

Wakes Colne Parish Council

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Clerks Report January 2009

Things Ongoing in January

It's the New Year and again it has been a very busy month in the life of the Clerk for Wakes Colne Parish Council. I have had a lot of updates from outstanding agenda items and looking at the Agenda for February it could be a long meeting!!

Rural Speed Restriction & the "Welcome to Wakes Colne" Sign at the top of Station Road:

During the January meeting several questions were asked about the design of the sign and it was agreed that the Clerk would contact George Ward and ask the questions then report back at the next meeting. The questions asked were as follows:

- 1) Will the sign have lighting over the top as the existing sign does?**
- 2) Will the sign be fluorescent i.e. will it light up in car headlights?**
- 3) Currently a 30 Mile per hour sign is on both sides of the road will this sign be on both sides of the road?**

George Ward replied as follows:

Valerie,

This type of sign is no longer required to be lit and it would be reflectorised to show up in car headlights.

We normally have a single "speed limit sign with welcome to" sign on the nearside and the speed limit sign only on the offside and I thought this is what we had agreed for Station Road. To repeat the

"welcome" message on the offside would require more space and again I think it would extend beyond the limits of the publicly maintained highway and therefore require the agreement of the landowner.

The edge of the sign has to be at least 0.5 metres from the edge of the carriageway and the extent of the highway is usually up to the ditch or hedge line.

Regards

Audit Commission & the Lost Years

All the requested information has now been sent to Mr King at the Audit Commission re: the 'Lost Years'. As yet I have not received confirmation that all the information received is correct, but I am confident that this has now drawn closure over this chapter in the Parish Council's life.

Level Entry Bus Stops in Wakes Colne

This agenda item has been on going since late last year!! It was agreed at the January meeting that the Clerk would contact Cllr Cresswell and also the parishioner who brought this issue to the attention of the Parish Council. It has been established that the bus stop in question that has not had the kerbs raised is the stop near Wakes Colne Church. The information received before the last meeting was that all the 'official' bus stops in Wakes Colne had been altered, however on speaking to the parishioner they said that the stop outside Wakes Colne Church has been an official stop as when you get on in Colchester you can pay your fare to the Church. In light of this information I

have contacted Highways and asked for a detailed map of the A1124 through Chappel and Wakes Colne to try and establish where the 'official' bus stops are. As yet I have not received a reply and or a map but I am hopeful I will have an update before the meeting.

Highways- Malcolm Dade

I was contacted before Christmas re: a hole appearing on the pavement opposite the cottages on the A1124. I have contacted Malcolm Dade who agreed to go out and have a look then report back, this he did do and confirmed that it was a BT cover that had collapsed. After the January meeting it was reported that the hole had still not been repaired but a barrier had been put round. It had been considered dangerous as the hole was fairly large, it was agreed that the Clerk would contact BT and request it be sorted and repaired. I can now report that the hole has been repaired. This item was on the minutes under next agenda items but as it has been fixed I considered it adequate enough just to appear in the Clerks Report.

Rural Housing Trust

In the middle of January I was sent an e-mail from Anne Bishop from the Rural Housing Trust with the following press release: **FYI**

Dear Valerie

I am so very sad to have to tell the Parish Council that the Rural Housing Trust has had to make a very difficult decision to wind down its business of developing affordable village housing.

As you know, the Trust has been around for over 30 years. We are a small and committed team passionate about the cause of affordable village housing, so it is extremely upsetting to find ourselves in this position when our work, which is needed more now than ever, cannot continue.

During the wind down process, it is our intention to hand over schemes that we have been working on to another like-minded organisation. Although the Wakes Colne and Chappel scheme is still at a fairly early stage, we do want to pass on to you contact details so that you have another organisation to help you. We are doing our utmost to ensure, despite the withdrawal of RHT, that the housing needs in villages are met. I will be writing to all those who have registered their interest shortly to tell them what they will need to do.

I am sorry to bring you this news but I am very confident that the scheme will progress as it should do, albeit without RHT's input. I will be in touch again as soon as I can with some more information. I will be at the Trust until Friday 27 February.

