

Village Hall Updates

James Hargreaves Community Hall

- We took part in the **Bridport Late Night Shopping** evening on 7th December 2011 and raised £288
- Our **Christmas Pop-In on 20th December 2011**, was an opportunity for the community to get together for a cuppa and mince pies and get in the festive mood with carols sung by a local choir. The event raised £134
- On the evening of 21st December 2011 the community came together again to sing **Christmas Carols** at the Hall. Hot dogs, soup and mince pies were on offer and we donated £63 to Shelterbox. We are continuing to track our box online to see who will benefit from our generosity.
- A very successful **Village Sunday Lunch** was held on Sunday January 8th 2012 which was enjoyed by all.
- The generosity of the community to donate unwanted items to our **Jumble Sale on Saturday 3rd March** meant keen bargain hunters were spoilt for choice. The event raised £287
- We are running a **St Patrick's Day Quiz on Friday 16th March**. Tickets are on sale at £6.50 and will include a fish & chip supper. Why not come along and put your general knowledge to the test!
- We are looking forward to a **Games & Pudding Evening on Friday 27th April**. Come along and have fun playing cards games and indulging in a selection of puds.
- We are also planning a **Race Night for Friday 18th May**.

Whitchurch Village Hall

- Thanks to hard work and enthusiasm, the Village Hall continues to host community and private functions as well as whist, table tennis, Women's Institute meetings and the Whitchurch Playgroup. Proposals to improve and extend the building are on-going.
2012 got off to an excellent start with January's Farm House Breakfast. A profit of £1,673 was taken and donations of £100 made to both the Church Bells' Fund and Dorchester's Special Care Baby Unit. A monthly film club is being piloted and showings of It's a Wonderful Life and Tamara Drewe were well attended. Screenings of Fargo and Slumdog Millionaire are planned for March and April.
- Forthcoming events include an a Young Farmers' Club Beetle Drive on 4th April, Bingo on 16th April and the annual skittles weekend in May (date to be announced).
The Whitchurch, Morcombelake and Ryall Flower and Dog Show is celebrating its centenary this year, so you can be sure it won't just be the Queen wearing her party hat this summer! The Village Hall will be playing its part in the Jubilee celebrations, of course, so join in, enjoy yourselves and help keep the hall at the heart of the community!

Wootton Village Hall

- The Artsreach productions of the Churchfitters in November and Bojangles in December were both very well attended and thoroughly entertaining. The Charity Quiz organized by Lyme Rotary in February was sold out and in spite of the bad weather, all tables were full. A lovely supper was served and a good sum was raised to buy dictionaries for local school children.
- The hall now has a new bookings secretary and cleaner, Katie Sawyer, who takes over from Jackie Collis. Jackie was thanked for her many years of service and presented with a box of chocolates.
- At the last committee meeting the purchase of a tree to commemorate the Queen's Diamond jubilee was discussed and also the purchase of the telephone box from BT - no firm conclusions as yet reached on either of these.
- Grants have been applied for to replace the lighting system and to buy of a new sound system.
- Last and not least, the Wootton Diamond Jubilee Fete will be held on Monday, 4 June at the Village Hall and playing field. It will be opened by Rev Stephen Skinner at 1.30 pm and the entrance fee is £1.50. There will be the usual stalls and cream teas and hopefully belly dancers, the fire brigade, dog agility competition and a band. All are welcome.



New Councillor— Ivan Gollop

Ivan Gollop and his wife bought Anvil cottage in Whitchurch Canonorum in the summer of 2010. He has a long standing connection with the area, as his father was born, and grew up in Charmouth before moving to Bristol. The Gollops were the local coal merchants, based on Avery Cottages at the top of The Street.

Ivan was a teacher of English, to 11 – 18 year olds, for 36 years and a District councillor on Gedling Borough Council for 19 years (Gedling is on the south east of Nottingham). Having moved to Whitchurch he was determined to be a part of village life and wanted to use his previous experience to contribute to village life. The vacancy on Char Valley Parish Council gave an opportunity to start making a contribution. He is really enjoying life in a small close-knit community and has already started a monthly film show at Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall. Ivan can be contacted by phone on 01297 480898 or email ivangollop@hotmail.com



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Superfast Broadband Survey

The survey was conducted during December 2011 and January 2012. Everyone in Char Valley Parish Council area received a survey and 40.5 % of the residents completed it.

