

## **BUCKLAND ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2013**

**MINUTES** of the Buckland Annual Parish Meeting held in the Reading Room, on the evening of Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 7.30pm.

### **1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The Chairman, Nigel Husband, welcomed everyone to the meeting and took the opportunity to introduce Councillors Day, Horden, Pryor, Steed and Westwell and the Clerk to the meeting. The Chairman expressed thanks to Terry McDonald who had resigned following a move to Holmwood and to Cindy Kearney who had stepped down due to the pressures of work.

The Chairman highlighted that there is currently a vacancy and invited anyone who might be interested in becoming a parish councillor to approach the Clerk or one of the Councillors.

The Chairman emphasised that the Parish Council encourages input and ideas from the village and schedules an open session at the start of each of the six full council meetings and all meetings of its Finance Committee and Planning Committee to allow input from members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed County Councillor Helyn Clack, District Councillor Paul Potter, PC Dominic Loraine and PCSO Aimee Lucas from Surrey Police and to those individuals who will be providing reports to the meeting. There were 45 parishioners in attendance and 5 members of the public.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from District Councillor John Muggeridge, Richard Wheen, Judith and Roy Forsyth and Carol Coslett.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2012**

These had been displayed on the Parish Council Notice Board, published on the village website, and circulated to Councillors. The motion to adopt the Minutes as a true and correct record was Proposed by Everett Leeds, Seconded by Anne Adams and carried by the meeting. Accordingly the Chairman signed the minutes.

### **4. SURREY POLICE**

PC Loraine outlined the 8 reported crimes that had been recorded in Buckland during the previous 6 months all of which have previously been reported in the minutes of Parish Council meetings. PC Loraine reminded parishioners that he or PCSO Ivor Williams attend Buckland Parish Council meetings to provide a contact point for Buckland residents.

Chairman invited Cllr Pryor to provide an update on the activities of the Mole Valley Rural Crime Panel.

Cllr Pryor explained that The Rural Crime Panel was formed and is chaired by Hugh Broome a Westcott farmer and led by PC Mark Trezise the Mole Valley Rural Affairs and Wildlife Crime Officer. The forum's remit is to counter any increase in countryside crime such as the theft of farm machinery, game, animals and fuel, livestock worrying by dogs, damage on open countryside and tracks by four by four vehicles and even hare and deer coursing. Steve Smallbone, gamekeeper to Buckland estate and Cllr Pryor attend twice yearly meetings at Pippbrook (MVDC) and report back concerns to the Parish Council.

Cllr Pryor highlighted the Surrey Country Watch scheme that acts as a messaging hub. The police use the Countrywatch network by circulating information by text message to Countrywatch members. Responses are then used to help direct police to intercept suspects. Cllr Pryor emphasised that anyone can contribute to the Countrywatch effort by calling 101 to report potentially suspicious events.

The Chairman thanked PC Loraine and PCSO Aimee Lucas for attending this year's meeting.

## **5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman reported 2012 as a year of Consolidation during which the potential impact of the Localism Agenda had begun to emerge.

Chairman reported that we continue to wait for SCC to determine the application submitted almost 3 years ago, to permit workings at Park Pit and Tapwood Quarry to continue beyond the original June 2010 end date. Chairman then read the following statement that had been provided by Dave Norminton, Hanson on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April: "There are two outstanding issues that remain to be resolved before Hanson's planning application can go forward to Committee for determination. The first of these concerns the restored lake level in Tapwood which the hydrogeological modelling completed last year now predicts to be 57m AOD. This is significantly lower than the consented level of 61.5m AOD. Accommodating this lower predicted level will entail changes to the currently submitted restoration scheme for Tapwood. This will involve lowering the currently restored benches around the site (which are currently at around 62.0m AOD) and devising a way to control the lake level within a defined range so erosion above or below the new bench height can be avoided. Under the old scheme, the lake would have overflowed naturally into the Shag Brook, but at the lower predicted level of 57m AOD, it will not. Once the details have been worked out, a revised restoration plan for Tapwood will be submitted to Surrey County Council for consideration. Hanson expects to be in a position to submit such a plan within two months. The second issue remains the restored lake level in Park Pit. Discussions continue with Surrey County Council, the Buckland Estate and Natural England, to agree a comprehensive package of measures that all parties will be happy with. This may involve leaving the consented restoration level in Park Pit at 52.5m AOD and concentrating instead on enhancements within the wider SSSI."

