

## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Friday 24 March 2023 at 7.30pm**

### **Present:**

#### **Parish Councillors:**

Cllr B Ahier, Cllr P Cragg, Cllr J Messinger, Cllr N Mitchell (Chairman of the meeting), Cllr B Nagle, Cllr M Price, Cllr C Riley, Cllr J Snowball, and Cllr T Wright.

#### **Staff:**

Assistant Clerk – Mrs V Fear

Finance Officer – Mrs H Lawrence

#### **Also present were:**

Nigel Baxter (Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Trust), Mark Taylor (Safe Drive Stay Alive), Mary Broughton (Sime Gallery), Diana Bignell (Men In Sheds/Age UK Surrey), Joy Wright (Emerge). Cllrs Bob and Ann McShee and 40 members of the public.

### **Apologies**

Were received from: R Kemp, J Meredith, Cllr K Witham, Cllr D Bird, Cllr M Fance, Cllr G Adam, C Tegg, J Ashton, and the Clerk to the Council.

At 8.15pm Cllr J Messinger introduced the new caretaker of Worplesdon Memorial Hall and Grounds, Mr Phil Bowers, and his wife, Marissa. Phil is due to commence work in his new role on 17 April 2023.

### **Networking Session**

Guildford Health Walks, Fairlands WI, Emerge Advocacy, Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance, Sime Gallery, Fairlands Practice Patient Participatory Group, Wood Street Village Cricket Club, the Stella Hancock Riding for the Disabled Club, Fairwood Helpers, Men in Sheds, Worplesdon WI, St Mary's Church - Worplesdon, Wood Street Village Maypole Dancers, Worplesdon Tennis Club, Safe Drive Stay Alive and Worplesdon Parish Council all had stalls at the event which commenced with a 45 minute networking session.

### **To receive the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting**

It was proposed by Cllr B Ahier, seconded by Cllr P Cragg, and agreed that the minutes of the 2022 meeting be agreed and signed by the Chairman of the meeting as a true record.

### **Report of the Chairman covering the activities of the Parish Council**

The Chairman introduced the Parish Councillors to the meeting. He explained that Councillors continue to set policies, review planning applications and risk assessments, set the budget, oversee, and get 'hands-on' with land management, co-ordinate pond works (on land we lease or own), manage Community SpeedWatch, and much more!

Worplesdon Parish Council undertakes additional work historically carried out by Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council. The Band D property rating has increased by 11 pence per month. The maximum increase for the largest properties in the parish is 22 pence per month.

There is an increased workload – including some 1,000 emails received per month. A greater number of phone calls are also received – particularly since the Borough Council don't answer their

own phonedlines in a timely fashion. Online communications have also increased – namely our website and social media pages.

To deal with the increased workload the Parish Council have employed a part-time Finance Officer, Helen.

Levels of asset management have significantly increased – as we have more benches, trees, and ageing play equipment to maintain. We are taking steps to minimise future cost by using recycled, low maintenance materials where possible. We are pleased to work in supporting Guildford Borough by acting as a collection point for food waste caddies. This service also supports residents who live outside of the parish who are also able to collect a caddy without making the journey into Guildford.

The Parish Office is necessary to store records and equipment in one location, to hold undisturbed meetings, and to provide safe working conditions for our staff.

The parish office, located in Queen Elizabeth Park, Stoughton, has become a hub for hosting council meetings.

The facility has also been used for multi-agency meetings to address long-standing issues across the parish, and to host the regular Flood Forum meetings which are kindly chaired by Angela Richardson, MP.

In the last year the space also hosted the party to celebrate the posthumous awarding of the Freedom of the Parish to the late Mr John Gunner, and has received multiple bookings from our local County association.

We are very grateful for all of the support and time John expended on furthering the interests of residents in the parish over the last 53 years. His willingness to help anyone is keenly missed, as his ability to reduce people to fits of giggles, and the constant twinkle in his eyes!

A memorial bench dedicated to John is currently being designed which will be located in Wood Street Village.

The Head Groundsman, Peter Trevena, can be seen ‘out and about’ in the parish van whilst undertaking his regular checks, general maintenance, and all of the other jobs he ends up doing!

As you can no doubt imagine, no two days are ever the same - and he can be inspecting or maintaining play equipment one minute, removing debris from grilles to prevent flooding the next, and then reporting attempted unauthorised encampments and fly-tipping, all within the space of a few hours!

