

**Reports from the
West Ilsley
Annual Parish Assembly 2007**

PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's report: SEAN RYAN

In the 18 years since Carmel and I arrived in West Ilsley, I can't remember a time when it's felt like such a vibrant community. This is largely down to the hard work of the dedicated people who run the cricket club, the church, the village hall, the tennis court, the fete and a host of amenities and activities from the youth club to the Evergreens, all publicised and promoted by the wonderful West Ilsley News. Those who do this work may not always feel that everyone in the village appreciates their efforts. But if they stopped doing what they do, people would miss it soon enough. On behalf of the parish council, I'd like to say a warm thank you to everyone who contributes to the life of the village: you help to make this a special place to live.

The parish council has played its part in the past year:

* We've set up the West Ilsley Trust, whose charitable status should help us to raise more money for activities and improvements in the village for years to come.

* We've raised a substantial sum for a play area to be built at the top of the Recreation Ground - nearly £1,000 from the Winter Warmer in January and more than £20,000 in lottery funds. To this, the Local Network Fund for Children and Young People has added nearly £3,000. The total of around £24,000 will be enough to create a decent little play area and to make sure that it's insured, inspected and maintained for several years.

* One of our 30mph limit signs has been moved from outside the Scrivens' house opposite the Recreation Ground to a point above Norman and Anne Carlisle's. The aim of this has been to slow traffic coming down the hill into the village from Farnborough and it should make us all a little bit safer.

* The parish precept was frozen, limiting this year's council tax rise to the relatively modest 2.8% imposed by West Berkshire Council.

* Last but not least came the May 19 barn dance, courtesy of the Carlisle family. More than 250 tickets were sold for a great evening of fun and fund-raising.

Any organisation now wanting to apply for a share of the funds should write to Alison Banks, the parish clerk, at The Poplars by July 1 and come along to the next parish council meeting in the village hall at 7pm on Monday, July 9, to make their case. We'll be deciding that evening how the money should be divided up.

I'd like to thank everyone on the council for their efforts: Philip Knight, the vice-chairman, who takes the lead on road safety; Dries Hagen, the treasurer, who runs the play area project; Alan Bloor, who leads on environment; and John Mountford, who's helped on road safety and village amenities. Alison Banks not only made a huge contribution to the organisation of the barn dance but has carried out her duties as clerk with meticulous attention to detail, for which we're all extremely grateful.

We're now looking for someone to replace Ronnie Cook on the council. It means coming along to one meeting every two months for up to an hour-and-a-half. Anyone interested should ring me on 281336 or email me at sean.ryan@sunday-times.co.uk

ALL SAINTS CHURCH

Ian Fewtrell-Smith

As all will know, the church was completely re-roofed last year, following a magnificent effort by the entire village. Kevin Holloway, who did a first class job, carried out the work and we are so very grateful to all who helped to complete this seemingly impossible task. In fact, there is some money remaining and we are presently obtaining quotations for the repairs to the damaged plaster on the underside of the rafters.

During the re-roofing, services were held in the village hall and this proved to work very well. The church was rededicated on All Saints Day.

Sadly, for personal family reasons, Trevor Maines decided not to stay in the benefice and early this year, he and Olive retired to Newbury. The benefice of Peasemore and Beedon, with West Ilsley and Farnborough, had already made closer links with Brightwalton and Chaddleworth, with Revd. John Townend as the priest-in-charge. Denise Brown continues to take many of our services with some help from other clergy and occasionally the congregation. We are currently looking for a replacement for Trevor to move into the Peasemore rectory, although this may take a little while.

The four parishes in the benefice are looking to encourage greater links between the churches and it is hoped that people will be able and willing to travel to a service of their choice without feeling they are somehow "letting the village side down". Worship in greater numbers will, in turn, help the individual churches to grow. At our recent Annual Parochial Church Meeting, the numbers on the electoral roll increased to 33 and we hope that trend will continue. We also have three additional members on the parochial church council.