Chairman referred to the recently completed and forthcoming "water supply" related works in the village, explained how the Parish Council has been working closely with Sutton and East Surrey Water, MVDC and SCC; providing input to the screening opinions, working methods and highways planning. He advised that this liaison continues today and drew attention to the large scale maps (last seen at the community drop in session) on display together with maps showing the proposed diversion routes for the footpath/bridleway closures. Chairman then read out the latest update, provided earlier the same day from the water company and advised that updates will continue to be issued via the email group and posted on the main Parish Council Notice Board.

The Chairman outlined a SCC Highways scheme which encourages communities to take responsibility for some minor highways tasks in their localities and explained that within the county ward of Dorking Rural, the Parish Councils have been working towards setting up a hub through which such activity could be channelled. Chairman explained that while the detailed administration is still emerging the theory is that each Parish Council will need to bid for a modest budget to fund highways tasks they consider important to their local community and invited residents input as to potential tasks.

Remaining with Highways, Chairman set out the background to the recently launch community consultation on "Decluttering". He explained that concern had been expressed at the number of damaged and dirty highway signs cluttering the Parish. Cllr Julian Steed had spearheaded an initiative to review the status of the signage and, in conjunction with SCC Highways to establish which signs were actually serving a useful role and to investigate how best to emphasise these signs and to rationalise the remainder. Cllr Steed had produced a draft policy paper, and, following discussions with the team at Surrey Highways, a draft plan had been formulated. He advised that a community consultation on this plan, currently open was due to close on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May and encouraged residents to engage with the proposals.

Chairman advised that the Parish Council email group now currently extends to the majority of households in the village and encouraged anyone with email who had not yet signed up to do so to receive e-blasts as and when new information updates become available. He reminded anyone without email to monitor the Parish Council Notice Board.

Chairman reported a good turn out for the 2012 Autumn Pond and Green Tidy Up, with numbers boosted by some young people who were completing the service element of their Duke of Edinburgh Award Schemes and managed to retrieve several metres of footpath alongside the Towered Barn. Chairman expressed thanks to Simon Elson and the Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers for their management and advice and to local farmer John Muggeridge for the use of his heavy machinery that enabled us to clear a considerable amount of material. Chairman did express one note of regret that (with the exception of refreshments kindly provided by John and Wendy Lane), the residents who live around the Green were conspicuous by their absence and their help, as key beneficiaries of this work would be gratefully received at future events.

Chairman explained that the next Project is the restoration of the War memorial as the base is in a poor state of repair and the lead lettering is in need of professional restoration. Chairman reported that sufficient funding has now been raised to allow detailed planning to proceed. Chairman expressed thanks to the SCC Mole Valley Local Committee for providing a grant of £2000, to MVDC for agreeing to pass £957 development money (s106) to be put towards the project and to Buckland Nurseries, Buckland Deli, The Jolly Farmers and Betchworth Post Office for agreeing to sell the walk booklets – an activity that has raised over £800. He advised that we are waiting to hear whether an application to the War Memorials Trust for a contribution towards the cost of renovating the lettering has been successful and emphasized that further donations from local residents and businesses would be much appreciated.

Chairman took the opportunity to express thanks to the SCC Mole Valley Local Committee for providing, £250 towards the tree works completed on the green and to MVDC for agreeing pass £1013 development money to the cricket club to enlarge the cricket square to increase the number of wickets to support more games of youth cricket.

Chairman thanked Cllr Alan Pryor for diligently completing the weekly “walk abouts” required by the insurance company and to Cllr James Day for ensuring we have comprehensive photographic records ahead of this summer’s water company works and for monitoring the floodlights to the church.

Chairman encouraged residents to engage with the Parish Council and invited anyone considering submitting a planning application to invite Parish Council input in advance of submitting an application to MVDC. Chairman reminded residents that with economic cuts affecting staffing levels at MVDC and SCC that the council officers are now forced to rely on residents to act as their eyes and ears. Please use the report it functions on the websites or call the customer service teams if you spot a problem on the highway, on a footpath or bridleway.

Chairman asked residents to help the Parish Council to look after the Village Green. He explained that while the Parish Council is delighted to see the Village Green being used responsibly for Village Events that in order to ensure events comply with legal requirements, organisers do need to comply with the Parish Council Events Policy, copies of which can be obtained from the Clerk.

Chairman reported that the Parish Council had requested a modest increase in the precept for the 2013/14 year to restore budgeted expenditure to its 2011/12 level and concluded by encouraging residents and business to engage with the Parish Council.

## **6. BUCKLAND PARISH ACCOUNTS**

Sheena Boyce presented a summary of the draft accounts with a comparison against budget for the year ending 31 March 2013, copies of which had been circulated on the reverse of the Agenda.

