

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 25th MAY 2023
AT 8.00PM IN THE CHURCH ROOM, WEST WYCOMBE**

PRESENT:

Cllrs Mr. S Cope (Chairman), Mr. N. Harris, Mrs. V. Smith BEM, Mrs. E.Copley, Ms C. Rowland, Mrs. S. Henson, Clerk & RFO,
Ben Stupples – Downley Dynamos, David Surtees Dawson – The National Trust, Alison Rimmer – West Wycombe PCC
Members of the public – Louise Brown, Judith Gerrard, Gary and Sue Palmer, Alison Wood, Mary Marshall

APOLOGIES: Cllr Mr. J Carstensen, Cllr Mrs. K. Cheshire, Buckinghamshire County Cllrs Mr. and Mrs. Hayday; Angie Wright, Jo Brookfield (West Wycombe Pre-School Manager), Sir Edward Dashwood, Bart., Christine Barry – West Wycombe Library and West Wycombe Cricket Club; PC Danny O'Driscoll – Thames Valley Police, Colin Mantripp

Cllr Mr S Cope, West Wycombe Parish Council Chairman's Report for 2022/23

Cllr Cope welcomed everyone and thanked them for making the time to come and hear about other organisations and businesses in the community.

The past year has been a time of significant change, both nationally and for me personally, but one constant has been the hard work, dedication and support of my fellow Parish Councillors, all of whom are volunteers, and of course our Parish Clerk Sharon Henson, without whom all of the following would not have been possible.

Last May saw the winding up of the Wycombe Area Association of Local Councils (formerly Wycombe District Association of Local Councils) on which the Parish Council had been represented for many years. It had been generally agreed by the membership of WAALC that it had reached the natural end of its usefulness, given that we now have direct contact and communication with Buckinghamshire Council and other key local organisations and services via the North West Chilterns Community Board, and that we continue to be members of Bucks & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils and send representatives to the county-wide Rural Forum.

In June the whole nation came together to celebrate a historic landmark - the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. West Wycombe was of course proud to play its part in the festivities, and once again the Events Team headed by Cllrs Cheshire and Harris organised a very enjoyable weekend of activities centred around a beacon on West Wycombe Hill and a picnic in the Community Orchard, complemented by street parties held across the parish. We also arranged to present each of the pupils of West Wycombe School and Pre-School with a commemorative mug as a lasting souvenir of the occasion, these were presented to them by myself and Sharon and received with delight by many, and it has to be said bemusement by some of the younger ones!

In July residents began to notice a significant increase in the number of heavily-laden lorries travelling along roads in the parish, in particular through West Wycombe High Street. It was soon established that these were transporting significant quantities of soil and chalk extracted from the former Molins site in Saunderton, where the construction of a new data storage facility was taking place. In partnership with Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire Council, and former Head of Transport for Buckinghamshire Jim Stevens, we were able to bring pressure to bear on the companies carrying out the work at the Molins site, and reach an agreement with the Site Manager and Transport Manager that these vehicles would not be routed through West Wycombe village, and would adhere to a stringent set of standards when transporting material from the site. We monitored this activity throughout the summer, after which it thankfully abated - although continued activity on the site, including the laying of a power cable running from Amersham, continues to raise issues and concerns for us and for surrounding parishes.

Our September meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday 8th. At 6:30pm that evening, Buckingham Palace announced the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, and a period of national mourning for the late Queen began. Our meeting did go ahead: we opened with a minute's silence, and our agenda was curtailed to only those matters of business which were essential to complete. I am sure that none of us will forget those days and the strong sense of the ending of an era, even though the Accession of King Charles III followed it seamlessly.

Throughout the year we have responded to requests for comments on planning applications in our parish. Leaving aside the very many residential-related ones, two of the more significant ones were those for the installation of a 5G mobile phone mast at the eastern entrance to West Wycombe village, and for a change of use on the Rent a Van site on West Wycombe Road. We expressed our serious concerns regarding the potential impact of the 5G mast on the character of the village, and alongside objections from a range of conservation organisations and local residents, the opposition resulted in planning permission being refused. Despite our continued concerns at what we consider to be the over-development of the Rent a Van site, the establishment of an MoT centre there was, alas, permitted - with the sole condition being the installation of a bird box! Needless to say we were left speechless at this.