The results have been analysed and will be shortly on the Council's website. The results for some of the most important questions are as follows:

Question 3 Reasons for using Internet/Broadband: In this section the 3 highest were:

E-mail 97%, Keeping in touch with friends 96% and Shopping 86%

Question 4 Which of the following are important?

Download speed 91%, Reliability 98.98% and Price 85%

Question 6 How do you rate your current Internet Connection? Excellent 2.6%, Good 15.53%, Good/Acceptable 0.52%, Acceptable 45.59%, Acceptable/Poor 2.6% and Poor 33.16%

The survey results have been sent to Helen Heanes, Senior Economic Development Officer at County Hall, Dorchester. Helen will be part of a project team for Broadband which will be in place by the end of March 2012. Dorset County Council has received notice that Government [BDUK, (Broadband Delivery UK)] funding has been approved. DCC, the borough and district councils

are working together to plan a series of public meetings across the county to explain to parishes, businesses and local broadband groups the process leading to the implementation of a broadband network upgrade across the county.

The purpose of the parish surveys, following on from the DAPTC Community Forum in November 2011 which was attended by Cllr Creed-Castle, was to demonstrate to BDUK that a real demand for improved broadband exists. With the funding now approved this same information will serve to provide a data base for the bidding process which should

commence around mid-2012 leading to a contract being signed by the end of 2012. Implementation will begin in 2013 and detailed discussions will be held with communities to establish an installation schedule.

Cllr Creed-Castle would like to say a big thank you to Jim Rose, who helped devise the survey sheet, and everyone who distributed and collected the completed surveys, The Five Bells Inn, Morcombelake Post Office and Fishpond Church who had collection boxes and Ali Cameron and Charles Somers from the Upper Marshwood Vale PC whose advice has been invaluable.

Sylvia Creed Castle

Report from PCSO Luke White

We continue to see low levels of crime reported in the Char Valley area, which shows how lucky we are to live and work in such a beautiful area. If you wish to see which crimes occur in your area, put your postcode into the website www.police.uk for a breakdown of the types of crimes in your community on a month-by-month basis.

In December there was a theft of oil from premises in Ryall. This is a relatively rare occurrence compared to a couple of years ago thanks to the number of people who have fitted alarms to their tanks. If yours is not protected then get in contact with us or your local oil supplier who will be able to advise you on how best to protect your tank.

There have been a small number of crimes relating to the theft of metal items and scrap. At risk of repeating myself, if you have any scrap metal then please take it to a scrap yard. That way you benefit from its monetary value, rather than a thief. If you have machinery such as lawn mowers, chainsaws, trimmers that you wish to protect then please contact us and we will be more than happy to come and talk to you.

Over the Christmas period Dorset Police ran a Drink Drive campaign with random checks as well as targeting people suspected of drinking and driving. The public played an important part in this campaign, providing information about motorists who were driving whilst under the influence of alcohol. 133 people were arrested during the month long campaign across the county. This is a 48% increase on the previous year's campaign which is a worrying rise. Just because the campaign has come to an end does not mean that drink driving is any less of a priority for Police. We welcome any information regarding drink drivers and I would encourage you to ring 999. Myself or my colleagues can be contacted by telephone on 07500 816312 or 101 or by email at lymeregissnt@dorset.pnn.police.uk



Affordable Housing in Whitchurch Canonorum

Notes of a Public Meeting on 10th February 2012 with guest Oliver Letwin MP

Attendees: Parish Councillors Ken Mansbridge (Chairman), Hilary Joyce, Debby Snook (Vice-chair), Carolyn Peck, Ivan Gollop, Sylvia Creed-Castle, Prof Rose, Sue Johnson, Chris Bailey, Christine Everidge and 43 members of the public.

The Parish Council document '*Proposed Affordable housing Scheme for Whitchurch Canonorum by Hastoe Housing Association*' was circulated.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Oliver Letwin who was here to listen and answer questions.

Prior to the previous meeting in October, an anonymous leaflet on the issue had been distributed to certain homes. Char Valley Parish Council started by referring to their own document in order to ensure that villagers had the correct information about the current situation and the history of Affordable Housing within Whitchurch Canonorum. Cllr Joyce read out the document and stated that listeners should contact the Parish Council Clerk for information. A member of public commended its factual summary.