Service patterns changed slightly in February of this year but we continue to hold three services a month. The All Age service on the first Sunday in the month became a communion service with a Sunday Club for children in the village hall. The 8.00 communion remains the same. Whereas over the past year there was a communion service at 9.30, this was not particularly popular and the third Sunday now has a "Songs of Praise" at 6.00 in the evening. This is a more informal time with more singing of requests made in the previous week. It is led by members of the congregation: the next one is this coming Sunday and will be led by Tony Scriven. All are welcome to have a good singsong! The children's church continued to flourish over the last year.

There were no weddings or baptisms in the village last year. There were 4 funerals and one interment of ashes without a funeral service.

The churchyard continues to be a place of peace and beauty enjoyed by all. We continue to be especially grateful to Norman Carlisle and Richard Gore, whose hard work ensures that it is kept neat and tidy. After the re-roofing, there was an intensive cleaning of the church, which was very well supported. We are always well supported by various people in the village who clean and provide flower arrangements on a regular basis.

The finances of the church continue to be a challenge with a small congregation. As well as the day-to-day running, the contribution to the Oxford Diocese (the parish share) last year was £7,100.

We continue to rely on fund-raising events and have just held a successful plant and coffee morning, in spite of the rain. Plans are already underway for a clay pigeon shoot in the autumn and a Burns Night in the New Year. Before then, we will be holding a flower festival over the weekend of 30th

June and 1st July. There will be a concert and drinks on the Saturday evening, during which the flower displays will be auctioned, and on the following evening the new Bishop of Oxford will be preaching at the evensong.

I am happy to report, as on previous occasions, that All Saints church continues to provide a centre for worship within the village, as well as being a place of quiet where people are welcome at any time.

THE ILSLEY EVERGREENS 2007

Shirley Gore

Our present membership is 57 of which 28 are West Ilsley residents.

We started the year with our AGM in February at West Ilsley Village Hall, when 30 members were present. The programme of events for the year was drawn up, and officers and committee appointed. During last year we had outings to Moreton-in-Marsh & Stow-on-the-Wold, Bournemouth, Isle of Wight, Henley & Marlow, Cardiff, Salisbury and Milton Keynes for Christmas shopping. We held our usual cake stall at West Ilsley Show and had a very successful stall at East Ilsley Sheep Fair. We will have another stall at the Sheep Fair this year, and our members will be busy making cakes for West Ilsley Show! Our annual Bazaar was held at West Ilsley Village Hall in November and raised a respectable amount for the club funds. There was a slightly bigger crowd there than the previous year, but we would still like more people there to snap up our bargains! At Christmas we again took the members for lunch at the Windmill Carvery.

All our outings are subsidised to a great extent, and we provide a Christmas Lunch for only £5.00 per member. We have decided to give our members an extra treat this year, and have planned a somewhat expensive river trip in June. This year the East Ilsley

Sheep Fair Committee are introducing a new scheme for people to apply for grants towards a particular project, so we are not certain of receiving a grant from them. Our activities are, as always, greatly appreciated by our members, and also friends who help to fill the coaches.

TENNIS CLUB

John Clemenger

The court was professionally cleaned on 9th May 2007 at a cost of £330 + VAT, plus incidental repairs to wire. The verdict of the experts, Colour Court Ltd, Bedford was that the playing surface was still in excellent condition – protected from frost damage and intense heat by the tall trees. Fee income for 2006 was slightly down on 2005 at £203.50 – with expenses taken off giving a profit of £93.50 (£113.50 in 2005). Fees for 2007 remain the same. £2 per hour for adults and £1 per hour for 16s and under. It was good to see the Youth Club enjoying the court last year and they have booked again for this year. In total 123 players used the court in 2006. We acknowledge with thanks a generous donation of £200 from the Fete committee for the purchase of a petrol driven blower. Still experiencing some vandalism to the court – gate taken off its hinges, broken glass at the entrance to the court, discarded coke tins and bottles thrown into the court. There was also damage to the front wire fence from using this as a backdrop for ball games. All in all, not a bad year for 2006. Very pleased with the praise given by the court builders and also by many individual players who appreciate the privacy of the surroundings and the quality of the court surface – the latter being our main responsibility.