Some residents will be aware that Wycombe Wanderers FC have expressed a desire to construct a roadway to allow vehicles to exit from Adams Park across land owned by Dashwood Estate and to join the A40 at the bottom of Towerage Lane by the cricket ground. We are aware of these plans, and as a member of Wycombe Wanderers Trust I have attended recent meetings and spoken informally to some of the club's directors about their proposals, but as yet no formal plans have been unveiled nor any planning application made. We will of course continue to monitor this closely and respond as and when we are required to do so.

Our Community Orchard, created last year, continues to flourish - last autumn a wildflower survey conducted by Chiltern Rangers with help from volunteer local residents identified thirty five varieties and when I visited last weekend it was lovely to see how well established everything is becoming.

We all owe a debt to those residents of the parish who voluntarily spend time helping to keep our streets free of litter. As well as regularly emptying the litter bins and cleaning up at the Pedestal Playing Field, the Parish Council organised community litter picks in October and last month, both of which were well attended by members of the public, who managed to clear significant amounts of rubbish from roadside areas and elsewhere.

Amongst our well-known local landmarks is the Pedestal monument, after which the roundabout, garage and playing field are all named. For some time now Sharon, our Clerk, has been attempting to establish who is responsible for this, since we are interested in its maintenance and have set aside some budget for any necessary repairs - we cannot however proceed with these until we know whether we are permitted to do so. (If anyone reading this report has any definite information on this we would be pleased to hear from them.)

Our highways and those who use them continue to occupy much of our time and activity: Our project to make changes to arrangements on West Wycombe High Street, aimed at improving pedestrian safety, have been delayed owing to a change of contractors used by Buckinghamshire Council, which meant that those projects - including our own - that had not already commenced by a certain date being put on hold until the new providers had taken over.

The Mobile Vehicle-Activated Sign (MVAS) that was positioned at the eastern entry to West Wycombe village was unfortunately vandalised last year. We were not the only parish in Buckinghamshire to suffer this, though the manufacturers have told us that these incidents do seem to be confined almost wholly to the Bucks/Beds/Herts area. They are still looking at a method to make the signs theft-proof - the belief is that it is the batteries that are sought after - and we hope to have our unit up and running again as soon as possible, since there has been a noticeable increase in vehicles travelling at speed into the village after exiting the Pedestal roundabout.

We are continuing our efforts to establish a Community Speedwatch group in the parish, and Cllr Rowland has persevered with jumping through the various hoops necessary to do so. We have put out a number of calls via *Contact* for volunteers to come forward and undertake the necessary online training, but it is by no means too late should anyone reading this report wish to step forward!

At the end of February the installation of the long planned for outdoor 'green gym' equipment took place at the Pedestal Playing Field. This new facility provides somewhere for local residents to enjoy the benefits to both physical and mental health of exercising in the open air, either individually or in the company of others; it is intended for use by adults of all ages and the range of equipment reflects this. We hope that as awareness of the green gym develops - and

as the weather improves - more people will join those who are already making good use of it. We trust that those doing so will give due consideration to nearby residents at all times.

At the start of this month our community again gathered to mark a royal occasion - one of joy and celebration as we marked the coronation of King Charles III with a bonfire and gathering on West Wycombe hill. Despite the inclement weather that had threatened to - literally - dampen the event, we were able to enjoy fish & chips, Rebellion beers, and the music of Chiltern Hills Brass Band in the company of family, friends and neighbours and surrounded by our beautiful countryside in the full flush of late spring. Once more I was reminded, as I am sure were all those who attended, just how fortunate we are to live in this place and with these people.

In closing I would like to again pay tribute to my fellow Parish Councillors, to remind you that we are all volunteers, and to offer my thanks to them and to our Parish Clerk for their time, energy and dedication, and for their many efforts, undertaken with good humour and enthusiasm, which continue to add so much to the life of our community here in West Wycombe.

Sharon Henson, Responsible Financial officer, Presentation of the Financial Statement Financial report for 2022/23

The accounts can be viewed on our website www.westwycombeparishcouncil.gov.uk

We started the financial year with an opening balance of £27,731.36 and have finished the financial year with a balance of £17,250.

Administration covers things like £1,200 per annum to insure all the parish council assets, e.g., the streetlights, defibrillators, play equipment, gates, signs. Administration also includes the Clerk's salary, pension, software, telephones, the audit, stationery, training and subscriptions to organisations which help us carry out our role.

We donated £300 towards the maintenance of the village clock, and we purchased Platinum Jubilee mugs for all the pre-school and school children, as mentioned by Simon.

As with all organisations and businesses we must pay into a pension scheme and currently the Parish Council has to pay 25.10% of the Clerk's salary each month.

