

WICKWAR PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting for the above Council was held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 7th May 2008, at 7.00pm

Attended:

Councillor M Summers (Chairman)
Councillor R Stimpson (Vice Chairman)
Councillor D Howard
Councillor S Isaac
Councillor T Proffitt
Councillor I Aldous
Councillor J Burton

Apologies:

None

Clerk:

Mrs P Trull

1. **Minutes of the last meeting**
Signed by the Chairman as a fair representation of last years meeting.
2. **Annual report from the Chairman**
See attached
3. **Annual report from the District Ward Councillor**
See attached.
4. **Financial Report to the 31st March 2008.**
See attached.
5. **Report from the Alexander Hosea School LEA Governor**
See attached
6. **Report from representatives of Lower Woods**
See attached
7. **Report from Neighbourhood Watch representative.**
See attached
8. **Report from Wickwar Educational Foundation**
See attached
9. **Report from King George V Playing Fields Sub Committee**
See attached.
10. **Report from the Parish Plan Steering Group**

No report received. Therefore, this item will be excluded from the 2009 APM.

Letter received from the Wickwar Playing Fields Association. Read out at this meeting. See attached.

The Chairman closed this meeting at 8pm.

**REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF WICKWAR PARISH
COUNCIL AT THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT
WICKWAR TOWN HALL ON WEDNESDAY 7TH MAY 2008.**

We all say, at some time or another ‘hasn’t time flown’. I’m no different. Although the Council nearly always meets on the first Wednesday of each month (except August) I find the time between those meetings seems to become increasingly shorter. Yes, I know that’s impossible, but the sheer volume of correspondence (mainly by e-mail from our Clerk - though she’s not to be blamed, she’s just passing on what’s been received by her!) gives the impression our workload is continuous. I am not saying we should not get what we do, as it is all of relevance to undertaking our rôles and responsibilities, thus aiding our decision making. But, some of us are better placed than others to absorb all this information, guidance, instructions, etc. (e.g. because work commitments limit the amount of free time one is able to devote to all these things). I fall into that category, to some extent. What I’m trying to say is that all Councillors work hard on behalf of the Parish every single day. The rewards are intangible, and we don’t always get it right, as has been shown. We are not paid for what we do. We are ordinary folk like yourselves who have an interest in the well-being of our Parish and try to do what we believe parishioners would want done. Suffice to say that the formal elections last May did not require voting to take place (which, incidentally, saved the Parish that expense) and, in fact, at that point we were one councillor short of our proper quota. So, I still ask the question about the level of involvement we see, when some of our meetings have no-one else present other than those required to be there.

So, now let’s give a brief summary of the last year. A further ‘quietening down’ with planning applications where, apart from the ones by Cemex, we dealt with just under 50 (i.e. equating to about one per week). Most were permitted and some were, I think, ‘testing the water’. Cemex’s applications are still outstanding and a lot of negotiating is required before everyone believes their points have been covered. Their application to extend workings further along the Downs Road towards Churchend is still to be submitted to S. Glos. Council and I think the best expression to use is ‘we await with interest’. The application by WPFA to get their field to be used for recreational purposes was refused, principally because of access problems. I hope the trustees see that as just a set-back and will ‘grasp the nettle’ to meet S. Glos. Council’s planning requirements before too long. We’ve had, in the past, various applications from the Hob Nob (in the High Street). It looks as though the refusals of some of them have resulted in its closure as a business. As

I've said previously, we try to support any business initiative as long as it blends in with its locality (and this applies similarly to most planning applications) and that's the point. There are local issues which must be taken into consideration and we base our decisions on our perception of the outcome if such applications were granted. As in other situations 'no' is not always the easiest thing to say, but that is what we're here to put a judgement on.

Having mentioned the WPFA above it is apt to mention that the Council was subject to investigation by its auditors regarding the grant towards the purchase of the field. The result showed the Council did not act prudently nor reasonably and was given a 'rap on the knuckles' and must do more in future with adherence to its procedure and Standing Orders. The Council accepted the report, which was required to be summarised in the local paper, and has implemented recommendations which included enhancing the Standing Orders.

