

Annual Watermead Parish Meeting

Thursday 20 May 2021 at 7.00pm
Held at the Village Hall, Watermead

Attendees: Cllr Severn (Chair), Cllr A Schwab, Cllr M Singleton, Cllr I Schwab,
Cllr S Mackay, Cllr M Morgan, Cllr E Rose
BC Cllr Ashley Bond, BC Cllr Peter Cooper, BC Cllr Diana Blamires
Noreen Shardlow (Clerk), Michelle Jackson (Assistant Parish Clerk)
plus 5 members of the public (via video link) – Peter Dean, Libby Rose, Denis Cassago, Ashley Jones, Graham
Severn

1 **Apologies**
None.

2 **To agree the minutes of 16th May 2019**
The Minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

3 **To discuss any matters arising from those minutes**
No matters arising.

4 **To receive reports:**

Chairman's Annual Report 2020-21

The following is the Annual Report of the Parish Council

The year has been very difficult with many visitors finding Watermead, resulting in increased litter, dog fouling and the other issues caused by large numbers of people. They are welcome, but we wish they would take their litter home, pick up after their dogs, and enjoy our beautiful surroundings quietly without causing a nuisance to residents. The vastly increased footfall around the lakeside path around the large lake has resulted in the path being eroded to the point where it needs complete reinstatement. (This is a common problem in other areas which have been used throughout the year by increased visitor numbers). The cost is considerable, but the PC is determined to get it done with the help, we hope, of a grant, or grants. Work will include a permanent crossing of the area which has flooded in recent years and become impassable for much of the winter months. We hope to have some news on this soon.

Freedom of the Parish

I am delighted to announce that we have appointed Mr Dave Lang as a Freeman of the Parish of Watermead. Dave works tirelessly to ensure our environment remains clean and tidy. He collects litter every day, throughout Watermead and the road verges to the main road. It was felt that Dave's contribution is exceptional, and we congratulate him on this richly-deserved honour. A small ceremony will be arranged shortly at which a member of the Lieutenancy will present the Scroll and Keys to the Village Hall; (the Freedom confers on the holder the freedom of the Village Hall). Our sincere congratulations.

Watermead Volunteer Army

Watermead residents volunteered immediately they were asked to help us deliver literally thousands of meals and food parcels to families in Aylesbury and some in Watermead during lockdown. Kelvin Wong started by offering those self-isolating and elderly residents deliveries of meals and food at the beginning of the pandemic. It was quickly realised that the need was great, and our volunteers stepped up to collect donations, sort food, deliver parcels, go shopping, collect prescriptions and much more including mental health support, advice on housing, benefits, employment, law and more. We have even collected laptops which have been refurbished and are given to children needing them to complete their school work. We can never thank everyone enough. The Army has received a number of awards recognising its achievements. A charity is now being registered and the work continues.

We are hugely grateful to all the wonderful people in our community who have, and continue, to donate food, every week, and to those who collect and deliver it to our families. To date, we have delivered over 10,000 meals!

The Community Larder is now firmly established at Roman Park, next to Aylesbury Vale Parkway station, all Watermead residents are welcome to use it. Donate fresh or frozen food you don't need and/or take something that you can use. It's free, it's a great way to avoid waste, and it helps us all. No need to feel guilty about throwing away that pack of salad, vegetables, bread, fish, or meat... it can be used by someone else if your plans change or you simply don't want to eat it. Anything within date is acceptable.

Christmas lights competition

Watermead's Christmas lights were very impressive last year, everyone seemed to work that bit harder to create a cheerful ambience and make something lovely for people to see as they took their exercise and walked around Watermead. Cllr Irina Schwab had a challenge in choosing the winners. Many of us left our lights on until the end of lockdown.

Summer events

Last year there were no events, other than small celebrations with limited numbers, in gardens mainly. Kelvin Wong and his team at Watermead Inn provided cheer by offering luxury picnic takeaways for Mother's Day, VE Day and other dates in the year. These were very much enjoyed, and those of us who volunteered in the delivery team certainly received much positive feedback. Thankyou Kelvin.

Front garden competition

Irina Schwab decided we should, once again, have another friendly competition for the best front garden. Gardens were judged in July, with the winners receiving a prize.

Once again, to complement the front garden competition it would be great if everyone would ensure that their bushes and trees are cut back from the pavements and they pick up litter on pavements and in the road in front of their homes. Our own "Best Kept" village initiative.

