

A brief look at some of the events in Witnesham during 2017

Village Recorder (Steve Henley) report 2017

Parish Council

It can be reported that the present council consists of 12 members 10 are from Witnesham and 2 from Swilland. They are chaired by Mr. Chris Rush. The first meeting of the year took place on the 18th January where the main discussion points were the continued concerns regarding speeding and that a new 40 mph limit was now in place at the Ashbocking crossroads. Also there was mention of the B1078 Gibraltar Crossroads, (which is pretty well mentioned at every following Parish council meeting throughout the year) and is generally accepted a far more dangerous spot than the one at Ashbocking. It can be recorded that this still remains unresolved.

Flooding was also on the agenda along with blocked drains which still remain a problem although it is fair to say that it is not just a problem for Witnesham. Nor are pot holes which again have pretty well dominated public concern on our roads. In later meetings the work being carried out on the under ground cable ducts came to prominence. These are to take the off Shore wind farm energy from Bawdsey to Bramford to join the National Grid. This could also have been a contributory factor to the problems of water lying and running down our roads in particular the B1077.

Footpaths were frequently discussed with new signs asking people to clean up after their dogs, also the money spent on keeping the pavements safe and problems of overhanging shrubs and surfaces becoming unsafe.

The police and crime involvement concerns mainly break-ins to garden sheds, anti social behaviour and speeding, although there has been concern expressed by the council for more detailed crime reports. I can report in more detail later after making my own investigations and enquiries.

Money was spent on keeping the recreation ground in good condition as well as looking at providing more equipment for older children and perhaps adult use.

There have been a number of resignations on the committee during the year but also some new recruits. It was goodbye with thanks for their past efforts to Anne Camp, Anthony Darrel Brown. Paul Madge also resigned due to a change in work circumstances. However, it was hello to Sarah Bailey the previous clerk and Matt Johnson.

The accounts are in pretty good shape. At the beginning of the year the total stood at £ 24,747.88 and at the close of the year it stood at £ 30,510.23. The council should be congratulated on this as much of last year's costs were paid for by grants which they had obtained. The precept was increased for the forthcoming year but this is due to the increase in the number of houses and in true terms will be the same per household as last year.

The Talitha Koum facility was formally announced as being up and running in November, although in early 2018 it was announced that in fact the facility would not go ahead as planned.(see below).

The planning committee were busy with ongoing issues and new applications. The main construction area in 2017 being the building on Jacks Field with 6 new houses due for completion in 2018. There was a proposal for 11 new houses on the plot on Mow Hill and 15 dwellings on the sawmill site. 7 New houses were completed and I believe now being resided in at Chestnut Rise hopefully supplying the Barley Mow with some new customers. There was also, and I believe still are, issues with Homelands a site being used for a number of activities which cause major nuisance to local neighbours.

Regarding speeding there has been a number of discussions regarding speeding signs and general dangers throughout the village. There was a rather nasty accident on Upper Street involving damage to vehicles and property. Recommendations were suggested to residents about the danger of parking on the road in poorly lit areas. One suggestion included speed limits being shown on wheelie bins, a method already in use in Otley.

The community council folded and funds held in the account were transferred to the Village Hall Committee (village show). Both chaired by Mr. Elmy. The allotments are all being used at an annual cost of £ 10.00 per plot.

The Telephone boxes which are now used for book swapping and hanging flowers were a matter of concern as far as their maintenance was concerned. Repainting and a general tidy up was proposed. Extra grit bins were ordered.

It was agreed to increase the Parish clerk's hours from 5 to 6 hours per week with an appropriate pro rata salary increase.

An interesting forethought was discussed in conjunction with representations of the churches of Witnesham and Swilland regarding the villages' actions in the event of the death of either the Queen or Prince Phillip.

Apparently someone had drawn to the attention of the PC the dangers of the Peacocks walking around between Church Lane and Burwash. Personally I find them rather a delightful sight although some neighbours may have a rather early wake up call at times.

So what can I comment on the recording of all these events dealt with in the main by the Parish council. They are doing a very good job and putting a lot of effort into speeding, road and paving conditions, play areas and grants. They face an uphill continuing struggle with pot holes and running water and I wish them luck. One thing I have noticed is that in some cases when a member is unable to attend no report is provided which is a pity as it means that no discussions or updates are given, perhaps something that can be addressed.