If you spot him, please do feel free to introduce yourselves, and highlight to him anything which is concerning you about land management – whether it’s the height of a water level in a pond, fly-tipping, or anything else!

We’re very grateful for all feedback from our residents. Our parish covers 35 square miles, and it is impossible for us to be everywhere at once!

From Spring 2022 Worplesdon Parish Council has no longer been cutting grass verges across the parish. This decision was taken by the Full Council, after extensive and wide-ranging deliberations.

Wood Street Village Green will be cut 30 times per growing season, with the triangle just twice, and White Hart Lane four times per year.

The remaining areas of Jacobs Well Recreation Ground, Harry's Meadow (Jacobs Well), Perry Hill Green, and Pitch Place Green, will still be cut regularly throughout the growing seasons to reflect the usage of the land.

The responsibility for maintenance of the grass verges will revert from Guildford Borough Council to Surrey County Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

The Parish Council has a statutory responsibility to encourage biodiversity on land for which it is responsible. To this end, a report for Harry's Meadow was commissioned in Summer 2022. It has been decided that two small wildflower trial areas will be established in Harry's Meadow, with seed spreading due to take place in Autumn 2023. Whilst temporary notices have been erected at both Jacobs Well Recreation Ground and Harry's Meadow to explain both the trial and the fauna seen around the village, the Council intends that permanent interpretation boards will be erected at each location.

Signage proved divisive in the village of Jacobs Well – with some residents asking for duck feeding signage to be erected, and then a campaign for the same sign to be removed!

The parish council is responsible for three ponds across the parish – one at Wood Street Village Green, and the other two are at Jacobs Well Recreation Ground. Whilst the crassula weed was sprayed at White House Pond last year, it, and the bullrushes, have returned with a vengeance and will be addressed during Winter 2023 taking into account the great crested newts mating season.

The parish council have a responsibility to ensure we support and enhance biodiversity across the parish. As in previous years, tree works have been undertaken, but more works are required to address various diseases which are sweeping through certain species. Sadly, a significant number of ash trees have been felled by Surrey County Council because of Ash Die Back.

Following an unexpected, generous donation from the United Reformed Church, a commemorative bench has been installed on Perry Hill Green. The plaque was kindly paid for by local resident Geoff Burch, whose relatives have a long established relationship with both the church and the immediate vicinity. Geoff has provided a significant amount of historical information to the parish council which has been displayed on a special history page on our website.

A QR code will be affixed to the bench allowing those interested in the history to simply scan the code and be automatically taken to the information.

The parish council was pleased to replace an old kissing gate with a disability accessibility kissing gate which facilitates access to the meadow to a wider number of residents.

Following the loss of numerous trees in the back-to-back storms in early 2022, and as a result of some requiring removal after being highlighted in our annual tree report, trees have been planted at various locations across the parish, including this one at Pitch Place Green.

Tree guards have been included to offer protection against deer, and treegators have been added to provide slow-release watering which will be invaluable during dry-spells.

Due to the ongoing impact of diseases having a significant effect on certain tree species and populations – such as Ash Die Back – it is intended that a variety of trees will be included in our succession planting schemes.

On Armistice Day 2022, Worplesdon Parish Council conducted two remembrance services simultaneously at both the war memorial in Jacobs Well, which is at the junction of Queenhythe

Road and Clay Lane, and at the WW1 Memorial bench in Harry's Meadow, behind Jacobs Well Village Hall. At the same time, wreaths were simultaneously laid at the other parish war memorials at St Mary's Church, St Alban's – Wood Street Village, and at Merrist Wood Golf Course.

Whilst the official war memorial is close to the location where the Lilly-Bell 2 Dakota aircraft crashed during World War II in Jacobs Well, killing all four aircrewmen aboard, the memorial bench in Harry's Meadow offers a more safe, peaceful, reflective location for attendees.

The new development, Halifax Close, next to Silvesters on Aldershot Road – named in memory of the crashed Halifax bomber on Merrist Wood - recently welcomed its first residents to a very special centre within it. I was proud to be able to officially open Finch Haven.

The late David Finch, who was a hard-working volunteer for the foundation, left the foundation a large sum of money in his will. It has helped the foundation to buy properties for adults with autism and learning difficulties in Halifax Close. The home is called Finch Haven in memory of the late David Finch.

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk have been heavily involved with submitting the preliminary responses to a call for information relating to areas which could be included in the extension to the Surrey Hills Area of Natural Beauty.

