

# Watermead Annual Parish Meeting

Thursday 21 May 2015 at 7.00pm  
The Village Hall, Watermead

Attendees: Cllr Severn (Chair), Cllr A Schwab, Cllr I Schwab, Cllr Singleton, Cllr Toler, Cllr Rose, Noreen Shardlow (Clerk), AVDC & BCC Cllr Netta Glover, AVDC Cllr Ashley Bond plus 3 members of the public

**1. Apologies**

Michelle Jackson (Assistant Parish Clerk).

**2. To agree the minutes of 15 May 2014**

The Minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

**3. To discuss any matters arising from those minutes**

Cllr Rose pointed out that at the last APM as a resident he asked if the Parish Council website could be more interactive with the residents, i.e. a forum. It was agreed for this to be looked into.

**4. Watermead Parish Council**

Short report on the past 12 months and on-going projects:

The year under review has been extremely challenging, literally in the case of planning matters and has kept councillors very busy with much additional work.

## Planning & Land

**Hallam Land** continued its appeal against the decision by AVDC to refuse their planning application for around 1500 houses on land to the east of Watermead which would, effectively, join us to Bierton. The PC has represented parishioners at every meeting of the planning committee and at each day of the Inspector's hearings. We are grateful to the support from Roger Cooling and Graham Severn who have attended, spoken and provided detailed report to the Clerk and PC, meeting the Inspector, showing him Watermead. We are grateful to the Inspector for the care and consideration he has afforded to our community throughout the hearings which will resume in July.

## Crematorium application on Riviera land:

This proposal is a huge threat to our community. We have had c.700 responses to our petition and press release in the last 21 days. We have had meetings with our MP, David Lidington, have made representations to the former Secretary of State for Local Government (DCLG) Eric Pickles and current Secretary of State for Local Government, former councillor Lisa Smith, Netta Glover, Ashley Bond, head of planning at AVDC and with one of the founders of Westerleigh Group in an attempt to find out if they would withdraw, and if not, why they were so keen to ruin our village. The PC has retained planning, environment and biodiversity advisors and has the advice of a leading political communications consultancy.

We are absolutely determined to stop this development. This is the wish of parishioners, and is a threat to the health and welfare of our community. Objections have come from many areas outside of Aylesbury, nobody can understand why it is even being considered by planners.

Attempts to get the **cricket pitch** land back into the community's ownership remain high on our list of objectives. We have taken legal advice and are in touch with one of the owners. We have requested meetings in order to move this project forward. The PC is the proper body to own it, retain it for the public in perpetuity, with the Powers necessary to manage it, and obtain the necessary grant funding to create multi-sports, cricket and club facilities.

**Devolved services:** Following cutbacks, Bucks CC advised that they would be unable to offer the level of maintenance to verges, grass and public areas we expect and require in Watermead. The PC has therefore formally contracted with and taken over grass cutting, maintenance of public areas and verges from Bucks CC. You might have seen councillors and volunteers cleaning road signs, weeding and carrying out other tasks such as planting and seed sowing. Please let us know if you'd like to help. The condition and visual aspect of verges and roads is gradually improving. Our contractor is keen to hear if there are problems in your road, just let Noreen Shardlow know on 01296 641423.

The **Memorial Garden** is gradually being planted. Our Memorial is now registered with the War Graves Commission and the ground was consecrated during a service last summer. The memorial itself includes the work of Peter the Potter, who created the beautiful pottery plaques resulting in a beautiful memorial for our times. The garden is a peaceful and very special place. Many villagers have now planted flowering trees and shrubs in memory of loved ones. If you would like to remember a friend or family member in this way please let us know and we will help. Any flowering plant is welcome from small rose bushes, bulbs, to larger trees.

We regret the gate has to be kept locked, a sad reflection on our times. Just call Noreen if you would like to visit the garden, all are welcome.