Community Group:

Sadly the community council has folded. It is with extra sadness that I have to report this as I was given the task whilst on the Parish Council to get it up and running, which I did. The value of a Community Council cannot be stressed enough. It takes the responsibility, although hopefully not support, away from the Parish council, and should be the link for all activities within the village supplying both support in numbers and financially for all the various groups. Without this many will struggle. Lets hope that it can be reborn sometime in the future.

Village Hall

The Village Hall provides facilities for local people to carry out various functions and in the main is well used. The cost of running the hall is not included in the precept and grants are obtained through the Parish Council. Revenue is obtained by hiring to outside activities such as dances, quiz's, parties etc at a cost of £ 38.50 per session. Local clubs, organisers pay £ 22.00 per session.

Talitha Koum

As mentioned earlier the news we were originally given was that everything was proceeding nicely but, it is now my understanding that the original project has been abandoned. Quote: **'draw a line and explore other ways to use our resources'** However, there have been continuous fund raising activities over the years resulting in hundreds of thousands of pounds being raised. As this was a project fully supported by the Parish Council then the money raised through various charity events and spent on what now appears to be an abandoned project must, in due course, be fully accounted for and explained by Talitha Koum to enable the Parish Council to report back.

Village Voices:

Well they still blossom with new members and performances. I had the pleasure of attending one such performance in July after the opening of the church following the repairs and alterations. It was truly remarkable and many congratulations to all concerned especially to Mr and Mrs Laughlin for all their efforts, guidance and talent. They meet on the first and third of each month at the Baptist church. A cabaret night event took place on the 2nd December to raise money for the Lighthouse Women's aid.

Barley Mow

The Barley Mow continues in its efforts to be the centre of the village but I have to report it does need all our support to keep it a viable proposition. Les again put on various functions throughout the year including his regular Bingo and quiz nights. The firework display was again a major success, there must have been in the region of 150 people in attendance. I understand that Les did manage to break even this year which would have been helped by the bucket collection. I'm not sure whether it had any financial support via the Parish council or not, hopefully it did but it is another area which needs to be supported by a group such as a community council.

The pub received a very good rating for food Hygiene in October 5/5.

The Barley Players:

No performance in 2017 but it was announced in late 2017 that a new performance would take place in 2018. The one act play will be the Great Exhibition of Winesham 1851 and will again take place in the Le Panto Theatre, Manor Farm, Church Lane, the home of Mr and Mrs. Burrows. The play is acted by local people for local people and is set around the activities in the village. The play will take place from the 4th to the 6th May.

WI

The WI Meets on Wednesdays as well as other days when fund raising.. They also arrange for various walks. At the time of writing this report I am unaware of all their activities during 2017 but can assure you that they have a splendid calendar for 2018 with a host of new speakers. Voting of new officers takes place in November.

A litter pick took place on the 29th April.

The Birthday party took place on the 12 April.

A visit to Helmingham Hall took place on the 12th July and Haugley Hall in September.

Regular Village Events;

Dance classes on Mondays from 3:30 village hall (VH)

Post office on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Baptist church (BC)

Carpet bowls; Tuesdays and Thursday VH

Pilates on Fridays VH

Tai Chi: On Thursdays VH

Drop in cafe Mondays BC

Mums and toddlers Fridays BC

Boxing Day walk (from the Rec returning to the Barley Mow) 69 people attended.

The year the walk started at the Recreation Ground car park at 11 am and was again organised by Gerry Hindle.

The Church Fete June

The Flower show: July

Fireworks: Barley Mow 150 - 200 people attended

School

The school had during 2017 - 105 pupils over 4 mixed aged groups.

Mrs. Joy Chambers retired and was replaced by Miss Taheart.

The school remains 'good' with Ofsted.

The school received a letter from the Minister of State for school standards which said,

'your school is in the top 1% of primary schools in England for achievement in reading. This was helped in no small way by the team of mums reading to the pupils on a regular basis.

A bench was presented to the school to be placed in the peace garden in memory of Janet Gordon. Janet taught at the school for 30 years between 1977 and 2007.