I mentioned the Parish Plan last year and there is very little to say now. The concept was excellent and gave us some indications of what parishioners aspirations were. But, there has been very little 'follow up' and the Plan is, to all intents and purposes, dormant. It would be good to see a revival but that must come from the parishioners themselves.

It is worth mentioning that the area below us has been decorated and this was done via the National Offenders Management Service's Community Involvement Scheme. Specially screened and selected inmates from Leyhill Prison undertook the work under supervision and we are pleased with the result. We purchased the materials and were charged a daily rate for labour, but there was a substantial cost saving. They also decorated the interior and exterior of the Community Centre and their committee are equally as pleased.

Thanks largely to our Clerk's efforts we have a new metal storage unit on the King George V Playing Field and the old 'tin shed' has gone. A large amount of funding was secured by Pat and the remainder is being, contingently, built into this present year's budget. We hope the main playing field users, the cricket and football clubs, will be able to store all they need in the new unit and we hope people will take care of this facility.

At the beginning of this year the Council took over responsibilities for the Wickwar Combined Charity (General Fund) and Wickwar Combined Charity (Educational Fund). It came as news to most councillors that these charities existed but all were happy to take on their administration (which is not onerous). Whilst the available funds for grants is not that

much the Council will be pleased to make payments to suitable applicants.

I started by trying to give an impression of the current rôle of a Wickwar P.C. Councillor. Therefore, great thanks to all my colleagues for their hard work over the last year when, in an ever changing world, both physically, legally and regulatory, life does not get any easier. Thanks particularly to Jane Burton for offering to be co-opted and we gratefully accepted her into office from last September's meeting. It is good to have a female on our Council again and she has already made worthy contributions to our business.

There's not enough I can say about our Clerk, Pat. Her diligence and workload is far more than she needs to give and I know we all so appreciate what she does. Each time she tells us she is due a pay rise we never flinch at agreeing!

We were so glad Howard Gawler was re-elected as S. Glos. Councillor for Ladden Brook Ward last year. He works with a passion for his constituents and we are fortunate to have him as our link with S. Glos. Council. We were all devastated by the loss of his wife, Sue, last December and it is the marque of the man that he has managed to come through that period and resume his duties so admirably. Thank you, Howard, for all the time and effort you give to us.

I don't suppose many of you have noticed because the clock doesn't tick any differently nor rings out at times other than when it should, but we have a new clock winder. After 46 years Roy Millard decided to retire at the end of July last, partly on health grounds but also as he was moving to a new home out of the village. We made a presentation to him and there are pictures on the wall as a permanent memento. His longevity will be a hard act to emulate. So our clock winder is now Annette Mackie, who also lives next to the Town Hall, but on the other side to the Millard's. We thank Annette for taking on the task.

A couple of plugs. There are regular Beat Surgeries at the Town Hall where you can have a chat with local police officers – check on the Notice Board when they are. We still have Parish Walks each month and it would be good to see more people join us. Again, check the Notice Board.

M.V. Summers
Chairman, Wickwar Parish Council

Financial Report

I undertake spot checks of the accounts and make comparisons with the bank balances at frequent intervals, often at the end of the monthly meeting. I can confirm, therefore, that the accounts are monitored and are kept in good order in accordance with the Accounting Rules and Regulations.

The Annual Precept is assessed as part of the Council's Budget setting process, which is usually done in January each year.

Report to Wickwar
Parish Council on Alexander Hosea Primary School 7th May
2008

This is my fourth and final annual report to the council having been appointed as a LEA governor in November 2004. I have now decided to stand down my post due to the pressure of other commitments. Councillor Jane Burton will be taking on the role, although this may be short lived as a consultation paper have been published which may end the need of LEA governors.

Apart from myself, two parent governors have stepped down - coming to the end of their four end term, to be replaced by Colin Baker and someone yet to be elected. Sally James was re-elected as Chair and Steve Jones as Vice-chair.