Our street lighting energy costs have increased along with everyone else's. We contributed £5,000 towards the HS2 Road Safety project and benefitted from over £140,954-worth of road safety measures in Bradenham Road – the pedestrian island; moving the bus shelter further away from the roadside; white-lining the A4010; signage for the railway bridge; speed reduction signs; cutting back trees and hedges to make signs more visible.

We contributed 50% of the High Street project investigation costs – as Buckinghamshire Council changed contractors in April 2023 we still do not know when the work, which was requested by residents to make it safer for pedestrians using the High Street pavement, will take place.

All our allotment plots have tenants, and this brought in £495 from allotment rents; however the cost of the water and general maintenance means we run the allotments at a loss, but we know that the allotments have provided a peaceful haven for many people and they are a 'service' we are proud to provide for our residents. The allotments and the burial ground are costs to the Parish Council in order that we can supply a service to our residents and in both cases the running costs will always be more than our income.

Our Community Orchard, adjacent to the burial ground, has been developed over the past 12 months. 500 wildflower plugs were planted by Year 5 children from West Wycombe School and this year we can already see ragged robin and yellow rattle as new species in addition to the 35 identified in previous years.

We pay to have the verges within the 30mph speed limit cut, trees cut back over lights and the pelican crossing and over pavements. We also look after the areas by the Pedestal Roundabout, Cutty Alley, Park Farm Road, Rosemary Close, and Portway Drive, as well as both ends of Towerage Lane. We pay the Chiltern Society to clear four of our footpaths; we pay a contractor to

spray weed killer along the road/pavement edges. Currently, and for the next year, we get £2,094 from Buckinghamshire Council towards this work but it costs far more than we receive from them.

We ensure that we have our Christmas trees lit and support the Village Clock. We keep our defibrillators maintained.

We pay £1,300 for dog waste bin emptying, and this price is due to increase.

Our two solar-powered speed indicators in Chorley Road are now out of warranty, and we pay £600 for an annual maintenance contract.

Our largest investment and project for the year was to install seven pieces of adult gym equipment at The Pedestal Playing Field. This was a project first mooted in October 2021 and the equipment, after site visits and cost comparisons, was ordered in November 2022 and installed in February 2023.

As a parish council we are allowed to claim back all the VAT we pay out. We have claimed £4,046 back from HMRC.

We set our budget in December for the coming year and for 2022/23, we reduced our precept, which is the Parish Council element of the Council Tax, to £42,500 and have kept it at that level as we felt that families would be watching their finances very carefully in the coming year. We will be watching our expenditure closely and for the first time may dip into our reserves to pay for everything we would like to do for the benefit of this community.

Report submitted by West Wycombe Estate read out by the Clerk

We are delighted to announce that the restoration project at The Walled Garden has now just about been completed, and we have recently re-opened the cafe there. It is being run by Victoria and James Dashwood-Chase. It has been a delight to see life back in the original Peach House & other areas. We hope to have a potter starting in the potting shed soon who will offer classes as well. We are also looking to be able to offer the venue for use for events and birthday parties, play area etc. All visitors are welcome along with their dogs & bicycles. From June the cafe will be open every day.

Filming continues to take place regularly.

National Trust Let Estate – West Wycombe Village Report by David Surtees- Dawson, Senior Estate Manager – Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire

The external decoration of the High Street houses continues. There have been delays caused by Buckinghamshire Council Traffic Regulation Orders requiring full-time banksmen. It is hoped that numbers 11- 17 will be decorated this year. Currently all the garages and outbuildings are undergoing maintenance and this work should be finished by October. There will be two vacant garages which will be offered to National Trust tenants.

Number 15c, which is above Artisan Jewellers, has a new tenant - a wedding dress maker - having previously been occupied by Little Strummers.

We have been given planning permission to divide 35 High Street (The Sweet Shop) into a shop but with a separate, independent flat above. This involves a great deal of work and when funds allow this work will be undertaken.

Number 13/14 is vacant and requires maintenance work before it can be re-let; 48 Church Lane will have new tenants. 50a is waiting for new tenants.

It was confirmed that the National Trust does not own the road leading to Meads Yard and The Apple Orchard.