The court celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year. John Verney, Denis Gilmore and I have been

associated with this committee for almost all these years. As founder members, with Elaine, some 25 years ago and stimulated and concerned at the sight of young village children playing tennis in the road (up against the Carlisle's wall – unthinkable now!). We are pleased to see the youth club taking an active part again. To celebrate its 25th Anniversary a short history of the court will be put in next months WIN along with a thank you to all those involved.

I especially remember the early days when the court surface suffered melting in the hot sun (we had to cancel games) and intense frost damage in the winter. John will remember also we had to take the front fencing down to get the heavy cricket roller in to bed down the frost damage which lifted the surface in large waves. Those days, thankfully, have gone now and it is largely due to the sheltering of the court by the tall leylandii.

ILSLEY UNDER FIVES

Amanda Knight

Activities

- secured funding for a set of toddler swings for West Ilsley (£2991 from Local Network Fund);
- continuing to meet weekly;
- scaling back art/music activities as most children are well under three;
- still holding monthly art/craft sessions;
- continuing with end of term treats (visit from Father Christmas, Easter egg hunts etc);
- new initiative: to get involved in fundraising for national children's charities (last year - "the Big Toddle" in aid of Barnardos, this year - "Pedal Push" in aid of Child Line.

Membership

- numbers are more stable than last year; never fewer than 6 parents plus charges, mostly more;
- we've had a couple of fathers attending regularly; very welcome;
- we've met a couple of new faces during the year and we're hoping that the young families moving into Bramble cottage and the Sheppards' old house will bring their little ones along too;
- we only have one member from East Ilsley and she will stop coming in September as her daughter will be at pre-school. We advertise in the EIC and also have a spot on the EI website. Not sure why we seem to have no takers.

Committee

- we are still in need of volunteers to join our committee;
- we currently have a committee of 4 members and we should have 5;
- we will be losing at least one committee member over the summer (daughter off to preschool) and I will most likely be standing down in the near future as William will also be starting pre-school in the next year.

Fundraising

- largely due to being short on numbers we have scaled back our local fundraising activities;
- we were unable to staff Santa's' grotto at the Ilsley School's Christmas Bazaar and the same is true of the cake stall at the Sheep Fair;
- intending to run one of the stalls at the WI Fete.

THE ILSLEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Felix Rayner

Successes this year

This year we are proud that we have successfully raised standards across the school. Our ethos of achieving more together has enabled us to make a

real difference to children's learning. Building upon previous work we have blended our afternoon subjects to provide a stimulating topic based curriculum. This mixed with introducing French and developing independent study/thinking skills, has enabled us to provide a fun, interesting and enriching curriculum. Our work on core skills has been rewarded and we have received The Basic Skills Agency's quality mark, showing we have reached a gold standard in teaching Maths and English. Sport continues to be important to the school and we have been successful in raising both standards and enjoyment. Our netball team won silver in a small schools' tournament and our footballers have won many matches. Music has also flourished. The choir sang their hearts out at The Anvil, Basingstoke and our older children enthusiastically worked with a local music trust in developing brass instrument skills. Our successful initiatives have led to very positive progress for the children, with very good results achieved in national tests and a very positive OFSTED report in June 2006.

Progress we have made

In 2006 year six, using contextual value-added data, achieved very well and made significant progress across all subjects. This progress was most significant in Maths and Science which had been key areas for development for the school. A local authority advisor stated the following:

"All pupils attained L4+ in English and over half attained L5. These are the best results for the school over the past seven years and indicate a high level of expectation of children at KS2. The school achieved the best results within the authority, in terms of percentages, for mathematics with all pupils attaining L4 and over

70% L5. The attainment of pupils in science marks the most significant improvement over recent years with most (all but one pupil) attaining L5."

The strategies put in place over the last few years are now beginning to bear fruit. They have enabled each child to achieve their potential and take ownership of their learning.

Results

Due to an incredible amount of hard work from the staff, parents, governors and pupils over the past three years the schools results have demonstrated an upward trend in Maths, English and Science.