The Clerk advised that the 2012-13 income had reflected a precept of £8000, unchanged from the previous year and a concurrent grant of £1200 from MVDC, cut from £1500 in 2011/12. She explained that the £300 spend on unbudgeted tree works on the Village Green had been offset by reduced spending on salt for the grit bins and that the concurrent grant is a MVDC contribution towards the cost of maintaining the village green and pond for recreational purposes.

## **7. BUCKLAND PAROCHIAL CHARITY : PHILIP HAYNES**

The Charity, as we know it today, is regulated by a Scheme of the Charity Commissioners dated 29th August 1974 which modernised the original Scheme which established the Charity on 10th May 1889. The 1889 Scheme brought together “the Charities of Laurence Denton and John Brown “The Poor’s Land” and the Charities of William Cooke and Henry Smith, so far as they are applicable for the benefit of the poor of the Parish”.

The capital of the Buckland Parochial Charity is a permanent endowment and only the income may be spent on beneficiaries. Income is principally derived from the right to receive a yearly sum from the Trustees of the General Charity of Henry Smith (Worth Estate) together with income from the capital endowments. There are six trustees, of whom four are appointed by the Parish Council, presently myself, Ianthe Cox, Ann Adams and James Day, together with two nominated trustees who are the Revd. Carol Coslett and the Revd. Pattie Vigers. Ianthe Cox also acts as our Clerk.

The income of the Charity can only be applied for the relief of need of those living within the parish boundary, as it was in 1889, and the trustees would always like to hear from anyone in the parish who becomes aware of any situation where we might be able to help, particularly in the present difficult economic climate. We are able to provide support through financial donation or by paying for items, services or facilities calculated to reduce the need, hardship or financial distress of the recipient.

During the year ended 30 September 2012, our income was £2,953 of which £2,500 came from the Henry Smith Charity, which enabled us to donate a total of £2,907 to 11 residents. In the current year we presently expect our income to be broadly similar but that total distributions will rise to just over £3,400 to meet exceptional needs but this will reduce our reserves to about £2,100.

## **8. VILLAGE RIGHTS OF WAY TEAM UPDATE: JIM DOCKING**

Our team of path wardens – Alan Pryor, Richard Wheen, Phil Wickson and Chris Worsley – has continued to patrol the Buckland paths, and I have kept the local Countryside Access Officer and Buckland Estate informed of any matters of concern.

On the whole, the local footpaths are in good shape, but we have notified the County Countryside Access Officer, Hannah Gutteridge, of various concerns. These relate to fallen branches, broken finger posts and other missing signs, broken stiles, slippery steps, the very deep puddles on a section of the NDW and the dilapidated sleeper bridge on the field path that runs westwards from just south of Glebe House on Rectory Lane towards the railway line.

Unfortunately some of these matters are long-standing, but the County has only limited funds to spend on footpaths and arranges concerns in order of priority. However, we are promised that some matters, such as the dilapidated sleeper bridge mentioned above, will be attended to this summer.

In the coming months, several footpaths will be closed while the new water mains pipe is laid, but presumably the paths will be restored when the works are completed.

Lastly, we would welcome the services of another path warden who is sufficiently agile to patrol the paths above the NDW. Our present wardens are either too busy with work or are physically challenged (as they say) to undertake this role except very occasionally.

## **9. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE GROUPS**

Ken Caldwell, Chairman of the Reading Room Committee, provided an update on the activities of Buckland Reading Room and outlined plans for improving the amenity of the building. Rosey Davy and Simon Thomas, committee members of the recently formed Friends of St Mary’s explained why the village now has this new group and described the committee’s plans for the coming months. The Chairman read aloud reports received from the Buckland and Betchworth Choral Society, Buckland Bridge Group and Buckland One World Group. The full text of these updates is set out below.

### **Update from Ken Caldwell, Chairman of the Reading Room Committee**

The Reading Room continues to host a wide range of regular community activities – during 2012, twelve groups met regularly in the Reading Room, mostly weekly. In addition, we provide a venue for community events and activities and for private parties for children and adults. In 2012 we hosted over 30 private events, for people of all ages.

The Buckland Choral Society is continuing to attract growing numbers of singers, which is excellent news for the community, but sadly they can no longer fit into the Reading Room, and have moved to other premises in Reigate for the regular practices. As a result, we have a vacancy in the Reading Room on Wednesday evenings, as well as one or two other slots at different times of day during the week. The Reading Room also has space available most weekends and in holiday periods, when some regular groups do not meet.