On the staffing front Head teacher Mrs Vally Lambert is to leave in the summer to take up post at a junior school in Derbyshire. She has been head teacher for nine years and in that time has managed the school to the highest level of academic achievements and a reputation to be proud of. I'm sure she will be greatly missed by pupils, parents, staff and governors - we wish her the best in the future. Mr Bennet, teacher of year 5/6 left at Christmas, emigrating to New Zealand. Existing teachers have covered his hours; a new head teacher will be appointed in the summer but would be unlikely to take up their post until Christmas.

The school has gained three significant awards: Healthy School Award, Activemark Achievements and the Financial Management Standard. The three awards are the result of much hard work by all the staff who presented the evidence for more than 200 standards which had to be met.

Premises - the reception area is to have a major face-lift and an outdoor classroom is to be built.

Academically the school continues to excel, the recent Ofsted Report declared the school 'outstanding'. There have been many sporting achievements over the year. All pupils have enjoyed educational trips and year 5 and 6 have had residential trips. Three members of staff have had an educational trip to Indonesia.

It was noted that during last months one day strike by NUT members the school stayed open with just two classes lost due to strike action.

Finally we all hope the new Head teacher will maintain and enhance the excellent reputation this school has achieved over the past decade.

Stephen Isaac

**WICKWAR PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING MAY 2008
REPORT FOR LOWER WOODS**

Woodland Management

Work has continued throughout the year with particular emphasis on coppicing and thinning. Coppice rotations will vary according to species and location but the increase of light to the woodland floor has a highly beneficial effect on woodland flora and the subsequent regrowth benefits many woodland bird species and mammals such as dormice. The coppice growth cut on a regular rotation will also increase utilisable and saleable produce.

Deer populations continue to be monitored and damage (to coppice regrowth and flora) assessed. As yet no control measures have been instigated. There is little doubt that the Muntjac population in particular has increased markedly.

Much work is carried out by volunteer groups many of them local. Tom Burditt, the Lower Woods Manager, is now also the Reserves Manager for Glos Wildlife Trust.

Wildlife

There has been a lot of species recording work carried out across a wide range of species types and groups. Plant and invertebrate lists for the woods are very impressive and contain many local, county and wider rarities. Dormice numbers and distribution appear to be healthy but some woodland birds including the Nightingale are becoming worryingly scarce.

Building at the Lodge

The old barns and sheds alongside the car park are being restored to provide new visitor information and volunteer facilities. The materials used utilise timber from the woods and the budget of £110k comprises £50k from Landfill Tax and £60k from charitable trusts and members. Plans for one of the barns have had to be revised as no less than 5 different species of bat were found in the roof space!

Archaeology

Further digs will be undertaken in the field by the Lodge this Summer to further investigate the extensive Roman remains. An illustrated talk at Hawkesbury Village Hall on 16th May will provide lots of information for those interested.

Visits and Events

The marked trails through the woods are being well used and many more local people are now aware of and using the woods. The Lower Woods leaflet has been revised and is available in the dispenser by the car park, also the events leaflet from the Wildlife Trust. The Lower Woods Management Committee is suggesting that a dispenser for leaflets including for events could be provided in the village. Views from the Parish Council and annual meeting are requested. A wide range of events are held in the woods each year, hence the need to increase awareness of these events amongst all villagers.

A major event being planned for September 7th will celebrate 10 years of the Wildlife Trust's ownership of Lower Woods. There will be many exhibits and guided walks on various aspects of the woods, a barbeque and lots for children to do. Further information will be provided and Parish Councillors will all receive individual invitations. **Bill**

Heslegrave May 2008

WICKWAR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH
VILLAGE CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT
TO THE PARISH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
7TH MAY 2008

Summary

1. We are fortunate that overall crime within the village remains at a fairly low level. Nonetheless, there have been a few incidents of concern over the past year; some anti-social behaviour and mercifully only a few burglaries and thefts from cars.