Pre School: The Easter egg hunt took place on the 13th April with the Mini beast day on the 30th April. It caters for children aged 2 - 5 years. A ladies afternoon tea took place on the 16th July which was part of the much needed fund raising. A newly formed Parent support group announced to meet on a Thursday afternoon 1 - 3 pm. The school received a good rating by Ofsted in October. The cost is £ 3.60 per hour,

St Mary's

The main reporting for St. Mary's is the re-opening of the church after all the work. The result is breathtaking and Winesham again have a church to be proud of. The cost was paid from the monies accumulating in the trust set up by Ms.Meadows. I can personally record all our thanks to who must have been a wonderful lady with so much love and affection for our village. I hope she didn't mind too much our adaption of the Ghost of Winesham Hall. performed in 2015.

Messy Church took place this year on the 3rd June.

The fete this year took place on the 24th June and raised over £2,000.00. Special thanks were given to Gerry Hindle who managed the event, Terry and Erica Burrows for the loan of their land and Anthony Darrel Brown for the loan of his land for car parking.

The Ipswich Community wind band set up in a different part of the field as the usual siting resulted in a number of members falling out of the chairs last year due to the uneven ground.

Living faith had 4 sessions during October and November.

The Baptist Church:

Pastor Andrew Croft continues to be available most Tuesdays and Wednesdays and is available to anyone who would like pastoral care. There is always something happening at WBC including the free Drop in cafe 2-4 pm. Each Sunday morning the Baptist church has a worship service at 11 am. A post office outreach service can be found in the conservatory room on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Babies and Toddlers group 9:15 - 11:15 am There is a collection box for FIND in the conservatory.

OTHER News

Berghesh Place, opened their gardens on the 25th June as part of the National Garden Scheme, which raises money for charity.

Fynn Valley Golf Course:

A man was killed on the Fynn Valley Golf course when he was struck by lightning whilst sheltering under trees near the fifth hole. Anglia one flew to the course but the man died in hospital on the 31st June. Philip Shard from Rushmere had only been a member for a few months.

A pantomime "Aladdin" was held at the club on the 20th December.

Fynn Valley Golf Club is also the home for the Ipswich Croquet club which was first founded over 100 years ago and originally played at Christchurch Park. Their club

nights are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6pm and Wednesdays from 2pm, during the summer of course.

The golf club is voted the most welcoming club in England by England golf.

Ryan air cancelled a flight resulting in a Witnesham man and his son being stranded in Madrid where they had flown to watch their team Chelsea play Atletico Madrid. Adrian Hogger and son Harry, apparently they were not very happy.

Carpet Bowls: The AGM was held in March. The club had raised £ 350 for Parkinson's UK. The club meet every Tuesday evening and Thursday afternoons at the village Hall.

Examination Passes reported and therefore recorded: Helen Powley PhD in Earth and Environmental science from the university of Waterloo, Canada.
James Claxton Msc. in Town planning from Anglia Ruskin.
Marnie Gooch BA (Hons) in Textile Design from Central St. Martins University of the Arts, London.

The Nursing Home came out of special measures on the 3rd May with the staff being praised. This follows a visit in April following special measures being recorded in July 2016. Their fete took place on the 12th August and raised £502.29

Crime

Although we live in a lovely village in the country side it has to be reported that in 2017 there were 132 crimes reported. The highest of these crimes were, 27 Burglary, 26 violent crime, 21 criminal damage and arson and 15 anti social behaviour.

There was a **UFO** reported siting at 11:30 pm on the 14th March.

Christine Laughlin: Was this year's recipient of the Sue Poole award for the outstanding work she does with 'Lighthouse' women's aid.

The Village Show: Took place on the 8th July.

Wine Trip: In September, members of Witnesham community visited the champagne producing area of France near Reims

The Poppy Appeal raised £ 3,866 (£3,027 in 2016). Next year will be 100 years since the end of WW1 so hopefully a potentially record collection. For me personally it will be my 40th collection so if you live between the top of Juby's Hill on Upper Street down to the Barley Mow pub then please dig deep in your pockets.

Wasps: No report: The Wasps were formed in 1995 now has 200 members with 13 boy and girl teams plus one senior team for 35 plus men.

Christenings/Marriages/Deaths:

marriages: Robert Shaw to Hannah Fieldman of Deben Road, Ipswich 27th May

Fredrick Weller to Kathryn Stone of Tuddenham St. Martin 29th

July

Deaths: Cyril William Scoffield of Barham (father of Erica Burrows) age 91 26th
July.

Sidney Guy Templeman Springfield Winesham age 85 25th

December

Christenings: None

Rainfall: No records supplied. (new rainfall recorder required?)

Steve Henley April 2018 Village Recorder and Historian.