Recreation & Leisure

The basket swing, kindly gifted to me by Proludic, will be installed as soon as possible once current lockdown ends. Installation will be paid for by the funds raised in 2019 by the Events Committee.

Larks by the Lake and Outdoor Film Night

We were very disappointed that these events had to be cancelled, in common with so much else, but hope they will return next year. fun day out raising money for four chosen charities.

Photographic competition

The ever-popular competition was held 'virtually' last year with some fantastic photography on display. We are very grateful to Eric Rose for arranging this and to Ron Adams for stepping up to judge – another difficult task.

Watermead Pub Lunch club

This is very much missed by those who used to attend, but Mary Singleton assures me, that with Kelvin's approval, it will start as soon as possible after lockdown ends.

Village View

The magazine goes from strength to strength and is even glossier thanks to a new printer and to our brilliant advertisers without whom it couldn't be delivered to everyone free. Thanks also to the great editorial team led by Mary Singleton. A wonderful team who always produce the goods, it's fantastic. Thank you all so much.

Mary really welcomes contributions and articles for the View, do get in touch if you have anything for inclusion.

Neighbourhood Plan

Our Plan is in its early stages with the first questionnaire complete and results soon to be analysed. These will inform the next stage of exploring the most popular ideas and understanding additional helpful comments made by respondents. This plan is for everyone, for the future. It is absolutely necessary to identify whether or not there are any areas of land which could be used for commercial or residential development and to use the responses to prioritise projects and create the vision for the future. The next stage also includes engaging with the many businesses and companies operating from Watermead to find out their needs and wants. It's an exciting and very important project, please do take part in consultation and events, when invited.

Parish Councillors

The Parish Council has sat for two additional years in the end. Planned for last year the elections were postponed due to Covid.

It has been an absolute honour for all of us to represent our community on the parish council and I have particularly enjoyed working with our councillors, past and present. I would like to personally thank each of them, on your behalf, for their service and hard work on behalf of the community. Each has brought their own skills and areas of interest, producing events, the Village View, undertaking legal work, marketing, interest in wildlife and environment, governance and finance. Their contributions are significant.

Watermead Parish Council retains the General Power of Competence, giving it the freedom to act, as any individual can, within the law, in a less restricted way, for the benefit of the whole community. We are fortunate to have a qualified Parish Clerk and to meet other obligations to exercise the Power.

I would like to end by sincerely thanking Noreen Shardlow, Michelle Jackson, all the councillors who have sat these extra two years, and those who have left. We also owe sincere thanks to Dave Lucas, John Hillier, Darren Adamson, Wayne Samuels, who work with us, often during emergencies, to keep Watermead safe and attractive. Their work goes beyond the usual transactional relationship for which we are grateful.

As I write we have just received the results of the Parish Council elections. I want to thank everyone who voted, and assure you that not only are my colleagues and I honoured at your trust. but hope that we will make a real difference in the next years, making Watermead an even better place in which to live and work. I would like to sincerely thank you for your support, and wish everyone a healthy and safe summer.

Cllr Adrian Schwab - Vice Chairman

Cllr Schwab commented that it was amazing what had been achieved over a very tough year and the challenges the community had faced and how they had come together. He wished to recognise the contribution made by Cllr Severn as being the driving force behind the initiatives. He thanked everyone for voting at the recent elections and was honoured to represent the community.

Cllr Mick Morgan – It was encouraging to have stability in terms of the two key positions within the PC and he was very happy to continue to support the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Severn commented that everyone was equally important and that the PC worked as a team.

Cllr Irina Schwab wished to add that the PC had been through a lot including some tough legal battles. If it wasn't for all the Cllrs knowledge and hard work, the

PC may not have been able to go through those battles.

Cllr Peter Cooper – Buckinghamshire Council

Commented that canvassing in Watermead had been challenging and the reaction from residents had been very interesting. He thanked everyone who had voted for him and congratulated Cllrs on being elected.

Cllr Severn congratulated the Buckinghamshire Council councillors.

Cllr Diana Blamires – Buckinghamshire Council

Diana thanked people for voting for her and commented she was looking forward to working within Watermead.

Cllrs discussed the problems getting through to BC via their phonelines. Cllr Bond advised that it was Martin Tett's number one priority to improve this.

5 Parishioners' Views

None.

6 Date of next Annual Parish Meeting

19 May 2022 7.00 pm

Cllr Severn thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 7.35pm.