Chartham and Stone Street ward since November 2014. (This area also includes Waltham, Petham, Upper and Lower Hardres, and Bossingham).

The following is based on the 6 month period that I have been the Police Community Support Officer for the area.

Crime and anti-social behaviour are both very low in the village. The few reported crimes are ‘burglary other than dwelling’ (shed and garage break ins) and incidents of thefts. Although these incidents are very few and far between.

For further details of 'crime and disorder' in the area residents can check the following website;

<http://www.police.uk/kent/264>

Please see attached documents for crime prevention advice to hopefully prevent any further instances of rural crimes.

Kent Police continue to patrol the area and can be contacted on;
Emergency – 999 Non-Emergency – 101

I can be contacted directly via email at; 56646@kent.pnn.police.uk

For any members of the Parish Council or local residents who may be interested below are links from the Kent Police website regarding Community Speed Watch schemes, and Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

http://www.kent.police.uk/advice/community_safety/initiatives/speed_watch.html

http://www.kent.police.uk/advice/community_safety/initiatives/nwatch.html

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance in any way.

BODSHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL – Report by Mrs Pettersen, Executive Head Teacher, read by Cllr Oram

Bodsham School remains a thriving community of children and their families. The school has sustained an outstanding track record in terms of attainment. Once again it has been one of the highest performing schools in Kent and progress of each child has been well above national average. This is due to the hard work of each child and the commitment of a dedicated teaching team.

A highlight for us during the past year has been the purchase of our school minibus. For some time we had wanted to build a larger hall, but when this was seen to be prohibitively expensive we focused our energies on a minibus. This has allowed us to transport children more easily from one venue to another without having to be so reliant on the goodwill of parents. The minibus has enabled us to take part in trips such as being a Time Traveller in Folkestone, being a pilgrim on a special day at Canterbury Cathedral and taking part in a French workshop in another local school. In this way the experiences for children are being enriched.

Other activities that have offered a greater breadth of experience to the children have included taking part in a wide range of sporting activities including swimming, gymnastics, tennis, hockey, dance and football. A visiting theatre workshop has worked with the children on drama activities linked to Christmas and healthy living; another has involved the children in role play connected to the Easter Story.

We enjoy welcoming visitors to our school and have been particularly pleased to have Lorraine Lawrence to our school. Her presentations in our worship are always lively and engage the children. It has been good to see the school used in the last year for a church holiday club in the summer and a special Christmas day. The introduction of Messy Church in to school once a month has developed the links between the school families and the church.