



Wilcot, Huish and Oare Annual Parish Meeting 5 April 2017 Chairman's Report

This meeting is to celebrate the achievements of our area, if I miss any of those achievements out please forgive me.

Spring has arrived in the last few days and once again I would like to say how lucky we are to live here. We have active community hubs in the Churches, Village Halls and the Pub, please continue to support them and make more use of them if you can. The train service from Pewsey is thriving, and in our wider community there has been a great deal of work being done to improve people's lives, for both young and old. This is largely being done in a voluntary basis and we are lucky that we have a core of active volunteers to do this work.

The Parish Council, working with various other agencies and organisations has been active this year and I would like to give you a summary of some of the highlights, plus update some other projects that are on-going.

War Memorial:

The War Memorial in Wilcot requires some significant restoration and the Parish Council has applied for a grant to finance the work. The War Memorial will be removed temporarily so that it may be sympathetically cleaned; while this is happening a new plinth will be installed replacing the current cracked blocks. We have to wait for the result of the grant application before we can provide details on timing, and will also be reliant on the mason's availability for the work to be carried out. We will of course respect important dates in the calendar and try to ensure the Memorial is not undergoing works for these dates.

Highways - Oare School:

Further liaison has been undertaken with the school, particularly focusing on the three key issues affecting traffic:

The Huish Lane/A345 junction; just before Christmas some parents contacted the Local paper regarding the issue and we held a site meeting with them to discuss the history and items still outstanding. Another meeting was held with some members of the Parish Council, School Governors and PTA in attendance. Following these meetings a letter was written to Wiltshire council asking for clarification on the Council's stand on some safety measures that might be undertaken but have not been. A full and helpful response was received from Wiltshire Council.



School children walking to the Church – we have received support for an improvement to the footpath from Rudge Lane to the Church, from the local landowner, Wiltshire Highways department and the School. Work on this will start shortly.

Traffic difficulties at pick up and drop off times. The PTA has contacted the school governors regarding the difficulty of vehicle access to the school. We have been liaising with a school governor about ways of mitigating the problems since local residents are also very much adversely affected by the problems caused by having the school on a narrow single-track lane. The Lead Governor for this issue has produced a draft report; and we await further input and actions from the school once this report has been considered. In the meantime could I remind all those visiting the school that access to Huish and to all residents properties must be kept clear at all times.

Speeding:

This remains an issue, particularly for the A345 through Oare and the C8 in Wilcot. Both villages Speed Watch teams persevere and hopefully at least some motorists will learn a lesson or appreciate why the teams are out monitoring. Speed Watch in Oare and Wilcot could do with some further volunteers, so if anyone has some spare time and you wish to consider joining I can pass your details on to the team leaders. You do not have to be a resident of the villages to help with speedwatch and full training is provided by Wiltshire Police.

A Village Gate will be installed at the South end of Oare Village, part funded by the Community Area Transport Group and the Parish Council. The work is in a queue and will be done when we reach the top of the queue. The aim is to draw attention to the fact that motorists are entering a 30 mile an hour zone.

The Speed Indicator Device (SID) has been successfully deployed in Oare just before the Huish Junction heading North bound on the A345. The device is deployed on a regular basis for two weeks at a time and provides a strong visual reminder that motorists are still in a 30 mile zone as they pass up the hill and out of Oare.

Emergency planning:

A review of our emergency plans has led to the purchase of a fourth defibrillator, this time for installation in Stowell, which should occur shortly. A large number of other items such as walkie-talkies, grit spreaders etc., have also been purchased so that we can provide assistance in the event of an emergency. A generator is also on order so that in the event of a major emergency Wilcot village hall can be used as a shelter.

Canal – Wilcot:

Work on improving the parking along the canal verge side will commence this spring. The aim is to stop parking where the lane is too narrow to allow for parking and



emergency vehicle access. In addition the work will improve the parking surface where the lane is wider. This should benefit both residents and users of the canal. We have held a number of meetings with residents and members of the canal users community and are grateful to the local landowner who will undertake the works on our behalf.



Rights of Way:

Please could all landowners and residents remember that all footpaths should be clear of obstructions for a metre. Horse tapes and vehicles are just as much obstructions as overgrown hedges, wires and locked gates. There are a number of unsafe stiles in our patch, please could we respectfully ask all landowners to check the state of the stiles and make appropriate repairs or replacements if these are needed. In addition, with the growing season upon us, please remember to cut back any hedges or re-instate any overgrown paths. If you come across any damage or obstruction please let the Parish Clerk know. On the positive side nearly all of our stiles and footpaths are accessible and I think we all appreciate the effort that goes in to helping us enjoy our area.

Planning:

We have had a busy year again for planning applications, having reviewed over 20 applications. May I remind everyone that if you wish to undertake any building works or works to trees and gardens either in the AONB or in the conservation areas you may well need either planning permission or to submit a notice to carry out works. Wiltshire Council's planning Department is very helpful and will give you guidance on any requirements and planning applications you may need to fill out. Please do not ignore this since you may find yourself being forced to take out a retrospective planning application and if you remove trees that have preservation orders you may face a significant fine.

Parish Walks:

The next walk is on St George's day Sunday April 23rd 2017 starting at 2pm by the Telephone Box in Huish. This walk will be more of an amble to hopefully enjoy the Bluebells and Wild Garlic in Gopher Wood. The intention is to hold these walks regularly over the summer. They are not strenuous but we do talk a lot and so they can be time consuming – please come for fresh air, exercise and pleasant company.

New Clerk:

We hope to be able to confirm a new clerk in position in the next couple of weeks. If you have any queries or items for forthcoming agendas you can contact the clerk on clerk@wilcotandhuish-pc.gov.uk.

Around the Parish

Wilcot Village Hall:

The village hall suffered significant damage when part of the plaster on the old ceiling came away and the Village Hall Committee have been hard at work, developing plans for



not just repair but also significant upgrading of the hall. There is still a long way to go with this project and local fund raising will be an essential, in order for these works to go ahead. The more money that is raised the greater the size of grants that can be applied for, the better the rejuvenation of the hall will be. If you can help, either directly by making a donation, by fund raising yourself or in any other way please contact the village hall committee at hutandgreen@gmail.com.

Wilcot Cricket Pavilion:

It is a pleasure to be using the Pavilion for this meeting and to see it in use. Congratulations to all involved in bringing this large project to fruition and we greatly appreciate their hospitality and support for the community.

Oare Village Hall:

We need to extend a big thank you to Oare Village Hall committee for allowing us to hold our Parish Council meetings at the Hall while Wilcot Village Hall is out of action. The village hall committee plans several events through the year, please support these events, they are varied and appeal to a wide audience. For more information on forthcoming events please visit their web site: <http://www.oare-wilts.co.uk>