



West Horndon Parish News March 2011

The Newsletter of
West Horndon Parish Council

Web site: <http://www.westhorndonparishcouncil.org.uk/>

Parish Council Open Morning

Saturday morning, 5th March, saw the Parish Council hosting an event in the Village Hall to inform villagers about the work of the Parish Council and to enable other village organisations to promote their activities. 12 groups took up the offer and the picture below shows some of the stalls. It was a successful morning with a good attendance from the village and vicinity. The picture (above right) shows the



Parish Council display with the Parish Clerk (Geoff Rudd) talking to last year's winner of the Roy Boggis Citizenship Trophy (Kath Porter) (Nominations forms for this year's award are now available with a nomination deadline of 1st April and the Award Ceremony will be on 19th May at 7.30pm in the Christabella Wing of St Francis Church) **TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PARISH COUNCIL, HOW IT SPENDS YOUR MONEY, THE WORK IT DOES, WHAT IS A COUNCILLOR AND HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED SEE PAGE 3**



From the Chair

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2011. This will be my last contribution as Chair of the Parish Council. On 5th May the whole Parish Council comes up for re-election. (This will be alongside other local elections and the Electoral Reform referendum) As the new Council will be for a 4 year term and Rose and I will be retiring within that timescale and having to leave the village it would not be right for me to stand again as I would not be able to serve for more than a year or two. In addition the new Council will have to start considering matters concerning the long term future of the village, with the possibility of taking advantage of new powers coming from the Localisation Bill which is currently going through Parliament. I feel that it is important that our new Council is made up of people who are likely to have a longer term commitment to the Village.

There is an article elsewhere in this Newsletter about Localism, Neighbourhood plans and some of the other implications of current government policy. I would encourage you to read it and consider its implications.

I would also encourage you to consider standing for the Parish Council or encouraging others who you feel would be suitable.

Although I shall still be around for some time and hope to be able to continue to support the Parish Council in its work, I would like to take this opportunity to say that it has been a privilege to serve for the last three years and to wish the new Council all the best as they take forward their work and responsibilities in these challenging times.

Steve Williams (Chair)



Digital switchover

Sometime in 2012 you will no longer be able to receive analogue TV in the Village. (It will happen this year if you are tuned into Anglia TV rather than London) Your TV is analogue if you can only receive BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4, Channel 5. However you will still be able to use your old TV even after the switchover but you will need an additional piece of equipment.

For more help and free leaflets you can call 08456 50 50 50.

There is a help scheme for people who are over 75 or get Disability living allowance, attendance allowance, mobility supplement or are registered blind or partially sighted. This includes equipment to handle the changeover, help with installation, an aerial check and replacement, if needed, a demonstration of how everything works and help while getting used to the new setup. This scheme costs £40 but is free to people on pension credit, income support and some other benefits.

Most people reading this article will have long since moved over to digital and understand it already, but please do look out for neighbours and others, especially the elderly and disabled, who might need some help and advice which you could give or you could direct them to other sources of help.

Broadband in the Village

A report last year complained that rural areas only averaged 2.8MB Broadband speeds (Urban was up at 3.4MB) 2.8MB would be heaven - I average **1.2MB!!** It is possible to measure your speed using various web sites, including the BBC, and also to see maps of individual communities. One map I looked at shows one person in the village getting 4.3MB - lucky person - but most speeds were well below even rural averages.

To really improve things, if you get your Broadband through a wire rather than from satellite, and whichever ISP you use, we need BT to upgrade the underlying cabling to the village. BT have an upgrade programme which is called BT Infinity. Unfortunately checking the BT web site shows that they have no plans to upgrade us at present. However the more people who express interest in our area the more likely we are to get it, so it may be worth going to the site given below and registering your interest - I have (but I'm not holding my breath. I'm told you need 600 expressions of interest to trigger things) However there may be other things BT could do which would give us some improvements.

http://www.productsandservices.bt.com/consumerProducts/displayTopic.do?topicId=29017&tduid=3e5e1eea0924d527ab2cbf972b883df3&vendorid=TDG&s_cid=con_cic_aff_tradedoubler_vidTDG_broadband

Equality and Diversity issues for those in private sector housing

The country has ambitious plans to make sure every dwelling in the land is of a reasonable standard by 2020 on the basis that 'a decent place in which to live is a basic need for everyone'. 'The Environmental Health Service [of Brentwood Borough Council] seeks to ensure that such properties are brought up to an acceptable standard for habitation and deals with a number of issues relating to Private Sector Housing, both for owner-occupied and tenanted properties'. There are a number of grants and other services available to elderly and/or disabled residents:

- Disabled Facility Grants - means tested grants to adapt a home for disabled occupation
- Affordable Warmth - grants for vulnerable households on qualifying benefits
- Anchor Staying Put - A home improvement agency which assists elderly and/or disabled home owners to improve, repair or adapt their homes. This now includes getting repayable grants, gardening, small repairs and energy efficiency measures

Advice is also available on energy efficiency relating to heating, lighting insulation and other electrical apparatus.

Herts Essex Energy Partnership and Climate Energy are further organisations that can help with energy efficiency measures.

More information on the above and other related matters can be obtained from: Environmental Health Service, Town Hall, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex, CMI5 8AY. Email: hoehpps@brentwood.gov.uk Telephone: 01277 312504

We have Community Notice Boards outside the Village Hall and at the Station and we have our own web site which can be found at:- <http://www.westhorndonparishcouncil.org.uk/>

Do look at these to find out what is going on.

Your Parish Council - what it is and what it does.

(What it does for you and what you could do for it!)