Cllr Neil Harris, Head Ranger National Trust

West Wycombe Hill- National Trust Countryside

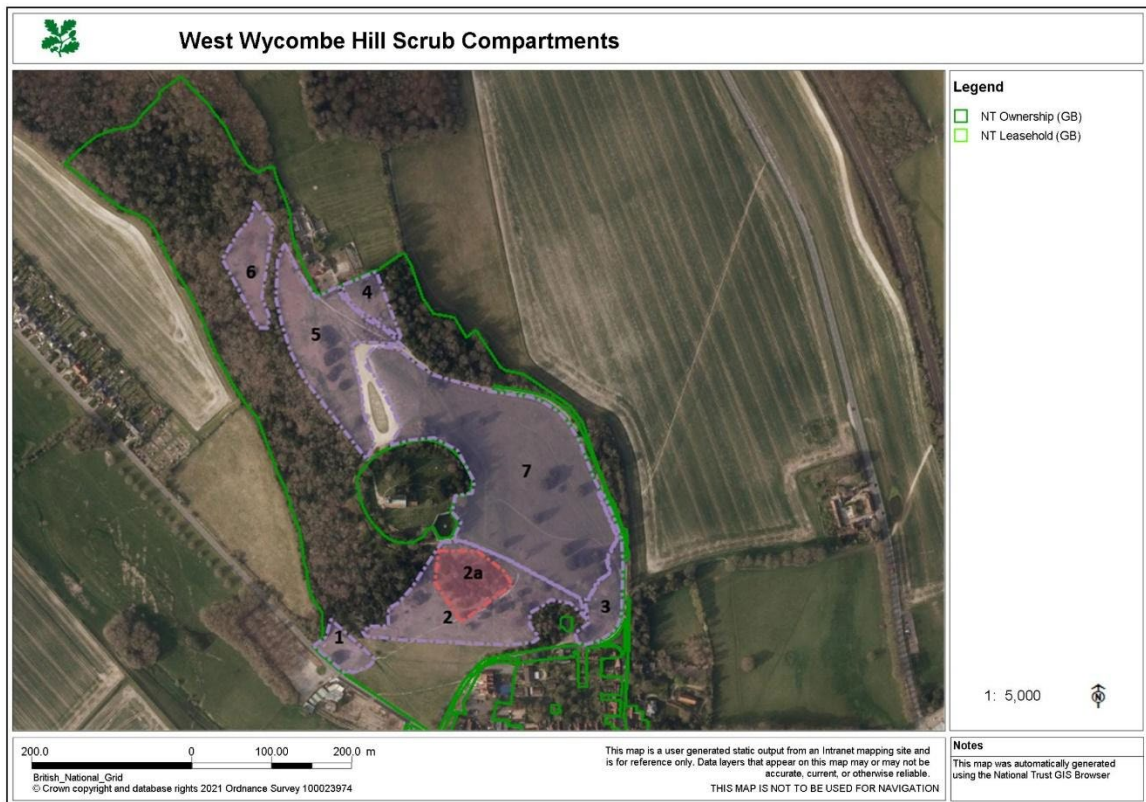
National Trust- West Wycombe Hill- 2022/23

Ash dieback tree removal and brash chipping- Ash trees on the edge of Hill Road and within the wooded area were removed by contractors, these were too diseased to be retained, the brash has been wind rowed into habitats, and glades left to promote a richer diversity of ground flora.

The brush near the road was removed and chipped, now being used as a mulch for young trees and on some paths across National Trust land.

Woodland Management Plan for wooded areas, now paths have been cleared and glades opened up, we will have a non-intervention approach in most areas.

Scrub management plan- maintain and enhance existing chalk grassland. Promote graded edge to woodlands. Manage a mosaic of scrub ages within blocks. (See areas below)



Hay crop taken from the south slope; arisings taken for use as compost.

Steps rebuilt opposite the school.

Breeding bird surveys- Whitethroats, Blackcaps, Firecrest, Goldcrest, Barn owls are regularly seen flying around the hill.

Litter is collected and removed regularly, and the dog bin is emptied twice a week.

Robo flail mowing on steep slopes, a remote-control mower was used to mow vegetation on the steep slopes, this is much safer for the operator and enables brambles and competing scrub to be kept in check.

Replacement memorial bench put in.

Replanted and re guarded 100 of the young yew trees on the front pens.

Butterfly monitoring using iRecord.

Jubilee Beacon for Her late Majesty.

Bonfire for the Coronation of King Charles III was held on May 6th, witnessed by some 200 people.

Removal of unwanted scrub species from grassland areas using 'tree poppers', hand devices that lever young saplings from the ground, can be done all year.

Paths mapped on OpenStreetMaps.

Filming work on hill and use of car park - bringing valuable income for our conservation work.