Police matters

2. The new neighbourhood policing arrangements have bedded down. We are part of an enlarged beat area, Charfield combined with Laddenbrook, administered from Thornbury. PC Lee Bainbridge continues as our beat manager, assisted by 2 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), Hayley Harrison and Shaun McKinnon. Hayley kindly provides a policing update in our Parish Magazine. Inspector Mark Hedgcock has moved to another post and his successor is Inspector Caroline Howard.

3. We have made the Town Hall available for the Police to hold surgeries where residents can raise any issues with the Police and provide useful background information which may enable the Police to complete the jigsaw and identify perpetrators of crime. We have held these surgeries at monthly intervals with timings spread throughout the day and evening to maximise potential attendance. I am saddened to have to report that, with the exception of the very early surgeries, residents have made little use of these opportunities.

4. If you call the Police to report something, please ask that the call is tagged Neighbourhood Watch. This will enable our NHW area co-ordinator to track what action was taken and they can then let us know the outcome.

5. Over the past year I have attended the annual NHW co-ordinators meeting held in Bristol on 27th September 2007 and the South Gloucestershire NHW Association AGM held on 16th April 2008. These meetings provide a useful insight into NHW policing issues, the approaches the Police are adopting to counter crime and, just as importantly, an opportunity to speak with police officers and understand and comment on the issues which are driving them.

Safer, Stronger Community Group

6. The concept of this Government initiative is that local communities should have a greater input into deciding policing priorities. The group also covers the Fire Service and NHS matters. The aim is to meet about 4 times per year. The first roadshow was held in Iron Acton in November 2006. Building on that event, the Group was formally set-up at a meeting held in Iron Acton on 24th January 2008 and Howard Gawler, our elected representative on South Gloucestershire Council, was elected chairman by

those who had been sufficiently concerned to attend the meeting. Pat Trull has volunteered to take notes of each meeting. Under the scheme, the other secretaryship roles remain with South Gloucestershire Council; William Kwok is the current secretary. The first public meeting was held on 10th March 2008 at Rangeworthy and prioritised three aspects for action; fly tipping in all the parishes covered by the Group, a flashing 20 mph sign at Rangeworthy School and lorries ignoring the weight restrictions in Wickwar. It will be interesting to see how the Group evolves; the next public meeting will be held on 12th June at Wickwar Town Hall.

Wickwar Neighbourhood Watch

7. The Wickwar Neighbourhood Watch AGM was held on 17th April 2008. The current neighbourhood area co-ordinators within Wickwar signified that they were willing to continue this voluntary work and so the list remains as:

Ann and Philip Revill	Tel. 294466	(High Street, The Buthay, North Street, Back Lane, Southend House, Southend Gardens)
Kay Stimpson	Tel. 299005	(Amberley Way, Burleigh Way, Canters Leaze, Sodbury Road)
Diane Short	Tel. 299085	(Avon Crescent, Station Road, Turnpike Gate)
Bryan Hockey	Tel. 294814	(West End)
Terry Proffitt	Tel. 299234	(Village co-ordinator)

8. There continues to be a need for more contact people and area co-ordinators to ensure a fuller coverage of the village. The task is not onerous; basically it is to pass onto to your neighbours the occasional messages received from the Police and to report back any incidents that occur. If you are willing to help, please let myself know or contact one of the area co-ordinators.

Security message

9. May I take this opportunity of once more stressing the need to secure property. Lock doors and windows, do not leave keys in doors, do not leave valuables in vehicles. Secure your gardening tools in garden sheds and garages, particularly important as the Summer months approach; some one-third of burglaries are thorough open windows.

Thank you

10. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the Wickwar NHW co-ordinators for their dedication and good work. Without this voluntary effort the village would feel less secure and we would miss out learning of the initiatives on keeping communities safe and how we can contribute to their success.

