



NEWSLETTER

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MAY 2014

Parish Councillors:

Frank Myers, *Chairman*
(email: run31@btinternet.com)

Clive Tucker, *Vice chairman*

Rodney Fuller
Nicki Howe
Keith Newell
Sally Marks
Ian Mathers
Alistair Pirie
Deborah Sherry

Parish Clerk: Karen Newman
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See Woldingham Directory for full contact details.

Other Useful Contacts:

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Sally Marks (tel: 653134)
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County Councillor:
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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The majority of this edition is devoted to a progress report on the Neighbourhood Plan. We are moving towards publishing a draft Plan. We hope that will be out by the time of the next Newsletter. In the last edition we reported on the resident's survey and called for residents to work with us on project groups. This issue gives a report of the important work these groups have carried out over the spring. There is also some information on our professional consultants and an invitation to you to help complete our list of village facilities and organizations. We will be establishing a Steering Group very soon. We hope to see you at the APM!

As always we include a report on developments in planning. The current news on that front is alarming. We are alerting everyone to the nature of the threats to our village and explaining what we are doing about them. We are not opposed to housing development, just to development that is out of harmony with the character of the village. We also oppose attempts to dilute or restrict the impact of established local policies, which are the safeguards of local character.

We have given a report of our flood related activities in the Woldingham Magazine. The last edition carried a large quantity of advice on snow clearance. We never thought we would be taking pictures of rubber sausages instead!

Things move fast in the world of telecommunications. The appearance of green boxes for superfast broadband was predicted for March and that turned out to be accurate. Most residents and businesses will welcome them but, as suggested by the Residents' Survey results, we might have had preferences as to where they were sited. The Parish Council did ask to be consulted (lest one be 'plonked' in front of the Memorial) but nothing further was heard.

In January we were delighted to welcome two new Parish Councillors, Keith Newell and Deborah Sherry. They were co-opted on the resignations of Susan Kurr and Bob Dench. We also welcomed Terri Waghorn to replace Kate Gardner as our part time planning administrator.



Photograph taken by John O'Brien



PROGRESS REPORT ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Along with the last Newsletter we gave out a summary report of the main outcomes of the Residents' Survey. We also held a Forum meeting to preview these results, to explain the steps ahead in creating a neighbourhood plan and to recruit helpers. About two dozen volunteers have come forward to help us shape the direction of our Neighbourhood Plan. Each has joined a project group of their choice and attended three scheduled Saturday morning meetings along with parish councillors. The meetings ran from January to March. Group members have taken on work in between meetings and reported back with further information and ideas. Our new part time administrator, Terri Waghorn, has ably assisted us to keep tabs on our meetings and activities - and has even joined in the project work!

A warm thanks to all our helpers!

Simon Aggiss, Andrew Barton, Rita Berry, Simon Browning-Hull, David Cable, David Chapman, Julie Cornish, Judith Crane, Sue Edwards, Julia Eziashi, Ian Flanagan, Nicki Fraser, Rupert Kelley, Geoffrey King, David Locket, Noel Marshall, Julie Peniston-Bird, Martin Peniston-Bird, Alan Perry, Tony Potter, David Shelley, Neil Tidmarsh, Jane Torrance, Robin Tozer

All project groups have examined in some detail the Residents' Survey results related to their group's topics. Another activity has been to study the relevant policies and projects emerging from Neighbourhood Plans that have been adopted or are nearing completion. Out of this has come a number of discussions and investigations. The work is not complete but will go into a new phase involving our professional consultants and a Steering Group. According to our timetable we should be aiming at completing a plan for submission to the Independent Assessor by the end of the year.

INTRODUCING OUR CONSULTANTS

We have appointed Action in Rural Sussex (AirS) as consultants to help us manage the project to write our Draft Plan. AirS has over 80 years experience in supporting community led planning and currently has about 20 parish councils at various stages of neighbourhood planning from 'community engagement' to 'referendum'. The AirS team comprises experienced and skilled community engagement officers, housing specialists and professional planners and designers: 'Our emphasis is placed on ensuring that communities are guided through the process in a way which best suits their needs.'

WHAT THE PROJECT GROUPS HAVE BEEN DOING

TRANSPORT AND LAW & ORDER

This project group studied in detail the Residents' Survey results on these topics. The greatest transport priority was the maintenance of road surfaces, road paths and verges, and rather prophetically, efficient drainage. These matters are to a great extent in the hands of the Surrey County Council, at least for adopted roads. We have approached David Hodge, as our local County Councillor, to explore what we can do together to preserve, or preferably enhance, the current position on maintenance

and through traffic. This would include a consideration of Surrey's estimates of future traffic flows and their potential impact upon Woldingham's roads. The recent traffic and access problems caused by flooding along the course of the Bourne has brought the issues into sharp relief.

Residents identified areas which posed a traffic risk, notably a number of road junctions, such as the one at the bottom of Bug Hill, and several sharp bends like the one in front of the station. These will also be discussed with Surrey to see whether the risks can be eliminated or reduced.



There was also support for the introduction of various potential measures of traffic calming, which again requires discussion with Surrey. In the opinion of the police, animated signs are often more effective than static warning discs.

