

Weedon Parish Council Newsletter

MAY 2011

GENERAL INFORMATION ON WEEDON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meetings

The Council meets on the third Wednesday of odd-numbered months at 8pm in the Old Schoolroom (winter) and the Methodist Chapel (summer). The meetings are open to the public and there is an Open Forum at the beginning at which any parishioner may raise an issue of concern.

Other recurring agenda items at regular PC meetings are:

- Correspondence – letters received and sent by the Council
- Planning – review of any current applications
- Financial – review of income and expenditure

Additional meetings are held from time to time especially to consider planning matters. Notices of meetings are placed on the noticeboards and on the website. Again, the meetings are open to the public and preceded by an Open Forum.

Minutes

Minutes of each meeting are issued by the Clerk to the Council and are presented for approval or amendment at the next Council meeting. The unapproved minutes are posted on the village noticeboard sited at the junction of the High Street and Aston Abbots Road shortly after meetings, and on the website. An archive of approved minutes is also accessible on the website.

Planning Applications

Both Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council are required to consult the Parish Council about planning applications. The Parish Council holds public meetings to discuss its response and everyone is welcome.

The Open Forum at the start of each meeting is a time when the details of the plans may be examined, questions asked or comments made, thereby making Councillors aware of residents' views. The Parish Council cannot itself approve or refuse planning applications – that is the responsibility of AVDC/Bucks CC – but we can support, have no objection or oppose.

Individual villagers can and should also respond in their own right to any application they feel strongly about, and the Council tries to make everyone who could be affected aware of the meetings via the noticeboards and website.

This yearly newsletter gives information to assist you to contact a Councillor or attend a Parish Council Meeting. **If you have any concerns, please call a Councillor or, better still, attend a meeting.**

On May 5th, elections were held for parish and district councils, and Buckingham Park became a separate parish.

A handy pull-out sheet is enclosed to help you identify which tier of local government to contact in relation to any particular service or issue.

Clerk to the Weedon Parish Council (for correspondence)

Sue Mordue, Pear Tree Cottage, 49 Portway, North Marston, Buckingham,
MK18 3PL. Telephone 01296 670707

Email: sue-mordue@more-control.com

Councillors

Joanna Rose (Chairman)
Chris Measures (Vice Chairman)
Justin Sellers
Kirsty Ashurst
Wendy Kett
Tom Jameson-Evans
Nigel Winnett

Aylesbury Vale District Councillor

Ashley Bond

Buckinghamshire County Councillors

Niknam Hussain Mary Baldwin

Other Village Contacts

Tuesday Club Judy Nagele
Village Association Catherine Rodnight
Old Schoolroom Shirley Bush
Methodist Chapel Laurie Gower

Website www.weedonbucks.org.uk

May 5th Elections

In Weedon there was an uncontested election with nominations from Joanna, Chris and Justin to continue in their roles and a new nomination from Kirsty Ashurst. These four councillors were therefore duly appointed. Ralph Followell and Mike Moore had stepped down from the council after many years of service and we are very grateful to both of them for their contribution to the parish. The two Buckingham Park councillors clearly could not stand again for Weedon, which left three seats remaining. These have been filled by the co-option of Wendy Kett, Nigel Winnett and Tom Jameson-Evans making up our full complement of seven.

We also voted for district (AVDC) councillors and Ashley Bond (Conservative) was re-elected as our local Aylesbury Vale District Councillor. Parish and District councillors all serve a 4-year term of office.

The Role of the Parish Councillor in Weedon

Traditionally the role of parish councillor in Weedon is voluntary and unpaid, although out-of-pocket expenses such as travelling and training can be reimbursed. The part-time Clerk is the only paid employee of the Council at pay rates set according to local government guidelines.

Goodbye and Good Luck to Buckingham Park

Now that Buckingham Park has become a separate parish, Weedon has reverted to its previous composition ie. the village plus Buckingham Road homes from Rectory Barns down to and including "old" Weedon Hill.

In the last year in particular, Weedon parish councillors spent some considerable time on reviews, meetings and responses to several large-scale planning applications for amendments to the originally agreed outline plans for Buckingham Park. We wish the residents the best of luck in their newly independent status; we hope we have helped them off to a good start.

Financial implications of the parish split

In the last few years, as new residents have moved into Buckingham Park, the total Weedon parish "precept" (the parish's council tax) has been divided among many more homes. Expenditure at Buckingham Park was low because the developers were still responsible for most items, and therefore each household paid less. Now that the precept must again be divided by only Weedon village homes, each household has experienced a significant increase over last year.

In order to minimise the increase, the total precept for Weedon village was cut from £18,000 in the last 2 years to £14,000 for 2011/12, which is the minimum amount to allow the parish council to carry out ongoing routine operations.

If you check your records, you will find that the Weedon element of the council tax this year is just marginally more than in 2005/06 – that is, before Buckingham Park was begun.

Keeping Up Appearances

This brings us quite neatly to the area where most of the parish council's budget (precept) is spent – on repairs and maintenance to keep the village safe, neat, tidy and as attractive as possible.

We look after the Pond, the Park, the parish pump and the grassy triangle outside the pub; we pay for the upkeep of the streetlights, and the electricity they use; we contribute to the care of the accesses to graveyards in Weedon and Hardwick. As county and district spending will be constrained this year, the PC will probably need to get more involved in weedkilling and road gutter clearance to keep highways and pavements in good order.

We hope that the annual village clean-up in April, and other community efforts, will help us maintain our record of success in the Best Kept Village competition (judged in the last week of May/first two weeks of June). We were awarded a Certificate of Merit in 2010 and 2009, and were runners-up in 2008.

Recent Parish Council Initiatives

The Park Children's Play Area

You will notice that we have topped up the young children's play area with wood chips. We were fortunate to be able to enlist a team of local probationers (at no cost to the parish) to barrow the chips up from the bottom of the Park where they were delivered, to the top where they were needed. Some of you will remember a community effort to do this job some years ago – we were glad to have had another option this time!

Weedon Village Parish Plan

The Parish Plan has now been published, and every home has received its own complimentary copy. The Action Points from each Working Group – Environment, Economy, Transport, Social and Community – will form the framework for much of the parish council's work into the future, and we will try to deliver what the community agreed was wanted.

Emergency Action Team

A Parish Council initiative in November led to the formation of a team of volunteers and co-ordinators who will act in times of emergency. Fortunately the winter weather was not as severe as had been feared, so the Action Team only had minor work to do. But the system is now in place for ANY future emergency.