- In English, children achieving the expected level for an 11-year-old, level 4, increased from 40% in 2004 to 100% in 2006. The number of children achieving the expected level for a 13-year-old, level 5, increased from 20% in 2004 to 57% in 2006.

- In Maths, children achieving the expected level for an 11-year-old, level 4, increased from 40% in 2004 to 100% in 2006. The number of children achieving the expected level for a 13-year-old, level 5, increased from 20% in 2004 to 71% in 2006.

In Science, children achieving the expected level for an 11-year-old, level 4, increased from 80% in 2004 to 100% in 2006. The number of children achieving the expected level for a 13-year-old, level 5, increased from 20% in 2004 to 86% in 2006.

With small year groups percentages figures can vary greatly; that said, we monitor children's progress very closely and feel all our children are progressing to their best ability across the whole school. We know it is vital that we look at each child as an individual; every child matters.

Extra Curricular Activities

As a small school we are very proud of the range of clubs we provide. Over the year we have offered football, netball, tennis, summer sports, talents, drama, choir, recorders, cross country running and

gardening.

Children have successfully taken part in football and netball matches, and have run in cross country competitions, participated in tennis matches and represented the school at athletics.

The school choir sang with the Berkshires Maestros Musical Trust and at the Berkshire Show to great applause.

One of our pupils sang solo in front an audience of over 1000.

The whole school has participated in educational visits to museums, pantomimes and theatres. Year six enjoy a residential trip in Wales each year where they take part in outdoor educational activities.

Ofsted View 2006

Inspection evidence agrees with the school's judgement that it provides a good, and rapidly improving, education for all its pupils. It has made many significant improvements in the last two years and now provides good value for money. Strengths and weaknesses are speedily identified because the school has introduced very good systems for monitoring its work. Pupils' progress is good and standards are now well above average. Children make a very positive start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Many are achieving above expected standards in their reception year as the provision is very good. Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the school. Teachers are now clear about the most effective ways to ensure that learning is successful for every pupil. Parents are very pleased about this. One commented that, 'This is a school where every child can be a star'. Lessons are well planned and teachers aim to make learning fun. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are very high. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are cared for very well, and all of them, including the most

vulnerable, feel safe and secure. Although the curriculum covers all subjects and is enhanced by a good range of additional activities, there are insufficient effective links between subjects.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher provides first-rate leadership both through his guidance and his excellent teaching. This is having the effect of raising standards throughout the school. He is very ably supported by all staff and the outstanding governing body. Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection. The changes the headteacher has introduced have transformed the overall provision. He says, 'There is still more to do for us to be the school we want to be'. Teamwork, under his guidance, is excellent and the school's capacity to improve further is very good.

What have we done in response to Ofsted?

The whole school community was delighted with the 2006 Ofsted and felt that it was a real pat on the back for all the work that had gone into school development over the past few years. Ofsted gave the school one area to look at further -

- Adapt the current curriculum provision to give pupils more opportunities to use their skills in a wider range of subjects.

With the whole school committed to the continued development of the school, a new plan 'Seizing Our Moment' addressing Ofsted's point has been written. Alongside other things it looks at merging and integrating subjects so pupils see their education as a coherent whole. Monitoring has shown positive signs that the changes are having the desired effect on children's learning. Children are enjoying school and are achieving to a high standard.

WEST ILSLEY CRICKET CLUB

Alan Bloor

The last 12 months have seen WICC continue to build on the progress made over the last few years. As far as the on field activities are concerned, we fulfilled fixtures on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesday evenings throughout the season. Our first foray into the Oxfordshire Cricket Association was by and large a success. We found ourselves playing mostly village sides in pleasant surroundings, in and around the Oxford area. The first team gained promotion from division 5 to division 4 and should have won the league but for a high number of rain affected games. Our second team finished in a respectable mid-table position.

Sunday friendly games, as well as those played mid-week were by and large enjoyable, against local teams, and offered the opportunity for social cricket without the competitive nature of the Saturday league environment. Playing numbers were improved upon which certainly helped the respective captains - but there is still room for more! The proposed extension and upgrading of the changing rooms and toilets is progressing, albeit slowly. We are currently awaiting the outcome of a grant application for the building works. So far 2 other applications made to The National Lottery Fund and Quantel have been turned down. Although this is disappointing, there are other options open to us and we have time on our side.