2023/24

Continued step replacement using some of our own timber milled from NT woodlands.

More Robo flail on rotation in other scrub compartments, to promote a more flower rich sward, particularly on the steeper slopes.

Hay cut on the North slopes.

Volunteer recruitment to help with conservation work on the hill.

Signage improvements.

Juniper regeneration from seed and DNA analysis.

Report submitted by Denise Hurst, West Wycombe Community Library read by Cllr Cope

The Library has been very quiet since Covid lock downs with footfall lower than past years. This has been offset by the number of books ordered online that we send out to other libraries, on loan, in Buckinghamshire and other Counties. This numbers approximately 25 per week as we have a large selection of current bestsellers, which the other libraries have had to cut back on buying and which have been donated to us.

Our Community Craft mornings are going strong. Mondays are crochet and knotting, coffee and chat, Tuesdays are any craft, coffee and chat! These sessions are great for people living alone who find a morning out, with like minded people, a way of getting out and enjoying their crafts and chatting. It is also good for those, not alone, who just want to enjoy crochet etc. There is also a social side as lunch is enjoyed occasionally at local cafes or pubs.

The groups have been producing and donating baby clothes for the prem baby unit at the hospital and for a bereaved and still born charity. The knee blankets, bags and shawls produced go to a local care home where they are gratefully received.

The Library is also available for hire for meetings, studying, meeting friends etc. for a very reasonable fee. £10 -£30 depending on the length of time needed. Refreshments are also available on request.

We hope to keep increasing the numbers visiting the Library during the Summer months.

Report submitted by Christine Barry, West Wycombe Cricket Club read by the Clerk

Finally last year things almost got back to normal,, following two years of changes to the way we do things because of the pandemic.

One thing w seem to have lost unfortunately is the traditional cricket tea, but we are happy to be back playing as normal.

On the field last season, we won more than we lost, which shows that we are developing a good core to our team and heading in the right direction. We won 8, lost 6 and drew 5. We even had to cancel one game because we agreed that the weather was too hot to be safe for play. Who would have thought it!

We are also pleased to be developing our youth section. We are running two programmes in conjunction with the ECB.

The first is called All Stars which is for children 5-8 years of age and runs for 8 weeks. The programme is designed to introduce children to the sport, teaching them new skills, helping them make new friends and have a great time doing so.

The second is called Dynamos, which is for children 8-11 years of age. Dynamos Cricket provides a fantastic next step for all those graduating from All Stars Cricket and the perfect introduction for all 8-11 year olds new to the sport! Complementing junior cricket, Dynamos provides children with a more social offer focused on developing fundamental movement skills and applying them in an exciting game of countdown cricket.

We have enough young people now to have started to arrange some fixtures, over the coming season, against teams from other clubs. We are proud to be developing a new generation of players who we hope will one day be playing for West Wycombe Senior Team.

Off the field we had a few problems with water. We received a large bill from our water supply company, which was a result of a leak under the paddock adjoining the cricket ground. Over the winter we have also experienced a problem with a leak within the pavilion itself. This has left us with one of our changing rooms almost unusable until we get the repairs in hand.

To finish, we remain one of the most popular places for people to come and play cricket. This is not just because of the beautiful setting our ground sits in, but also because we play the game in the right spirit and offer a friendly hospitable experience to all who come to play.

Mrs. Vicki Smith, BEM, Chairman, West Wycombe Community Association

West Wycombe Community Association are the Trustees of West Wycombe Village Hall. Money was raised in the 1950's by residents of West Wycombe to build the Hall and a competition to design the Hall was won by local resident, Col. Lesslie Watson who lived at The Manor House, now called Steps House. The Hall's foundation stone was laid in 1960 by the local Member of Parliament at the time, Mr. John Hall and Sir Frances Dashwood.

The land the Hall is built on is owned by The National Trust and we pay a yearly rent to them. West Wycombe Village Hall Committee manage the Village Hall on a daily basis.

All the Village Hall Committee members are volunteers and each one brings their knowledge and experience to help the Hall run as smoothly as possible.

Our car park is privately owned by us, West Wycombe Community Association, and we have the right to ask people who are not using the Village Hall to not park there, although we do our best to help the parking problems in the Village by offering 16 parking places to West Wycombe residents on a first come, one permit per household basis and Monday to Friday day parking places to the Village businesses but of course we have to have enough parking spaces for our clients hiring the Hall.