A professional firm of consultants were engaged, jointly between Pirbright, Normandy and Worplesdon Parish Councils to assess and present evidence relating to this – based on the comprehensive information assembled by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. Involvement in numerous public consultations, and not just this particular one, take up a huge amount of officer time.

We have recently been advised that landscape architect assessors have been out in the field, reviewing the evidence that had been submitted to them, and from this fieldwork, the recommendation made is that the existing Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (shown at the bottom of the slide in muddy green), should only be extended as far as the brighter green area above it. The statutory consultation has now commenced on this proposed expansion.

Once the formal consultation has taken place on the final recommendations, Natural England will make their recommendation to the Secretary of State for DEFRA.

The Parish Council carries out speed watch deployments across the parish. The Community SpeedWatch Scheme is overseen by Surrey Police. All members of the deployment team are unpaid volunteers.

The locations are surveyed by Surrey Police to ensure that they are safe for the volunteers and visible to motorists and other road users. The SpeedWatch scheme is designed to educate motorists about the speed limits on the road they are travelling. Community SpeedWatch is not a revenue generating exercise.

After a deployment we submit our roadside data to a central website for the Police to take action. The Parish Council does not have the authority to issue any form of penalties to those road users committing offences.

The website to which we upload the noted offences is a national database for all police forces.

If you would like to assist us in the deployments please contact the Assistant Clerk on 0143 300094

The parish council provided beacons to a number of our communities who had coordinated events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – and a brochure was created advertising all of the events

taking place across the parish. This was delivered to every property in the parish. Street parties took place across the parish – and there was superb feedback from residents.

The parish council coordinated the Platinum Jubilee beacon lighting in Wood Street Village on the village Green. We were fortunate to have a piper from Gordons School, Harry Wynn, and local cornet player, Phil Kerby, who is a Wood Street Village resident – with the beacon here jointly lit by the in-coming and out-going flower queens.

It was decided by the Full Council that a gift of Platinum Jubilee books to each of the primary schools in the parish would benefit a multitude of children and act as a lasting legacy. Personalised book plates were included with each book – the titles of which were specifically chosen by each school to ensure that they were titles that were needed.

The titles covered a huge cross section – ranging from books to support the curriculum through to a number of titles about horses due to her late Majesty's love of horses.

Children at the three primary schools within the parish – Rydes Hill, Wood Street, and Worplesdon – were all delighted to benefit from the Parish Council's generous donation of books to each of their schools.

To tie in with this theme of nurturing and supporting a love of reading the parish council has ordered a commemorative recycled leather book mark for each child attending the three primary schools within the parish. The official emblem pays tribute to the King's love of the natural world – unifying the flora of the four nations of the United Kingdom – and uses the red, white and blue of the union flag.

In addition to the bookmarks, the Parish Council has agreed to plant a commemorative tree in each of the four electoral wards. Each tree will be a different species, highlighting the diversity of flora which is so important to our new King, our nation, and the planet.

As before, each tree will have a tree guard to protect it from deer and a plaque referencing the planting of the tree to commemorate the Coronation will be affixed to the guard. These trees will be planted in the Autumn which is the optimum time to plant trees.

We're very proud to have been able to give grants to all of these organisations during the course of the last 12 years. Amongst the many, Challengers provide welcome support to disabled children and their families – including a number from our own parish. The Safe Drive Stay Alive campaign embraced the challenges of Covid and moved their hard-hitting presentation online – which further increased the reach of their important message. Live performances will return this year.

In addition to financial grants we have also been pleased to support the local scout groups who have been borrowing the parish council's litter picking equipment!

Worplesdon Primary School used our 2022 grant towards purchasing multiple den building kits, which all the children love!

Wood Street Infant School used our grant towards the purchase of multiple outdoor learning resources – including construction equipment and outdoor maths resources!

The Chairman concluded that, the Parish Council undertakes a wide variety of work on behalf of the community.

The Chairman then introduced Nigel Baxter who gave a presentation on the Air Ambulance covering Surrey.

