

Great Horwood Annual Parish Meeting 18 May 2017

Chairman's report

Great Horwood Matters

During the past year, Great Horwood Parish Council has been dealing with a number of issues on behalf of parishioners.

1. Traffic matters

- Speeding through Great Horwood and Singleborough continues to be a problem : we have the evidence from the data collected by the MVAS (Motor Vehicle Activated Sign). Particular thanks to Mick Wood who has recorded data, relocated the sign and mended fixings in all weathers. The police so far have said that it's too tricky to find a suitable location for a camera van. We are, however, developing a Neighbourhood Speed Watch Scheme. More volunteers would be welcome – please contact the Parish Clerk if you are interested. If you could help for an occasional hour that would be wonderful and training is available.
- Inconsiderate parking is something the Parish Council is often asked about – whether this is parking on pavements, or parking in particular places in the village, such as School Lane and Spring Lane. This isn't illegal parking and parking on the pavement is not against the law. However, it does cause inconvenience so we encourage everyone to think of others when they are using the road.
- Our attempts to find a crossing patrol person to help schoolchildren cross the High Street safely have not met with success. Crossing patrollers seem to be an endangered species, however, and not only in Bucks.
- There have been some roadworks in the area which caused major disruption. In particular, the closure of the A421 last June, led to traffic backing up from Winslow almost to the roundabout. This could, surely, have been foreseen and managed better. The repairs to the corner of Pilch Lane (near the BBOWT field) led to large numbers of grain and bulk haulage lorries using the village to access Adstockfields.
- The constraints of funding cuts both to the County Council and to the Police have led to lengthy delays in responses and actions. Nevertheless, we are grateful to the hard-pressed staff.

2. Maintenance matters

- The Parish Council is now responsible for grass-cutting within the 30 and 40 mph areas. On the whole this is working well and the village has a good appearance. Beyond the signs, the responsibility remains with the County Council who will cut twice during the season. We had to chase them to cut the hedges obscuring the chevron signs indicating the corner by the Washbrook bridge, but it did happen eventually.

- The Parish Council has arranged two litter picks during the past year – one in connection with the celebrations of The Queen’s 90th Birthday and one earlier in 2017. The amount of litter and its content is astonishing. The litter picks do improve the appearance of our surroundings. Our thanks go to the volunteers who carried this out.
- Plans for the refurbishment of The Green are still being developed and you can look at ideas for what is proposed at one of the tables tonight. In the meanwhile, the benches on The Green have been refurbished. The benches are now both safe and comfortable. The Parish Council is trying to find someone to repair the village sign which blew down in Storm Doris.
- The Horwode Pece Management Committee has continued to care for and look after Horwode Pece and the play equipment there. Some of the allotments at Castlefields (near the Football Club Field) were cleared by young offenders so that the land can be brought into production again. The Parish footpaths continue to be maintained to a high standard and a programme of replacing stiles with gates to make the paths more user (and dog) friendly has begun.
- Finally, and it’s not really maintenance but this seemed the most appropriate slot, two matters relating to the Village Hall . First, wifi has now been installed in the Village Hall and, secondly, the Wednesday morning travelling Post Office has returned.

3. Planning matters

- The Parish Council was pleased that the Secretary of State decided to refuse permission for the development at Weston Road and that the application for development at Willow Road was eventually withdrawn. All three of the Neighbourhood Plan sites are currently the subject of planning applications – although they move forward at a glacial speed. The detailed proposals for the redevelopment of the Horwood Mill site are a matter of concern as access to this gated community is now shown along Spring Lane rather than through the Greenway Business Park as originally suggested. The Parish Council is opposed to this alteration and has objected to AVDC.

4. Wider Context

- We in North Bucks find ourselves in a time of great uncertainty about the future. There are uncertainties about governance – will there be one or two unitary authorities in place of the existing county and district councils? The views of the Secretary of State are awaited and clearly this will not come before the General Election. Changes in housing figures have delayed the development of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan on which we spent a considerable amount of time preparing comments last summer. The revised plans are due to be considered by the District Council in July before a further consultation period and subsequent examination by an Inspector. At present, we can only guess what may be said about, for example, housing numbers or new settlements. We just have no idea what will be proposed for new settlements - whether the previously proposed alternatives at Winslow and Haddenham or the private proposal for a major new settlement near Verney Junction. Any of these would have a significant effect on what happens around here. The timing of the opening of East-West Rail remains uncertain – despite the current planning application for the new station at Winslow. We also await the latest views of the

Government on the route of the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Expressway which may or may not have a major impact on this area.

Amidst all this, the Parish Council continues to work to ensure that the village is developed in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan and to look after the parish environment so that Great Horwood and Singleborough remain pleasant places to live. I'd like to thank my fellow councillors for their hard work and fellowship and also the Parish Clerk who works tirelessly on behalf of us all. I'd also like to thank all of you for all that you do in so many ways to support our community.

MALS

18 May 2017