We also try to be good neighbours and turn down parties that could become noisy and disruptive. Not many village halls are in such close proximity to family homes as our Hall is. We had rather a concerning start to this year. After closing for 2 years through the pandemic it became obvious when we opened again that some of our regular hirers would not be returning and that has not improved very much in the last year, due, we think, to the increase in the cost of living.

Our hirers are not attracting as many people to their classes which does not make their classes viable and the knock-on effect is they then cannot continue to hire the V Hall. For instance, Masque Players, who have been regular users of the Village Hall for many, many years could not get a cast together for this summer's production and therefore are not hiring the Hall twice a week as they usually do, for some weeks.

We do our best to keep our charges competitive but when we had a £6,954.13 bill for electricity for the quarter from Dec 2022 to March 2023 you can imagine how shocked we were, and it wasn't a particularly cold Winter! Last year we paid £8,458 for electricity for the year. Our income last year was £20,576 including the car park fees and our outgoings were £19,337 for the same period, you can see how worrying that bill of almost £7000 for 12 weeks of electricity is for us. We have to run a tight ship at the best of times but this was scary!

We have a good few exercise classes in The Hall and they still need the heating on in the winter, albeit turned down compared to The Art Group who sit still all evening. We are lucky to have Mrs. Judith Gerrard as one of our Committee Members because she monitors the heating almost daily.

We have plans to improve our rather dated heating system, and will apply for grants to achieve this. We know we will have to put at least 10% of money up front too but on the other hand we do not want to leave ourselves short of money for the constant general maintenance that the Hall needs.

The news this week is that the cost of electricity should go down for the summer months but we can still see our reserves for the new heating being swallowed up by electricity bills.

We will soon have to make tough decisions about the new heating and Village Hall's future. After that gloomy forecast I would like to thank a few people

We couldn't run the Village Hall without the services of our Letting Secretary, Mrs. Emma Copley. She is the link with our regular hirers, our cleaner Alison and potential hirers. It is a very demanding job and we are well aware of how hard Emma has to work, we thank her for her immeasurable patience and care.

Mr. Graham Wood our Hon Treasurer and I joke that once you come on to the Village Hall Committee you can never leave... Graham is in his 27th year as treasurer. Graham has the time consuming and important job of keeping our finances in order, dealing with our car park permit holders and all the communications with The Charity Commission. We very much appreciate all Graham does for the Village Hall.

At our AGM in January Mrs. Marion Brown stepped down from being our Hon Secretary. Marion had been our Secretary for many years and she also deserves our thanks for her years of service to the Village Hall, she has stayed on as committee member. We have been extremely lucky to have Mrs. Angie Wright take over the Hon Secretary's role.

As I have said all the Village Hall Committee members contribute so much to the running of the Village Hall and I would like to say a big thank you to them all for all their hard work and support again this year.

Report submitted by Jo Brookfield, West Wycombe Preschool and read by Cllr Cope

This time last year we were still on a high having received our long overdue Ofsted Inspection, we couldn't have been happier with the result of Outstanding. Since receiving this inspection we have seen a huge increase in enquiries at the Preschool and have been running at full capacity since this time last year. This is set to continue into next year with an extremely long waiting list for spaces to start with us in September, much to the disappointment of some parents hoping to join us.

Despite the increase in the demand for our services we continue to fundraise to cover the rising cost of the gap between the funding paid by the council and the bills we have outgoing. As I am sure is true for many businesses in the village, as a charity we rely on our fundraising committee to keep us going. Susie Chester remains our long standing Committee Chair, for which we are very grateful for her time and expertise. We have run various fundraising events over the last year, including a successful Summer Fete alongside WW school and we hope the one being held this June will be just as good.

We are always on the lookout for any volunteers, you don't need to be a Pre-school Parent to join our committee, if anyone is interested at all!
We are always looking for new ways we can continue to get involved in the community so if anyone has anything they would like us to join in with then please do get in contact.

Our aim over the next year or so is to extend our garden space to allow our very active 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds extend their physical skills with a climbing area. Something we will continue to fundraise for and hopefully accomplish soon. An exciting busy year ahead.

Alison Rimmer, Church Warden, West Wycombe PCC

Thank you for inviting me to report on the churches' activity over the last year. It has been a busy time for the Parochial Church Council as we entered our 4th year of vacancy. This is very unusual and a huge challenge, we have now advertised twice for a .5 Priest with no success. Now we're delighted that with the support of Bledlow Ridge PCC and with each parish digging deep for extra funds, we are now able to advertise for a full-time priest for an interim 3 year post, bringing its own focus and energy. I would like to thank the PCC members, Alison Wood (also Lay Chair in the absence of the incumbent), Sharon Henson (PCC Secretary), Beth Webster and Nicky Cronbach as well as the congregation and community for all their support during this time.