## **Grant Awards**

### **Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Trust – Nigel Baxter**

Nigel advised that he had checked his app, and the air ambulance was currently deployed, helping someone across the three counties. He advised those assembled that the costs displayed on his slides would be out of date due to the costs rising almost daily. The air ambulance operates independently of the NHS. The charity has two helicopters, with a third available as a reserve should either of the core two be unavailable for any reason. The charity receives over 3,000 requests for assistance each year – which is usually between 6 to 8 times every 24 hours. The charity also has four cars. This gives the charity the flexibility to attend local incidents and can operate in adverse weather when the helicopter might be unable to fly. The cars carry the same equipment as the helicopter – which is referred to as HEMS. The dispatcher at SECAMBS (South-East Coast Ambulance Service) prioritises cases through multiple criteria. The helicopter is only called upon for major trauma.

The major trauma centres – Southampton, Royal Sussex, St Georges, and Kings college. HEMS work closely with the NHS during callouts. The air ambulance cars are unable to transport patients so either a SECAMBS ambulance or the air ambulance can be called upon to support the car.

The crew comprises 2 pilots, a doctor (who's usually at consultant level) and a paramedic. The doctors tend to complete a 12-month secondment to HEMS, whereas paramedics tend to serve for longer than 12-months. The teams undertake comprehensive additional training including night vision goggles, so the crews can fly during darkness. The current helicopter fleet are new aircraft which offer better space inside for treating seriously ill patients. They can reach as far as the Isle of Thanet and the western most points of the county within 30 minutes from the base at Redhill. Speed is key, particularly when trying to treat critical/severe trauma.

With having a doctor onboard, the patient can receive treatment which may otherwise only be received in hospital – including inducing a coma, intubating patients, conducting open heart surgery, etc.

The presentation then focussed on the stories of three different people who had each required the air ambulance.

It costs over £16.6 million per annum to keep the air ambulance scheme operational, with costs rising all the time. The cost of attending just one incident is now £4,500.

A member of the public commented that they hadn't appreciated the level of cost involved, and had thought each launch cost would be closer to £500.

Another resident asked if the KSSAA had been on any of the medical television programmes following real-life incidents. The response was that it has been sighted a few times, in circumstances such as landing on St George's Hospital, but the KSSAA has not directly been the subject of any programmes.

Another resident asked what type of helicopters currently make up the fleet. Nigel Baxter confirmed that the current fleet are Augusta-Westland (AW) helicopters.

## **Safe Drive Stay Alive – Mark Taylor**

Mr Taylor, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) gave a comprehensive report on the scheme which focusses on both 16-18 year-old drivers and passengers. A live performance takes place at Dorking Halls, lasting some 1 hr 15 minutes, with SFRS as the lead organisation. The 800-capacity hall is booked for multiple performances each Autumn to target the 90+ schools in the county. 9,308 young people attended the performances in November 2022. Statistically 8-9% of licence holders are young drivers, but approximately 20% of those killed are in the same age bracket. This initiative specifically focuses on this anomaly to try to change perceptions. Each performance includes members from each of the front-line services – police officers, fire and rescue personnel, paramedics/A&E staff – together with those who have lost relatives or friends as a result of a road traffic collision and those bereaved following a collision.

Financial support is greatly appreciated because the venue hire costs need covering, as does the cost of providing free transport to and from the event for attendees.

A VIP performance event is hosted each year to ensure that all supporters are able to see the content being delivered. Whilst it's termed a performance, there are no actors – and they all speak about their real-life experiences.

The statistic of the event goes back to when the initiative first started in 2004 – so this has been delivered to approximately 198,000 young people across 18 years. Surrey have even helped get a similar scheme up and running in Greater Manchester. Evaluations are carried out at the end of each session to establish how successful the presentation has been to ensure that those who haven't engaged with the content, for whatever reason, can be targeted another way. Those young people attending the presentation are encouraged to subscribe to a regular newsletter using a QR code, and each of the subsequent emails covers different important aspects of driver and passenger safety and awareness.

A member of the public asked if there are any figures showing that this initiative has directly affected reducing accident numbers. The answer was that it's exceptionally difficult to correlate, because of the amount of time between the presentation and any potential event occurring – plus accidents that haven't happened aren't recorded! There are also improvements in police enforcement, structural design of highways, police enforcement, etc – all of which have a bearing, but can't easily be measured.