On Remembrance Day a group of around 40 of us gathered to remember the fallen at 11.00 am observing the two minutes' silence together. There was a very special atmosphere. We will continue to mark Remembrance Day in this way without a formal service but with a gathering of parishioners and friends to quietly reflect and remember with respect those who have died in all conflicts, and to pray for peace.

### **Social events**

**The Carol Concert** was a great success, as usual with a large turnout of children and families in good voice, fuelled by the usual mulled wine, sausage rolls and snacks kindly provided by the WI. Our grateful thanks to Mary Singleton, Dot Toler and their team.

**The Christmas Fair** once again proved popular, held a week earlier to enable people to Christmas shop in comfort. There was a good variety of crafts stalls from jewellery to pottery from Peter the Potter. A total of £165.00 was raised for CHAT.

## **Village View**

Our village magazine remains a hugely appreciated and key part of our community, keeping us up to date with what's happening in Watermead, local services and many interesting articles. Mary Singleton, the editor and her dedicated team have produced increasingly interesting issues every quarter, no mean feat, attracting a range of local advertisers without whose advertising fees the magazine would contain less colour and would be smaller. Carolynne McKee has recently joined the team bringing her professional editorial experience. Phoebe Shardlow is another great addition to the contributor team with her very interesting and unique view of the fashion industry and haute couture.

Unfortunately our Advertising Manager, Paul Wilson, and his wife Su are leaving Watermead after many years, moving nearer to their families. Paul has done a magnificent job in selling advertising, planning and making sure we sell advertising space in the publication to virtually all local businesses over the years. (Paul also brought his project and programme management skills to the party for the Save Watermead Village campaign against the original Hallam Land application, keeping us all on track and in suitable order). Thank you Paul, we will miss you and Su very much.

## **Volunteers**

Parish Councillors are all volunteers and have worked hard this year to deliver services, ensuring Watermead residents' views and interests are heard, particular in the areas of planning. During the year we said goodbye to Pam Stocks, a Chartered Town Planner who worked hard on the Hallam Land objections document and has taught us much, helping us to understand fully planning requirements, changes of legislation and how to object, the grounds which are helpful, and those that are not. Pam is now concentrating her efforts on her work with Victim Support as well as her family. Thank you Pam. Helen Cook and Phillip Bennison did not stand for re-election and we will miss them. Helen created our new website and has kindly offered to continue to help with this and Phil will, we are sure, continue to keep an eye on the wildlife and trees which are his areas of interest.

We have welcomed Phil Toler to the council. Phil and his family have lived in Watermead since the beginning, Phil was a director of Lakeside Land and has worked with the community for many years, his expertise in finance will be very useful and we will no doubt find a way to invite the fantastic Dung Beatles to entertain us at some point.

We are delighted to welcome Irina Schwab to the council and welcome back Eric Rose. We are looking forward to working with them.

Apart from councillors, the Save Watermead Village group has gone from strength to strength, comprising 400+ members (half of our households) and giving us the ability to consult with villagers in a short period by email, leaflet distribution and in person. This group is invaluable and we hope that they will continue to take part in campaigns and enjoy the odd social event to spend time together.

Watermead's unique and pleasant environment requires constant work. The

Parish pays for all grass cutting and other maintenance such as dog bins, litter collection and tree work from the Parish Precept. Without two special volunteers however this would be a much less pleasant place to live.

Dave Lang and Graham Severn work on an entirely voluntary basis, because they care, clearing rubbish and litter from the Piazza, car park, lake areas, verges, fields, undergrowth and roadside every day. They remove countless bags of rubbish which include some very unpleasant things, ensuring that our public areas remain safe for visitors and a pleasure to visit. This level of maintenance would simply be unaffordable if it were to be paid for.

We cannot thank them enough, it is refreshing and humbling to know that they do this for no reward or recognition; but because they are determined to maintain our unique environment. They report damage which has, of late, included vandalism to trees, graffiti, and damage to the bandstand amongst other things, which enables the Clerk to report it and repairs to start without delay.