As you may know, our parish services are now based at St Paul's on the High Street, and at the churches in each of the Benefice churches, where we rotate during the month. Although many miss the weekly service in the village, it has also been a great opportunity to meet and build up friendships and working with the other parishes, especially during this vacancy. We're all in it together! We thank our voluntary priests Veronica Beaumont and Anne Cooper who care for us

all and take regular and occasional services, baptisms, weddings, funerals and Festival Days. They have also led study groups at Advent and during Lent. We have been supported by priests within the Wycombe Deanery and are glad to be building up a relationship with the RAF base at Walters Ash. Thankyou also to our Parish Administrator for our Benefice, Helen Chadley, who has made such a difference during her three years in post.

One of the major concerns in the parish has always been the three buildings, St Lawrence, the Church Room and Loft and St Pauls but I'm pleased to say that these have been largely resolved, the outstanding one being St Lawrence. Management of the future of the much-loved building is in the hands of the Oxford Diocese in conjunction with the Churches Conservation Trust to determine who could form a new team of Trustees with responsibility for the building and its activity. It is too big a task for the PCC who are working so hard to rebuild parish life, especially in the absence of an Incumbent, but we all know how much St Lawrence means to the parish and the community, and are constantly on the case to the Diocese to see where we are all up to! The PCC has secured a formal agreement with the Serbian Orthodox congregation for their use of St Paul's church; we warmly welcome them at St Paul's, it is a bold and positive ecumenical opportunity which has also offered worship to Ukrainian families living in the area. And we are particularly delighted that in the last two weeks, the historic and very popular Church Room and Loft has been transferred to the internationally renowned Wood Carver and Craftsman Colin Mantripp. Our greatest joy is that the building will be restored and safeguarded for the future, the clock is safe, and there will be opportunities for the community to access the building to see his work.

Links between the church and the local community have strengthened, many of our social activities attract local friends and families, and some have then joined us at occasional services. We have held Coffee Mornings, pop-up coffee shop, Snowdrop and Daffodil Sunday Teas, a Folk Night, Christmas Tree Festival, and provided refreshments at the village Craft Fayres and Beacon events on West Wycombe Hill. None of our parish activity could take place without the commitment and generosity of our clergy and volunteers and I am so very grateful to them all!

Our main concern now is for the appointment of our next Incumbent, in his/her Interim three year full-time post. There is no doubt that we shall all welcome the renewed energy and inspiration, and a presence in the village and Benefice.

For three years now, our parish has been deeply involved in the Rural Review which has evolved into the Rural Forum, which encourages and enables shared links and resources throughout the rural parishes in the Deanery, West Wycombe, Hambleden Valley and South Chilterns Benefices as well as more recently Little Marlow, Hedsor and Bisham.

In the next couple of months we shall see building and repair work started at St Pauls and we are delighted to welcome local specialist architect Libby Rose who is advising on and managing the project. Dampness work is the main work, with draught proofing, more efficient heating, decoration, new chairs and a sound system with loop facility the other priorities. The work will take a while to complete, some funded by grants available, and this time next year should see a difference in our parish church, often a peaceful haven on the busy A40.

However, church life is not just about buildings and money, far from it! We're delighted to have increased links with the village school and Pre-school, Butterfly Crafts events and a local art exhibition held in church last summer. The survey on the use of St Paul's church produced three main suggestions; music, children's events and a pop-up coffee shop, and we have addressed each of these.

We are extremely grateful to the Parish Council for their continued support and generous financial support along the way as well as the beautifully kept Burial Ground and community orchard, Brian Palmer who maintains the clock, Neil Harris for your frequent advice and help, the National Trust, Ian Wright for cutting the churchyard grass, and there are always those who help but in the background and we may not always see!

Thanks also to Sir Edward and Verne Grinstead for their ongoing support for our churches, and to Susie Chester who continues to manage our social media and offer opportunities for essential

fundraising. In particular, Susie created a brilliant Parish Profile to accompany the advertisement for our new Incumbent, her graphics and artwork have been greatly admired by local churches and the Deanery team.

We all look forward to the year ahead and with firm hopes for the appointment of our new Incumbent! Life is all the richer because of the wonderful area and village in which we are placed, and thankyou to everyone for making it so.