Kind regards

Anne

Precept for 2009 / 2010

Following last months meeting and the signing off of the Precept/Budget I have now received the forms from Jonathon Hills at Colchester Borough Council. As advised at the meeting the Parish Support has stayed that same for the 2nd year running and is confirmed as £1996 for the year. The total precept including the Parish Support for 2009 /2010 as agreed was £10,500. This now means that the sum of money for the Precept that we need to apply for is £8504. The deadline date for submitting the forms is the 6th February 2009 so I have completed the information and it was posted on the 28th January 2009. If anybody has any questions about the Precept/Budget or the Parish Support please ask.

The Village Hall Meeting – January 28th 2009

This meeting was called by both Parish Councils because a few important housekeeping issues had been overlooked in recent months with regards to the Village Hall in Chappel & Wakes Colne. It was felt by both Councils that, as Trustees of the Village Hall something needed to be done. I agreed to take the minutes and Cllr Stratford and Cllr Glen-Martin attended from Wakes Colne Parish Council. Cllr Cresswell (the Village Hall Representative) was unable to attend and gave her apologies. In the Chair was Philippa Deman, the current chairperson of the Village Hall Committee. The meeting was very productive, all agenda items were discussed and a very positive conclusion was reached. The Chairman delivered her report, new members of the committee were appointed and the accounts were discussed briefly. One major concern was the state of disrepair of the hall, it was agreed in the short term, that immediate maintenance was required if the Hall was to be continued to be rented out. Long term it was agreed that maybe both Councils could help out with funding from the borough to improve things like the electrics and the toilets. The hire charges were discussed in relation to the increase in cost of all the utilities and the current economic situation. Also the cleaning of the hall was mentioned because it was agreed unanimously that Elli Langley and her team were doing a fantastic job even during that recent months when things have been more difficult. It was also agreed that the new committee members would keep both Parish Council's up to date with developments.

Updated Resignation Letter from Wayne Goodchild

This is now dragging on and I can not seem to get a written copy of Wayne Goodchild's updated resignation letter. I have e-mailed Wayne at least five times asking for him to update the letter and I have had no response. This is taking up a lot of my time, so I wondered as it is on the Agenda as an item whether one of the Councillors could give him a ring to discuss it. Below I have copied my last e-mail to him so you can see what I have asked for. I also blind copied Keith & Hilda in on the E-mail.

Hi Wayne

Sorry to contact you again, but our monthly meeting is next week and I still haven't received an updated copy of your resignation letter. The EALC and the SLCC have confirmed that to keep the records in order, the Parish Council requires your resignation letter to read that you have resigned from both Chairman and the Parish Council.

We are just in the process of co-opting a new member onto the Council, I have been advised that until a letter is received we can't co-opt a new member as technically you are still a member of the Council and therefore we do not have a vacancy. I understand that this is a nuisance, but to have closure for both you and the Parish Council it is essential that we have the updated resignation letter.

Thank you for your help and understanding on this matter and I look forward to receiving your e-mail.

New Bark for Play Area

Cllr S Chamley attended the January meeting to ask if we could consider contributing towards the cost of the bark for the play area it was generally agreed that we would contribute and it is on the agenda for next week to agree an amount.

Bank Accounts with a Higher Interest Rate

It was requested at the last meeting that I look at other banks and try and see if we can get a better rate of interest for the savings account that we currently have with Barclays. I am at a training course on Wednesday (the day of the meeting) and I am hoping to be able to ask some questions with regards to this issue. I need to find out what restrictions, if any, apply to Parish Councils and the Banking system. With Barclays we have a 'community account' and the rules for signing etc are a little

different from the ordinary business accounts. Hopefully I will have more information on the night of the meeting - Watch this space!!

Emergency Planning Meeting 1st December 2008

This meeting held on the 1st December was to update all the Parish Councils locally on how to write and implement an Emergency Plan in the event of a major disaster. It became apparent from the lack of information I received that I was or indeed Wakes Parish Council were not on the mailing list for up to date information. Since Christmas I have had contact with Mr Paul Walker from Colchester Borough Council (who is the contact), we are now on the mailing list and I have had a template sent through on e-mail for us to write are own Emergency Plan. Currently we have a plan (you should have all received a copy of Issue 3 dated January 2003) but it is very much out of date and it was discussed at the last meeting that we should have it updated in the very near future. It is on the Agenda for the 4th, so it would be good if you could have read it, and have some ideas of the best way forward. Chappel are still quite happy for it to be a joint venture and I would suggest that when it is done it is produced electronically, this way it is easier to update. I have also sent off for some official booklets from Central Government about how to go about writing your own plan - hopefully they will have arrived before the meeting.