Terry Proffitt
Village Co-ordinator
29th April 2008

Graham
Teague
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4 May 2008

Pat Trull
Parish Clerk
Wickwar Parish Council

Dear Pat

Report for Wickwar Parish Council re Wickwar Educational Foundation

There has been a considerable increase in the number of Student Grants awarded - increased to 31. There were 9 grants for educational visits plus donations to the Alexander Hosea Primary School.

Accounts for the year ended 31st January 2008 are currently only in draft form but should be finalised shortly.

Audited accounts (published on the Charities Commission website) for the year ended 31st January 2006 shows Income of £5,745 and Expenditure of £5,899.

We are still working on providing information regarding the Foundation on the Wickwar website (www.wickwar.org) over the coming months. Unfortunately this is taking us longer than originally envisaged.

After many years of dedicated service Wally Aplin - former Head of Alexander Hosea School - has resigned from the Committee recently.

I hope this is sufficient for the Council meeting.

Regards

Graham Teague

cc clerk to Wickwar Educational Foundation

King George V Playing Fields Annual report to the Parish Council

This has been another steady year for the committee. Research into upgrading the pavilion continues to be on hold. The parish council have renewed the planning permission on the Pavilion plans although there is no intention to progress the scheme in the near future. At the last meeting it was agreed that as new neighbouring facilities (pitches and cricket square) were unlikely to be available in the near or medium term the sub committee would carry on with the strategy of improving and upgrading the existing facilities.

A major step forward has been the replacement of the old tin shed with a purpose built store shed. This has created a lot more space for the storage of club equipment. I would like too extend a special thanks to Pat Trull for the hard work she put into not only obtaining grant funding but also arranging the contract for the building work. Thanks also to the Parish Council for providing matching funding.

In the pavilion the old doors have been replaced thanks to the hard work of Bob Bannister. Many thanks for your efforts.

When temporary storage is removed work will commence on tarmacing the car park. Many thanks to Pat for securing funding from Cemex for this work.

A successful application for play equipment (thanks to Pat Trull and Steve Issacs) means that in the near future new equipment will be installed. It has yet to be decided exactly what type of equipment would be most suitable.

I would like to express my thanks to all members of the Sub Committee for their involvement through the year and look forward to the new challenges ahead.

WICKWAR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MAY 7TH 2008

General.

I have now been your SG Councillor for 5 years and during that time have directly helped, or acted as go between with council officers, for many members of the local community.

Positions.

At the moment I am Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Chair of Corporate Select, Chair of Audit and Accounts, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and I am also on D.C.West and the Appointments Panel. The latter is very interesting but time consuming as we are appointing three second tier posts at present each of which will take about 2 days of my time.

Housing for the next 20 years.

Most of you will have read about the on going debate of how many houses are going to have to be built in South Gloucestershire over the next 20 years. We agreed to 21,500 as our share of the west of England total (Bristol, BANES NS and SGC). GOSW increased this to 30,800, including 5000 round Yate and Sodbury, which came right out of the blue. The current area being looked at includes a large part of Engine Common with up to 1000 houses but since one of the mine shafts fell in a couple of weeks or so ago they might have second thoughts about this area.

We are now awaiting a final figure from the Secretary of State – Hazel Blears - which will be announced in a couple of months. The Council is fighting this figure most vigorously as it is untenable, especially in the Yate area. We don't have the infrastructure - schools, roads or sewage system - and also because a large part of S Glos is on a flood plain. Wickwar has not been allocated any specific number but it is likely that a lot of villages will get small numbers to keep them vibrant. 2300 of the total come under this category.

Drains.

Wickwar seems to have more than its fair share of drain problems. The corner of Back Lane, the High St opposite Back Lane and Station Rd under the railway embankment – all have caused problems and are now improved but not necessarily solved. The council has an extra gulley cleaner on order, which costs £100,000 per year to buy and run, which will improve the long term scenario.

WPFA.

I don't propose to say much as it will be covered elsewhere. However I sincerely hope that an agreement can be reached to either have a new entrance, or an improved one, that will solve the problem once and for all for the good of the village.

Wickwar Quarry.