The Parish Council is the lowest tier of Government, just below Borough Councils. In some places they are called Town or Village Councils. (They have nothing to do with the Church and, as in our case, may cover a different area to the Church parish) Our Council has 9 members and they are elected every 4 years. (The next election is 5th May this year) Councillors are voluntary and our Councillors do not receive any financial payments (other than travel expenses when on Council business outside the Parish). The Council does employ a part time Parish Clerk.

Most of the Council's income comes from a charge (called a precept) which is collected through your Council Tax and a (declining) small grant from Brentwood Borough Council. The Council spends this money at its discretion. It has some regular commitments including helping with the maintenance of the Park, emptying dog bins, the annual Citizenship Award and maintaining gardens at the Village Hall and the Station. Things that the Council has also used its money for in the last couple of years are on the Teen Shelter in the Park, helping with the upgrading of the Village Hall, including the new disabled toilet, providing the Village Christmas Tree and the lighting up event. Among projects currently underway are plans to improve the area next to McColls shop, upgrading the football pitch in the Park, CCTV (see below) and additional dog litter bins. In addition the Council has been instrumental in obtaining grants from other bodies for village improvements.

The Council has other powers and these are likely to significantly increase in the coming years. The Council is a statutory consultee for all planning applications. This means that we see all applications and are asked whether we support or object to them before they go to the Borough Planning Committee. The Council plays an active part in seeking to influence the Borough and County Councils on other matters where these Councils are responsible but which effect our Village.

In future the role, influence and powers of Parish Councils are likely to increase. The Government wishes to devolve power and new legislation potentially gives addition roles to Parish Councils. The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 gave an opportunity for Councils (including Parishes) and communities to undertake work to improve quality of life and wellbeing in their locality. The current Government is seeking to take forward these powers and, in its Localism Bill, will put local communities at the centre of strategic planning for an area. To take just one area - District Councils will have to produce development plans for their borough but it will then be possible for neighbourhoods to develop their own plans which they might do alongside developers and other parties. These plans would then be put to a referendum and, if accepted, become the basis for future development. In an area with a Parish Council it would be the Parish and its Council who would be defined as the neighbourhood and be responsible for developing a plan. **FOR THIS REASON IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WEST HORNDON HAS A REPRESENTATIVE AND PROACTIVE PARISH COUNCIL. PLEASE ENCOURAGE SUITABLE RESIDENTS TO STAND FOR THE NEW COUNCIL.**

CCTV is coming to West Horndon

At its January meeting the Parish Council decided, in principle, to install two CCTV cameras in the centre of the village. Subject to a full technical study and final costing the cameras would be installed on the Village Hall and cover the area around the Hall and the two parades of shops. A number of Parish Councils in the Borough have already got similar installations. The system would be monitored from the Brentwood Borough Council control centre along with the systems that cover areas such as Brentwood High Street. There would be strict controls on who would be able to view the pictures.

CCTV systems act as a deterrent in an area, but when there is an incident the authorised authorities, such as the police, can look at the system and gather evidence. The newest systems are quite sophisticated and can be programmed so that they do not invade the privacy of private dwellings. If anyone wants any more information they should contact the Parish Clerk (details on page 4)

Who's who on the Parish Council

Steve Williams (Chair)	01277 811223
Tina Duffin (Vice-Chair)	01277 811793
Michael Bowyer	01277 811202
John Grahame	01277 811548
Christine King	01277 810306
Chris Price	07708 503104
Marjorie Ramsey	01277 811242
Alan Slawson	01277 811336
Andy Spiller	01277 811583
Geoff Rudd (Parish Clerk)	01277 218618

Other key people

PCSO Matthew Grimwood	07896 871008
(email: matthew.grimwood@essex.pnn.police.uk)	
Brentwood Police Station	01277 262212
Neighbourhood Police Team	07896 871008
Brentwood Borough Council	01277 312500
Cllr Linda Golding (Ward)	07792 670393
Cllr Gordon MacLellan (Ward)	01277 810945
Cllr John Roberts (Essex)	01277 225039

Parish Council Meetings - 2011

Thursday, March 31, 2011
Thursday, April 28, 2011
Thursday, May 19, 2011
Thursday, June 30, 2011

Thursday, July 28, 2011
Thursday, September 29, 2011
Thursday, October 27, 2011
Thursday, December 1, 2011

Meetings are usually held in the Christabella Wing of St Francis Church in Thorndon Avenue on the last Thursday of each month * commencing at 7.30pm, with 30 minutes for a public forum prior to business commencing at 8.00pm.

* No meetings in August and November. The December meeting is on the first Thursday.

Village Hall 50th Birthday

The village hall is celebrating its 50th birthday/anniversary on Sunday 10th April. From 2 - 5pm the hall will be open for people to come into the hall, look at photos of the story of the hall, have cup of tea/coffee, cake and biscuits.

This is a chance for people to come along for a chat, about how the hall was first built, what it was like in the early days, how it has developed and see how the hall has recently been decorated/improved and is now used.

If you have anything relating to the history of the Hall that you could contribute, please contact Tina Duffin (details on page 4)



Highway Matters

There is no longer a Highways Department at Brentwood Borough Council. All matters relating to roads and pavements, INCLUDING POTHOLEs, are dealt with by Essex County Council and the contact number for reporting any problems is:
The West Area Highways Office.
Phone: 0845 6037631

Royal British Legion - Poppy Parties

The Legion will be 90 years old this year and is encouraging people to organise Poppy Parties over the weekend of 10th-12th June to support their work over the next 90 years. If anyone would be interested in organising such an event more details can be found at:
www.thegreatpoppypartyweekend.org.uk