We have recently made an investment which we hope will both aid our training facilities and improve our batsmen's performances - namely a mechanical bowling machine which you may have seen being used in the net area. This is proving very popular both to the batsmen, who get quality practice and the bowlers - as they don't need to expend any energy!

Talking of coaching, significant strides have been made regarding our capacity and capability to train young cricketers, which we hope will pay dividends in the future for both them and WICC. The club now has three qualified coaches - with others in the pipeline. On the first Friday training session 46 youngsters were registered for coaching and we expect this number to grow as the season progresses. Junior games against other clubs are planned but there is a dire need for 'helpers' to manage a team and to help with transportation to and from games for example. If you can spare some time please let us know.

The Friday evening sessions are also an opportunity for the grown-ups to wind down at the end of the working week and this inevitably leads to increased bar takings and therefore our fund raising. We do hope that parishioners will regard our clubhouse as a place that they feel able and welcome to visit and to regard it as a social venue for the village.

Recently necessary repair works have been made to the post and rail fence around the ground. A new concrete pathway has been laid adjacent to the Clubhouse entrance.

Last summer we were granted the opportunity to run the pre-show event which was a first for us and it was with some trepidation that we organised our 'Strawberry Ball'. Thanks to much help, energy and generosity it was a resounding success. On the back of that we shall be giving a repeat performance this year, albeit without the strawberries and we sincerely hope that it is as well supported and enjoyed as last year's.

THE DOWNLAND SPORTS CENTRE

There is very little to report that is different from our previous year at the Downland Sports Centre. The Centre continues to be busy, with the hall fully utilized most weekday evenings. We are open for children's parties and special events/bookings at the weekend which uses staff and resources efficiently.

The children's holiday activities continue to thrive with most days fully booked. We have children attend from outside the catchment area - Thatcham and Newbury come to mind. These customers obviously have a great deal of choice available to them which we think says a lot for the quality of the sessions we provide, in terms of care, activities and cost. The pool still remains the major attraction during the summer holidays and is used a great deal in the holiday activity sessions and enjoyed by the public between the hours of 2.30 - 5.30pm (Monday - Friday). The pool will be open from 23rd July to the 31st August. Here's hoping for a long, hot summer!

We continue to try to keep the Centre looking a clean as possible although it is a long, hard battle to do so - especially when the weather is as wet as it has been recently. We freshened up the changing rooms at the beginning of 2007 by having a deep clean, installed automatic air fresheners and new toilet roll dispensers. While not perfect by a long way, it made a noticeable difference.

We currently have several part time and casual vacancies to fill. We require a cleaner (Monday to Friday 3.30 - 5pm or 4 - 5.30pm); a Lifeguard during the month of August for a short period each day and a 'handy man' to carry out small jobs. The rates of pay are good. If anyone knows of anyone who might be interested in any of the vacancies,

please contact the Downland Sports Centre on 01635578866 (Monday - Friday) and leave a message with the member of staff on duty for Rose Metalli (General Manager) who will return your call.

WEST ILSLEY YOUTH CLUB

Paul Willis

The Youth Club runs every second Thursday during term-time for children aged 8-15 years who live in West Ilsley or Farnborough.

The Club was successful in being awarded a grant from the BACYP. The application highlighted the need to fund voluntary organisations within the community to help establish a community spirit among young adults. The fact the village has no school or regular bus service helped win the grant for the local community.

Thursday night Youth Club sessions are run by parents either in the village hall or the cricket ground. During the summer months the village tennis courts are also booked. The Youth Club is fortunate in that for most sessions we have been able to book SPLAT youth workers to organise and run activities. The grant has made it possible to purchase a wide variety of equipment which includes computer play-stations, projector and large screen, table-football, snooker-table, sporting equipment and craft box.