Although not strictly within Wickwar Parish it has a daily effect on the lives of the people that live here. At present Cemex have put in a further application regarding the hours limiting usage to 60 days per year for night work outside current conditions. I am still not sure whether this is 60 x 24 hours or 60 days when they will work outside the condition for one or more hours. Whichever, bearing in mind they worked most nights during Feb and March and 8 of them were for a full 24 hours, I can only assume they want the best of both worlds, with a regulated 60 x 24 hours and lesser unregulated hours as well. Negotiations are under way at present as neither side wishes to go to an appeal that is currently set for July.

The liaison group has been effective under the Chair of Terry Proffitt but it does need both sides to be fair and honest for the best results.

Poplar Lane.

An extraordinary to do where we had two sets of neighbours not seeing eye to eye over verge planting and some poplar trees. In the end a Streetcare Manager had to sort the matter out but it resulted in the loss of the trees to allow hedge cutting, a tidying up of the verge and probably the more obvious opening up of the lane to walkers to take them down to the Pack Horse Bridge. Nobody was happy with the end results.

Just for a bit of extra news - this morning one of the Conservative Councillors defected to us so that the Liberal Democrats are now up to 28, Conservatives 33 and Labour remain at 9.

Thankyou to everyone in WICKWAR who has supported me over the past year and I would now be happy to take any questions.

**Howard Gawler
Ladden Brook Ward
South Gloucestershire Council**

May 7th 2008.

WICKWAR PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN

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Gloucestershire
GL12 8PH
Tel: 01454 294051*

VICE-CHAIRMAN

*Mr J McAleese
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TREASURER

*Mr J Ranee
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Monday, 05 May 2008

Mr Martin Summers
Chairman
Wickwar Parish Council

Martin,

Please find below a brief summary of the activities of the Wickwar Playing Fields Association over the last twelve months.

Planning Application

In July of last year a planning application for "Change of Use" of the fields from agricultural to sporting and recreational use was submitted to South Gloucestershire Council Planning Department. The refusal of the planning application in December is disappointing but wide-ranging discussions continue to attempt to resolve outstanding issues. The trustees were pleased with the support and encouragement received from the hundreds of residents who actively supported the application and the support provided by South Gloucestershire Councillors.

Field Maintenance

The trustees are delighted with the improvements to the condition of the fields. The vast majority of the 2000+ native trees and shrubs have survived their first year and will continue to provide increased wildlife habitat and biodiversity of the area. The grass sward is continuing to thicken and maintenance is ongoing.

The task of removing the overhead power cables has been a major technical and logistical challenge and was completed with the much-appreciated support of Central Networks and the Summerfield Foundation. Over 270m of cabling has been diverted underground and three telegraph poles removed. The long-term benefits to the trust are the removal of an eyesore, to increase the possibilities for future use and improve safety. Additional benefits are; the original single-phase low voltage cable to the adjacent King George V playing field pavilion has been upgraded to a three-phase low voltage cable; a supporting stay from one of the telegraph poles, which has protruded into the adjacent children's playground for 30+ years, has been removed. These additional benefits were implemented at no cost to the Trustees of the King George V field.

WICKWAR PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION

The two ponds on the fields have been cleared of debris, refurbished and replanted. Over 100 native trees and shrubs have been planted, together with over 450 wild flower plants.

Planting of the traditional Gloucestershire orchard is now complete and contains 31 different varieties of Apple, Plum, Perry Pear and Walnut trees.

Allotments

After its first full year of use, the allotments are the most visible and significant success of the project so far. The allotments are thriving with all plots let, the maintenance levels are excellent and the community benefit is obvious. Nineteen full plots have been installed, and over forty families are involved with them, there is now a waiting list of seven residents seeking plots.

The major undertaking this year has been the provision of a water supply to the site and the installation of water troughs. Once again technical and logistical problems had to be overcome but the outcome is a real and long-term benefit.

Summary

The trustees are very pleased with the progress made this year and look forward to the challenges ahead.



John Broad
Chairman
Wickwar Playing Fields Association