If anyone knows of any current or emerging local groups who might be interested in taking up one of these vacant slots for their regular meetings, or would be interested in hiring the Reading Room for a weekend or a block of days in the holiday periods, please let us know

During 2012, we generated around £8000 in income from regular and one-off lettings of the Reading Room. Although running costs such as heating are continuing to rise, we continue to benefit from lots of minor repair and maintenance tasks carried out free by members of the Committee, husbands, and others in the community. With no major urgent repair bills to face in 2012, we were able to generate a modest surplus to help us rebuild our Maintenance Fund. This is now at a level where we are able to plan some work to improve the Reading Room.

Having consulted with many of the groups using the Reading Room, the Management Committee have identified some priorities for Reading Room improvements. The first of these is to improve the pathway to the front door, including proper wheelchair and pushchair access for the first time, which you may have seen on the way in. Our next priority is to seek to tackle the problems of cold and damp in the Reading Room during the winter months, and we are now developing and costing a programme of improvements to insulation and heating to help address this. We are looking at potential sources of funding to help finance this work. Finally, we are looking at some modest steps to improve the décor

If any members of the community have specific ideas, contacts, or offers for other ways of using or improving the Reading Room, please feel free to get in touch with me or any member of the Committee. Contact details are in the parish magazine.

### **Update from Rosey Davy and Simon Thomas, Friends of St Mary's**

We have come to talk to you about a new initiative called 'the Friends of St Marys', to briefly explain why we have set it up and what we hope to achieve. We hope everyone agrees that St Mary's is important to our village. We believe it is a beautiful building and churchyard, provides a focal point for the village, is in an idyllic English village setting with the green and pond, shop etc and provides a spiritual centre and a quiet place for any who need it – it is open every day.

We may take the church for granted but it probably affects how we all feel about the village – if it wasn't there we believe people would feel the village was diminished in some way, churchgoers or otherwise. We believe most people locally feel some affection for the church. It helps make the village attractive to outsiders and because of its contribution to the English village idyll helps keep property prices elevated

But there is a problem...St Marys is ancient, the oldest parts dating from 1380. It has one of the most complete preserved Victorian interiors by the acclaimed architect Woodyer. It is grade 2 listed. Old buildings require routine maintenance and maintenance costs over the last 5 years have always been between £6-8k. Insurance alone costs £3k p.a. There are other routine costs like mowing the grass in the churchyard but there are also one off costs, such as the repainting of the belfry last year and in the near future we will have to repair the vestry roof which has a large crack in it.

St Marys has a small congregation who need to pay for everything linked to the church, from the mission based costs, to insuring the building and keeping it in good order. This small congregation is unable to fully meet these costs and we now run with a deficit of several thousand pounds every year – about £4k. Without additional funds the church will become unsustainable.

We decided to set up a 'friends' initiative, allowing people for a small charge of £15pa to become a 'friend' of the church. We considered various options for setting up the friends, which included being a separate organisation with its own charitable status, being a sub committee of the church PCC or being a sub fund of the St Mary's churchyard and church fabric fund. There will always be at least one member of the PCC on the Friends committee.

We took guidance from Southwark diocese and the recommendation for a village and church of our size was to run as a sub committee of the PCC. This allows us all the benefits of gift aid etc without the overheads required of a separate charity. The terms of reference for this sub committee are:

- To raise money for the upkeep, maintenance and repair of St Marys (but not to fund clergy costs or charitable giving);
- To come up with and implement new ideas for community events to raise funds for the upkeep, maintenance and repair of the church;
- To encourage people to become 'friends' of the church and pay an annual subscription of £15, and to offer benefits to these 'friends', such as free entry to some church events, as the committee approves;
- To act independently of the PCC and to decide – when to pass money collected by the Friends to the PCC, and if it thinks fit, to earmark the money for specific projects identified and agreed with the PCC.

We have set up the committee and are hopeful that we will soon have a chairperson. We have had several committee meetings already and we currently have about 50 'friends', who joined following the Flower Festival, after reading about the initiative in the parish magazine or by word of mouth.

We have a mailshot planned to all village members and those with a connection to the church in some form, whether they are local or otherwise to further encourage membership. We have several events already planned, which include a cheese and wine event for friends in May, an open garden event in June, an art show in the August bank holiday, a quiz night in the autumn and a May Fayre next May.

I hope you have all found it interesting and that you feel encouraged to join us, support our events and help us fund the maintenance and repair of our picturesque church.

#### **Update from Mike Hogger, Chairman of the Buckland and Betchworth Choral Society:**

Buckland & Betchworth Choral Society has had another very successful year.