During the year the Youth members have enjoyed a variety of day trips which include:

Canoeing at Pangbourne

Pantomime at Newbury

Ice-skating at Bracknell

Skiing and Snowboarding at Bracknell

Activity Day at the Calshot Outdoor Pursuit Centre in Southampton

The membership of the Youth Club has increased during the year and is now approximately 20-25

children. The activity days have been well supported by children and parents (who provide the transport). The children have presented themselves as enthusiastic, polite and well-motivated young adults and have thus received positive feedback from all the centres visited.

The Youth Club has had a very successful and enjoyable year and we now await the second instalment of our grant for the coming year.

WEST ILSLEY NEWS and WEBSITE

Andrea Cook

Editors: Liz Dray joined me as joint editor last summer following Lynne Smith's move to Cornwall. We are both happy to continue for the next year, but will also be happy to relinquish the task if a new team volunteers!

"Non-players": We now have only eight homes in the village which, to our knowledge, do not receive the WIN, despite several offers to email it or arrange for a printed copy to be delivered. Unless the PC would like us to do otherwise, we do not propose to chase these people further but if the householders change we will contact the new residents.

Change of residents: When we hear that a property is changing hands we put a printed copy through the door with an invitation to go on the mailing list and this usually works well.

Email distribution list: The PC used the email distribution list to update villagers about the A34 roadworks and it has occasionally been used for timely communication between issues of the WIN. It seems logical that email will be used increasingly for communication within the village and the editors obtain email addresses to add to the list at every opportunity.

Feedback: Very little received so we continue to assume no news is good news. It would be nice to have more contributors ...

Support from the PC: During 2006 we drew up a publication policy and an approach to advertising, both of which we agreed with the PC. The WIN is regarded as the main communication vehicle for West Ilsley, is now supported by the Parish Council, and the editorship and production are now delegated by the PC to the editors. We have raised the grand total of £58 from advertising revenue. This is held by the PC and the funds will be reserved for purposes agreed by the PC and the Editors.

Website

Martin continues as webmaster and posts the WIN regularly. No further development of the site has taken place in the last year. Thanks to Martin for the support he has given.

WEST ILSLEY RECREATION AND SOCIAL ASSOCIATION (VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE) Activities over the last year (year ending October 31st 2006)

Our Committee consists of 3 officers, 4 village residents and 6 user group representatives.

Hall usage continues at a steady rate although we are always keen to encourage further usage. The main users are Toddlers, table tennis and Youth Club with occasional parties and meetings.

Fund raising is steady with 2 bingo nights, the village fireworks and bottle stall at the fete.

All monies will replenish the funds following the expenditure on maintenance and activities for the Village.

On maintenance we were able to decorate throughout and completely upgrade the heating.

We are also planning for a new porch. Planning permission has been granted and we shall now apply for grants. Also for next year is secondary glazing. We continue to fund a cleaner. The roof will need to be patched up again following the gales in January. 2 more tables have been purchased, On activities, last year saw the very popular village Camp Out take place again when children are entertained in the woods followed by an overnight stay in tents. Again this is all funded by the Village Hall Committee and encourages all ages within the village to meet.

On the subject of the Charity Commission, the new West Ilsley Trust has been set up by the PC and therefore becomes the village charity. Our charitable status will cease in the near future when the paperwork is updated.

Alison Banks (Secretary)

DOWNLAND VOLUNTEER GROUP

This was our twenty-first year of operation & once again it has been a very successful year. Although the requirements of our clients have altered slightly, the need for our services appears to be as necessary as ever.

During the last year our Volunteer car drivers have made over 1,000 journeys taking people with no transport of their own to the Doctors' Surgeries, hospitals, dentists, opticians, shopping, etc. Our Handybus is the most used in all of West Berkshire. In order to continue with the services we provide, we always need more Volunteer car drivers, Handybus drivers (Age limit 70) & Office workers - although we have clients from West Ilsley we currently have no Volunteers. All our Volunteers find the work they do rewarding & enjoyable. If any residents in W. Ilsley feel they could be of assistance, even if it is only a few hours per month

or on specific days, please contact the DVG Office (Monday - Friday 10.00 - 12.00 noon - Tel. 01635-578394).