It has been suggested that we need a community strategy for the use of our cars, building on existing practices that encourage sharing and mutual assistance. Meanwhile, a particular concern was expressed by residents about access to the station, with a large percentage favouring the creation of better facilities for residents' parking nearby. We have recognised that there are likely to be formidable obstacles to the creation of a residents-only car park, in terms of location, financing and planning permission (most of

the surrounding area lies in the Green Belt). Other options being explored include the re-introduction of a stance for a taxi service. Discussions of the various options have begun with potential stakeholders. All ideas are welcome.

On the other project group theme of law and order, residents and ourselves all recognize that Woldingham enjoys a relatively low crime rate and that much of what crime happens is of an imported variety. It has been noted that during the closure

of Woldingham Road the crime rate had been particularly low. The group has also recognized the part played by both Neighbourhood Watch and our CPSO, both of which agencies take part in the project group. Since 1st April, PC Kelley's jurisdiction has been extended to cover Warlingham and Tatsfield. We shall need to monitor how the new arrangements work out. At the same time, we shall discuss with Neighbourhood Watch what crime reduction measures may need to be strengthened.

You are warmly invited to the

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
of the Parish Council
Village Hall on Thursday 15 May 2014**

7.00pm - 7.30pm start of meeting

**Theme:
THE WOLDINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

HOUSING AND CHARACTER

This project group has focused on some of the policy priorities supported by the Residents' Survey. It looked at what supplements are needed to Tandridge Council's existing and proposed policies, both to protect Woldingham's character and the Green Belt and to explore what kind of development would be right for Woldingham, and what policies are needed to facilitate it. Points that have been considered so far are:

- Restoration of the 0.2ha requirement if it is finally dropped from Tandridge Council's Local Plan Part 2, but perhaps focused more on parts of the village where it has had and should continue to have an important effect on the spaciousness and character of the immediately surrounding area;
- Facilitating smaller accommodation units in the village, in particular for older residents who want to down-size without leaving their social networks in Woldingham;
- Raising the status of selected points in the existing Village Design Statement and Woldingham Design Guidance, so that they have full policy status equal with Tandridge Council's policies are not so easily overlooked or overruled: useful analysis has been done on this;
- Whether "not disproportionate" and "not materially larger", the magic words that are used to define acceptable extensions or rebuilds in the Green Belt, can be better defined, to make it more difficult for houses in the Green Belt to be enlarged excessively or replaced by ever larger buildings;
- What might be done to improve the Crescent, both in terms of its visual character and to bring more life to this centre of the village.



FACILITIES

In this project group, building on the opinions of residents in the Survey, we have taken 'facility' to mean a piece of land or a structure that is used to give residents local access to an activity that is relevant to their work or leisure. By 'gap' we mean the perceived absence or shortage of a facility that could be of benefit to residents if provided locally. We have recognised that this village, like others, is to some degree a 'dormitory'. The demands of long employment hours and travel leave residents little time for socializing after work. There is also a tendency to go elsewhere for recreation, exercise, shopping and other facilities. We may also be at an early stage in addressing the needs and interests of the increasing number of residents who live longer and may not live near the centre of the village where most facilities are located.

Local providers are a mix of social enterprises and commercial ventures. Especially where existing facilities are underused, adding more of the same is going to be commercially unwelcome. But increasing the overall volume of users could benefit all.

Among the top six facilities that residents marked most relevant to their households, those least often ranked good included eating out, daily shopping and health/medical care. Those marked most often as non-

existent included facilities for health/medical care, business meetings, reading and study, eating out, elderly care and disabled persons.

On eating and drinking, some say that the facilities are largely there but their perception is an issue. Are they known, accessible and attractive to residents? The survey results suggest otherwise. So we have been considering how current providers could 'network' to attract more local custom, for example by joint concessions and better publicity. Even the signposting of where local facilities are could be improved. We have also begun to explore what kind of additional provision would complement, not duplicate, what is here and would be sustainable. Is there room for a 'coffee shop' in an accessible spot? Can we make it easier for 'popup' ventures and good quality specialist fresh food retailers to visit the village? Linked to this is an emerging discussion about 'regenerating The Crescent'.

We have also begun to contact health providers to see if there is any way to attract them to set up some limited services in the village; after all they did once exist here. In theory the new commissioning arrangements should help to encourage response to community need but commercial and resourcing considerations will no doubt play their part.

Some key facilities, eg in

the Village Hall, are perceived as regularly not accessible to residents. Is there a way to meet conflicting demands? Is there scope for expanding premises? If so, what would the accommodation priorities be? We are proposing to seek external assessment and advice on what we could do. We also hope to arrange visits to innovative villages which have gained a good reputation for their community facilities.

Dates for your Diary:

Saturday 10th May - Litterpick

Thursday 15th May - APM

Parish Council Meetings:

Last Thursday of the month, Village Hall 7.30pm - except July & October when meetings are held in the Peace Hall, Garden Village (no meetings in August and December)

May 29th*

June 26th

July 31st*

September 25th

October 30th*

November 27th

*preceded by Community Police Action Group (7pm)