We must also thank Graham for the gift of a Barn Owl Box. We had a report of a barn owl the other day, we hope it has become a new neighbour. If anyone else would like to donate a box there is plenty of room for one or two more.

## **Dogs**

Most visitors to Watermead respect our land, but there are some who do not. You will no doubt have seen our neon pink dog poo. This spray draws attention to these selfish dog owners and helps kill bacteria.

Despite having more dog bins than any other village in the area these selfish dog owners are ignoring them and not picking it up. After consultation the community decided Dog Control Orders were not appropriate but wanted dog owners to keep dogs under control and on leads if requested, and to pick up the poo.

**PLEASE** pick up poo and put it in the dog bin. See why this is important below:

### **For information**

◊ Dog fouling is unsightly, unpleasant and can lead to toxocariasis in humans. Fouling laws do not cover faeces from other animals, *because they aren't hosts for toxicara* and are less likely to foul in areas where the public walk or play. Toxocariasis causes serious illness and even blindness. It is caused by a parasite known as toxicara canis (also known as roundworm). These parasites live in dogs' digestive systems. Eggs are released in the faeces of infected animals and contaminated soil. If someone ingests infected material, the eggs may hatch into larvae and can lead to toxocariasis. **It usually affects children aged between one and four years.** But cases of toxocariasis have been reported in people of all ages. Young children are most at risk because they are more likely to put things into their mouths and less likely to wash their hands properly. Please, **don't risk our children's health in this way**

## **Allotments**

Our thanks to the Watermead Gardening Society for keeping up such a good standard of plots and a special thank you to Sheena and Derek Hudson and Sheree and Colin Smith who look after all the new lettings and welcome new members.

## **Piscatorials**

The Piscatorials continue to lease the small lake, maintaining fish stocks, the water and banks acting as excellent and professional water bailiff. Thank you.

## **Financial**

This year we have raised the parish tax (precept) by 5.49% which is being spent on maintenance to public areas. What does this actually mean? The amount paid by a Band D household in Watermead is £5.92 per month, it was £5.61 a month last year. We aim to retain services and increase reserves.

## **Casual vacancy**

It is a huge privilege to be trusted to represent Watermead's interests and a duty which current councillors are proud to be part of. The Parish Council is representative of our community and has a range of talents, necessary to ensure success for our community.

We have one casual vacancy on the council following the election and the Parish Clerk will now commence the co-option process. If you would like to know more, or apply, please get in touch with Noreen Shardlow.

It just remains for me on behalf of my colleagues to thank Noreen and Michelle for their hard work this year. They both work very hard for us an volunteer much free time to join us and volunteers in working on projects and campaigns.

**Adrian Schwab** – Wanted to second all that the Chairman had reported and how difficult it can be at times and wanted to reiterate his appreciation to fellow Cllrs, Volunteers on all the work that is carried out. A vote of thanks was given to Cllr Severn for the amount of work and commitment given over the past and sometimes very challenging year.

## **5. Parishioners Views**

A Parishioner asked for an update on the Crematorium application. An update to be given during the ensuing Annual Parish Council Meeting, in which we would open for public comments. Agenda Item 15.19-3

Cllr Rose requested that due to the lack of empathy during the Elections and amount of attendees for the Annual Parish Council Meeting and PC meetings could more publicity be made. It was discussed for the Village View to coincide with Annual Meeting, however it was agreed not to as this would change the schedule for the whole year. It was agreed to separate the evenings of the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parish Council Meeting and to deliver a flyer to all residents a couple of weeks prior to the APM.

A Parishioner commented on the fluorescent dog poo spray and hopes this is a learning curve for the offenders and feels this is bringing the matter to all

walkers attention.

**6. Date of next Annual Parish Meeting**  
28<sup>th</sup> April 2016 8pm

Cllr Severn thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 7:30pm.

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