The weather may have been miserable so far this Spring, but nothing could dampen the Choral Society's joy on its annual visit to the Leith Hill Musical Festival on 11th April. This thriving group continued the winning ways it has forged since the appointment of Ben Woodward as Musical Director three years ago. It did the two villages proud by getting the highest mark awarded in three of the five classes in which it competed and thereby winning the 'victor ludorum', the prize for the overall total aggregate mark in its division for the FIFTH consecutive year.

Congratulations to all involved: a well-deserved accolade for all the hard work over the dark winter months.

After a brief 'holiday' in April, BBCS looks forward to the light summer evenings and its rehearsals of Haydn's 'Nelson Mass' as it gets ready for its summer concert on 29th June in St Mark's Church, Alma Road, Reigate. Its success in attracting new members means that, temporarily at least, it's been necessary to move to a larger rehearsal space. The United Reform Church at Shaw's Corner, Reigate, is now the venue for Wednesday's weekly rehearsals. Despite this move, the Choral Society still feels very much part of the two villages and would like to invite even more people from B&B to make the short trip across to Reigate to join them in performing in (or hearing them perform) this summer concert. Full details of dates, times and prices can be found on [www.bbcsinfo.org](http://www.bbcsinfo.org) or from Secretary, Helen Mardell, on [helen.mardell@gmail.com](mailto:helen.mardell@gmail.com)

**Update from Richard When for the Buckland Bridge Club:** The Buckland Bridge Club meets in the Reading Room on Thursdays to play duplicate bridge and goes from strength to strength. We almost always have 24 players or more, and everyone says what a friendly club it is - perhaps because the club is now owned by its members, rather than by Richard When who started it. In the depths of the winter we very nearly had to turn people away as the back room was often too cold to play in. [Translated, this means, please could somebody mend the broken heater in the back room, and perhaps install a third heater. Otherwise we may have to find a new venue to accommodate us all]. For those interested the results are always in the Parish Magazine and on our website.

Bridge can, however, be a dangerous game - witness Marjorie Hill's fall while moving from one bridge table to another. It is great she is back with us. She and her team mates won the first competition after her return.

We have recently invested in a "silver" pot, to be competed for in a Club competition each May and called the "Greensand Trophy" (Geoff Woodcock, our vice-chairman, assures us that the Reading Room is built on the Greensand).

Many thanks particularly to Veronica, who is our caterer and on the Bridge Club Committee as well as the Reading Room Committee; to Lesley Standen our Secretary; to Geoff Woodcock, our vice-chairman and scorer-in-chief; to Mike Foss our treasurer; to Gloria Whitwell, also on our committee and in charge of the website; and finally to Chris Greenacre, our new Committee member and deputy scorer.

In addition to the Club Richard When runs bridge classes in the Reading Room during term times - sometimes two and sometimes three classes a week. Currently he is running a class for beginners and two classes for improvers (people who have been learning for more than a year)."

#### **Update from Jim Docking, Buckland One World Group:**

The Buckland One World Group has continued to arrange talks and organise entertainment to raise funds for lesser-known charities that support some of the poorest people in the world. During the last year, donations to the Group's core charity, Money for Madagascar, have come from the U3A singing group who gave a concert in Dorking as part of the Arts Alive Festival and from collections following a talk by Meike Laurenson on her experiences in post-war Germany and a talk and recital by the local harpist Margaret Watson. Very recently, a collection to help desperate children in Darfur followed a talk by Patricia Parker who runs a local charity called Kids for Kids.

*After a break for refreshments, the Chairman introduced our guest speaker, local resident and Parish Councillor James Day.*

#### **10. GUEST SPEAKER: JAMES DAY - "A BUCKLAND MEMORIAL"**

James shared with us some of the insights he has gained into the lives and deaths of the people named on our Village War Memorial. For everyone who opted to come along, this engaging, poignant talk breathed life into this important village feature. The Chairman expressed heartfelt thanks to James and took the opportunity to explain that the aim is to complete the planned refurbishment of the paving around the War Memorial and to repair and re-enamel the lettering in time for next year's centenary commemoration of the start of WW1.

#### **11. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and expressed the hope that what had been heard and discussed would sponsor further discussions and debate about what village residents want Buckland to be. The Chairman concluded by enthusiastically inviting anyone who might have an issue that they consider the Parish Council needs to be aware of to attend a meeting, make a call or send an email to engage and declared the meeting closed at 10.10pm.

**Sheena Boyce, Clerk**  
**email: bucklandpc@sheenaboyce.co.uk**