Oliver Letwin explained that he first became involved when he began to receive a stream of conflicting letters, causing him concern

that there was friction within the community. He wrote to Hastoe with a proposal for them to find another non-contentious site. After this he met Hastoe and they clarified why an alternative site was not possible. He announced that he was not a planning expert, that consensus had not been reached and that this issue would go before the Planning Committee. He said that once a decision had been made, regardless of the result, he hoped the community would reunite, ending bitterness.

A member of the public said that the government are for Affordable Housing, and as there is a suitable site in Whitchurch, surely that should be acceptable. Oliver Letwin replied that the government is in favour of Affordable Housing and 'Localism' (the future), the latter allowing the community to make decisions rather than WDDC. His job was to ensure that all members of public are happy. He spoke about Buckland Newton as an example where all had gone well. He observed that whilst at Whitchurch there is clearly evidence of consultation, it is obvious there are still problems. Although these houses are being built in the village, the Parish as a whole will benefit.

A member of the public asked if, because the site is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the development would have to be sited within the village. Oliver Letwin said he believed so. It would be very rare to find a site of affordable housing in an AONB outside a village.

A councillor said that there are a lot of emails/ hearsay circulating and that the Parish Council would like to understand what those against are truly against and she would like to discuss it with them now. She said that they were hearing more from those for the Affordable Housing than from those against.

Oliver Letwin confirmed that he had received a lot of correspondence from both those against and those for. If this leads to a planning application, which it inevitably will, all comments will be for public viewing. He stated that those objecting were objecting to the location of the proposed Affordable Housing. This assumption was countered in that records clearly showed that the field was the only site available; hence objections made were obviously to that of Affordable Housing.

Oliver Letwin said that from here the Planning Application will go in and a decision will be made. There is very little which can be done to change that; planning law will be applied and complied with.

The chairman said he had spoken to Peter Friend and if no major objections are raised at this meeting, the Planning Application will be submitted.

A member of the public sought confirmation that any comments made on the plans previously should have been published on the WDDC website. Oliver Letwin / Chairman confirmed

that all comments made to WDDC are displayed for public viewing.

A member of the public asked 'Would you agree that if there are enough constructive comments raised that they would be taken on board for the Planning Application? For example, it is regrettable that there is no vehicle access to the furthest property on Bluntshay Lane; a road between hedge and houses would have been beneficial.'

Oliver Letwin replied that in general, if comments are made to the Planning Officers/ Committee they might take the view that an amendment should be made. In order for this to happen under current planning law, the argument has to carry weight, but not necessarily involve common sense. He hoped that common sense would be the future with the Neighbourhood Plans, but that is a long way off. The current standards will involve a court-like process.

A member of the public revealed that they had been on the housing register since 2005. Their priority would be a house within the village but are not too concerned about close parking.

A councillor replied that with regard to Neighbourhood Plans, they would be accepted only if WDDC allowed it. There has been a clear documented need for Affordable Housing for 10 years. Those people waiting for the possibility are growing older. There is provision in the Parish Plan and West Dorset Local Plan for affordable housing in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The problem appears to be the siting. Are they objecting because the site is in close proximity to their own dwelling or because of the design? If it is the former, then there are always likely to be those who object. The need is there and the site is available.

Oliver Letwin said that the Neighbourhood Plan would conform to the Local Plan by

reflecting its structural elements. Further, as long as it conformed to the National Framework, the Neighbourhood Plan could 'trump' the Local Plan. Currently this was irrelevant as this present application will be determined under planning law.

The Chairman then quoted from an email/ letter received earlier that day. It was a reminder that the playgroup last year needed more young children and it is the playgroup that keeps Whitchurch Village Hall going. The parish magazine reported that St Candida is in danger of shutting down. It pointed out that we need young families in the village to keep the village going. A member of public agreed explaining they had just started running a toddler group in Wootton Fitzpaine. At the moment they are lucky as they are in rented accommodation but it would not be easy if they were forced to move out of the area.

A member of the public volunteered that they had lived in Whitchurch for a very long time and that it is a great shame people are objecting to Affordable Housing. Although it is understandable that people will object if it affects them, you also have to understand the need for housing and there has to be a balance.

If we do not act now, the next generation will be gone as there are few in this village of childbearing age. We are not talking about Affordable Housing for strangers; we are talking about homes for local people.

The owner of the land in question declared categorically that no more of the field than had already been agreed would be given over to Affordable Housing. His sole intent was to 'give' to the community in the name of his late uncle in the way that his uncle would have wanted. This he had done.

(These notes are an edited version of those taken by Kat Johnston-Hyde and Chris Everidge. We thank them for their assistance)