Ben Stupples, Vice Chairman, Downley Dynamos

I am currently Vice-Chairman and this is my last year in that role. We have been using the Pedestal Playing Field for 10 years. The club is based in Downley and we use Mannings Field, California, the Downley Cricket Club outfield, and Studley Green as well as The Pedestal. We are a growing club and in the last year we have gone from 350 5-17-year-olds to 450. We have 125 volunteer coaches and team managers. Our Under-16 team has been very successful and have been courted by Risborough Rangers; they will now join them as they go into senior league. We now have more girls in the Under-12 team and are able to have our own first girls' team. We have spent money on repairing and refurbishing the pavilion and have a club room with different games which can be used by club members. We have spent £2,000 on 'seed, weed and feed' on the Pedestal Paving Field. The Under-12 and Under-8 teams will be based there for the new season.

We are holding our first tournament on July 9th, With permission from West Wycombe Estate we will be using the Pedestal sheep field for parking and have everyone safely crossing the road to the pitches.

Cllr Kate Cheshire, West Wycombe Events Team read by Cllr Harris

After a long Covid pause we looked forward to organising some events for the parish yet again. With this in mind our first set of events revolved around the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

2nd June – Beacon on the Hill. This was a beautiful evening and hundreds turned out with picnics, family and friends to celebrate the Queen's jubilee. We were entertained by music from the Chiltern Hills Brass Band and refreshments by the church.

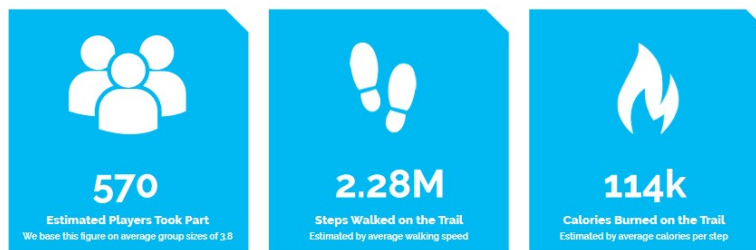
Queen's Beacon Trail

From 30th April until 12th June, the Events team organised a QR code trail for families to find throughout the village. There were seven QR codes placed strategically around the village and on the way up to the Mausoleum. Each code gave the user some detailed facts about a decade of the queen's reign. Families also got to choose what happens in their story and see each character come to life in augmented reality.

From the statistics we received back 570 players took part, and on average each family walked 2.28 miles to find the characters.

Platinum Jubilee Storytrail Event Report

West Wycombe



8th July – Quiz

With all the Jubilee celebration plans, we were unable to organise our annual summer fayre. However, we organised a quiz in the village hall in July, which was very well attended and enjoyed by all.

7th December – Festive Fayre

A wonderful evening again, giving families and friends the opportunity to get into the festive spirit. Lots of stallholders filled the various spaces throughout the village. The reindeer were very popular and Stories with Father Christmas was a sell out.

Plans for more events are in the pipeline.

Cllr Darren Hayday, Buckinghamshire Councillor read by the Clerk

Both myself and Orshi would like to pass on our thanks and appreciation for all of the hard work and time in which each and every Cllr, the Chairman and the Clerk offer to the community. It does not go unnoticed.

The last 12 months have been very hard, especially financially with the high cost of living, we have all had to make cuts and tighten the belt (us included!). However everyone has pulled together, and after the lifting of the Covid restrictions we are now seeming to be returning back to 'normal'. However sadly many of us have lost friends or family over the last couple of years but should be thankful that we were spared and can continue with this gift of life.

It is sad to see litter around, but it makes both of us smile to see so many people who help to pick it up and make West Wycombe look like a picture postcard, stuck in time and bringing so much pleasure to those who visit or live here.

It will soon be announced as to what the change to the boundaries shall be, and it would be sad for both of us to no longer be a part of helping officially, even though Sharon is always one step ahead of reporting most issues!

But we shall know very soon as to what those changes shall be, and to then see who the candidates that would be standing, as to who would replace us. I am sure that the right person(s) will continue to help the Parish as we are.

West Wycombe has a soul, an excellent Parish Council and a community - not many places have all three.

That comes with the excellent work that you have all carried out. Thank you all.

Thames Valley Police

Due to a shortage of officers and being seconded to High Wycombe Police Station, PC Danny O'Driscoll was not able to attend. He gave us this short report.

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Cllr Cope invited everyone to ask questions and stay to take refreshments.