## **Sime Gallery, Worplesdon – Mary Broughton**

Mrs Broughton, who is a Trustee of the Sime Gallery CIO, gave a short presentation to the assembly. She thanked all those who volunteer – not just those who volunteer at the gallery, but all those attending the assembly. The Sime Gallery is based at the Worplesdon Memorial Hall. It contains a wealth of work by Sidney H Sime 1865 – 1941, who lived in nearby Crown Cottage, Worplesdon during the later stages of his life, and was buried just over the road in St Mary's Churchyard. He drank at The New Inn before it was renamed The White Lion and Dragon and he even ventured out on night walks across Whitmoor. All of these experiences added to the huge variety of works bequeathed to the former Worplesdon Memorial Trustees on his wife's death. Sime was an illustrator, caricaturist, humourist, artist, and scholar.

The Sime Gallery CIO has a vision for the gallery – to preserve and promote. Sime drew 213 theatrical caricatures and these will be exhibited at the Garrick Club in London this summer, with more upcoming exhibitions at other London galleries booked through the coming year.

There are nine trustees who are solely focussed on the gallery despite working closely with the Worplesdon Memorial Hall and Grounds CIO.

The gallery has been fortunate to receive two major grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, for which the trustees would like to thank all those who purchase lottery tickets.

Plenty of activities are planned locally with an Easter workshop, which will be run in conjunction with the church, and the Ta Ta café continues to be open regularly on Sundays and Wednesday between 2pm and 4pm.

Steven Cranstoun has undertaken 10 years of research into the caricatures and has produced the contents for a book, for which the gallery is very grateful to Worplesdon Parish Council for their grant.

### **Men in Sheds (Age UK) – Diana Bignell**

Diana stated that it might surprise those at the assembly that Age UK is for anyone over the age of 50! Surrey Age UK has its own board of trustees, and provides its own services and group activities, with a focus on helping people to remain independent in their own home.

There are over 200,000 people aged 65 and over in Surrey alone – with chronic loneliness highlighted as a huge problem. Approximately 16,000 people in Surrey have dementia. To assist with this specific requirement Surrey Age UK have a maintenance cognitive therapy support unit based at Milford. You don't need a diagnosis to access this, and it is a 24 week course.

Surrey Age UK have their own Information and Advice Service which deals with in the region of 3,500 calls per year. They achieved £2 million of benefits for Surrey residents last year.

They also offer advice on scams because only approximately of Surrey Age UK's clients are able to access the internet. They also offer a Lasting Power of Attorney Service, Home Help and Gardening Service, a Check-in & Chat Service (as a Covid legacy), and Shopmobility in Guildford (3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Bedford Road Car Park). There is even a tech support helpline for those who are struggling. All of which is run by volunteers.

GO50 Walk Programme – details on the Surrey Age UK website.

Men In Sheds was established for a group of people who were most likely to have fewer social networks, and on retirement had issues with loneliness. Women are allowed to attend, despite the name! Sessions run 4 days per week – with separate morning and afternoon sessions.

The kind grant from Worplesdon Parish Council went towards the provision of a second shed at Merrist Wood in which to store wood.

There are 6 workbenches within the main shed, and they make a nominal charge of £4/session for those attending.

Relying solely on grants and donations, Diana expressed how grateful the group was for the donation from Worplesdon Parish Council, and highlighted that she had brought along with her some products



made by the attendees. Two of the men are qualified carpenters, and they can even make blanks for schools, bird box kits, assemble flatpacks, etc!

### **Presentation by Emerge – Joy Wright**

After a short video explaining about the valuable work of Emerge, Joy explained how the charity was grateful to have a base within the parish at the Memorial Hall, and how lucky the charity were to have such a welcoming community supporting them. Emerge now operate in nine hospitals and have already supported over 2,000 young people following visits to A&E departments. Emerge take referrals from A&E when young people are in crisis.

Joy's daughter was then invited to draw the raffle to win a bird box raffled to benefit the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice.

### **Open Forum – Question and Answer Session**

David Willis proposed a vote of thanks to all of the councillors who enhance and conserve the parish. Mr Willis highlighted that the evening had been a great education.

During the Question and Answer session the following topic was raised:

- The grass was cut on Wood Street Village Green this week, and sadly the mower got stuck and caused damage to the grass. Could the parish council please liaise with the contractor with regard to this?

The Chairman confirmed that the Assistant Clerk would speak to the contractor on Monday morning.

Cllr Mitchell thanked all those who had presented at the assembly for their time and interesting presentations, those from volunteer organisations who had attended to promote their causes, and also the councillors and officers who had helped set-up for the event to take place.

Meeting finished 9.52pm

Signed:

Chairman of Worplesdon Parish Council

18.5.2023