

PARISH ASSEMBLY 2009

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE SEAN RYAN, CHAIRMAN

A well-attended parish assembly on May 18 heard reports from the numerous groups that make West Ilsley such a vibrant village, with cricket, tennis and table tennis represented alongside the village hall, the church and everyone from the Youth Club to the Evergreens. In my report on the parish council's activities, I thanked all the councillors for helping to foster community spirit as well as looking after their own projects: Dries Hagen for his rota of volunteers to look after the church yard and other work which has made a visible difference to the village; Alan Bloor for tenaciously pursuing West Berkshire Council to make sure it fulfils its obligations to us, particularly on the risk of flooding; John Mountford for his persistence on transport matters, especially speeding and threats to our bus service; Fred Carter for publishing a list of all the societies and activities in the village, which has been so useful to newcomers; Sue Simmons for the work she put in as treasurer over the past year; and Jo Scriven who has taken over that post for the year ahead. The main issues that preoccupied us in the last 12 months were:

* **SPEEDING.** A vehicle activated sign was installed on Main St by West Berkshire council at the request of Cllr George Chandler and ourselves to remind anyone doing more than 30mph to slow down. According to the police, who came along to one of our meetings, one-third of the cars travelling through West Ilsley exceed the speed limit and in two separate rounds of monitoring, two cars were caught doing more than 50mph and four were found to be doing more than 40mph. The police warned they would be back! * **FLOODING.** Following the flood of July, 2007, various pieces of work were undertaken to reduce the risks to the village and this programme has continued. Although the system is not perfect, gulleys have been redug in Catmore Road, a drainage pipe has been replaced near the old veterinary surgery, new soakaways in Bury Lane have been found to be working well and most drains have been fairly regularly cleaned out. West Berks still has some way to go but water seems to be draining away better on the whole than it used to.

* **TENNIS.** The parish council held a joint meeting with the old tennis committee last autumn. This resulted in the formation of a new committee under Andy Driver which has already proved a dynamic force for change. It also led to the clearance of trees from one side of the court where they were interfering with the light to neighbouring homes. The resurgence of interest in tennis means that it is now played by nearly 90 people in the village.

* **PLAY AREA.** The first full year of the play area, which we built the previous year with lottery money, has been a great success. It has not only proved popular but has been well looked after by a rota of parents and has just passed its annual safety inspection with flying colours. Some who opposed this project at the outset have made a point of saying how glad they are now that it went ahead.

* **PARISH PLAN.** We heard talks from Sarah Ward of West Berks Community Action and from Neil Sanderson, who oversaw a parish plan at Peasmore, on how to set the process in motion. A group is now being formed in West Ilsley to put together a plan in the next year or so in response to a questionnaire that will be dropped into every household to find out what you'd like to see happen here. This will be done independently of the parish council and will look at all kinds of things from housing needs to use of the recreation ground and the possibility of restoring allotments to the village.

* **CHURCH WAY road surface.** West Berks Council has agreed to provide free material, such as gravel or scalplings, if the residents pay to have it laid. At the time of writing, Ian Fewtrell-Smith was negotiating the quantity with them in the hope that this could be sorted out soon.

* **PRECEPT.** Mindful that this is no time to be imposing any unnecessary financial burden on anyone, the parish council froze the precept - part of the council tax - for the third year running.

It's been good to see another increase in attendance at parish council meetings. The more people who come along, the more ideas we get and the more chance we have of putting them into practice!

News from The Ilsleys Primary School – May

In my last report I included information about our plans for a living willows sculpture to be installed at the front of our school. I am now pleased to show (pictured above) that – despite a day of continual rain – we have now planted and woven our sculpture. The children have enjoyed making sure that they are well watered and we are looking forward to them growing green shoots. We are thankful to Flora Gare from New Greenham Arts for her support in making this project such a rich learning experience for our children.



To further our use of the environment for learning opportunities we are also pleased with the construction of our outdoor classroom area. This is a result of fund raising by our parents last year and the area is regularly being used by staff and children alike. We were thrilled that Felix Rayner was able to return to the school to officially open it and we now look forward to the weather to enjoy it.

We were very proud of our school choir, ranging from 7 to 11 years old, representing us at the 'Berkshire Maestros Music & Dance Festival 2009'. There was a very jazzy presentation of 'Old MacDonald' and a 'Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious' song and dance number. We were delighted that one of our pupils also played a role in 'Jake and the Right Genie', a musical performed at the show.

You may have seen our youngest pupils getting their hands dirty and enjoying planting potatoes at Newbury Showground earlier in March. We are taking part in the 'Grow Your Own Potatoes' initiative and are also looking after our own potatoes here at the school. We are eager to harvest the crop later this summer as well as learning more cooking skills with some top chefs.

We all benefited from the visit to our school of the Life Education Centre Mobile Thames Valley. This was open to parents and carers and through the day our classes explored topics of 'All about me', 'Decisions' and 'Meet the brain'. This is one of the resources we use to teach our children important life skills and proved a worthwhile day.

There are still a wide variety of active learning opportunities to come through this Summer term. After the half term we will be having a themed week on Scientific Discovery which will culminate in a 'hands on' open afternoon. Our oldest children will be travelling off on their residential visits and learning self reliance and team working skills. We continue to promote walking through our 'Go Kinetic' scheme and will be taking part in the Record Breaking Walking Bus, sponsored by Brake – the road safety charity. We are contributing to raise last year's 80,000 children to 200,000 across the country. We will also be having a sponsored walk on the Millennium Green to raise money for the new stage which we will be able to use for our performance of 'Oliver!' at the end of the school Centenary year.

West Ilsley Table Tennis Club Annual Report 2009

History

For a number of years the West Ilsley Table Tennis club has consisted of a couple of teams and quite a few players from the village.

Recently the club has consisted of just five members playing for a team in the Newbury Tables Tennis League (<http://ndtta.co.uk>). Five experienced players joined the club for the 2007/8 season and played as a team in the second division and very nearly won promotion to the first division.

The League

The teams play in the Newbury and District Table Tennis league, which consists of three divisions. There are other nearby leagues such as Didcot, Reading, Oxford, Swindon etc.

The teams come from varied places around Newbury, such as Ashford Hill, Didcot, Aldermaston, Thatcham, Woolton Hill as well as us. Interestingly there's no team from Newbury itself! (in the past Brightwalton and Compton used to play but not anymore).

Usually games are played from 7:30 to 10:00pm, once a week. Both teams play home matches alternately in the Village Hall, on a Monday night.

The Teams

This season (October to April) we ran two teams, West Ilsley A playing in the second division of the Newbury League (8 teams participating), and West Ilsley B playing in the third division (9 teams participating). We run two teams of five players, with three usually playing on a match night.

This Season

Both teams have enjoyed the 2008/9 season and have again done well, with the 'A' team finishing third in the second division and the 'B' team finishing fourth in the third division. It was an extraordinary finish in the third division, most of the season we led it, but it finished with three other teams with the same number of points above us. How the final three positions were decided, we still don't know, but the winners were AWE Fission (Aldermaston)

Facilities

Generally we are very happy with the facilities; the conditions in the hall for league table-tennis are good, especially now that we are able to hang our halogen lights directly over the table from hooks in the ceiling.

We have our own match table, which is for our own use, which we are allowed to store in the hall.

The only small problem we have encountered has been water seepage through the floor, which sometimes requires regular mopping. We understand that this will be addressed soon.

Finances

We pay a registration fee for the teams to NDTTA, and we charge our players £3 a match which, over the season, covers the registration fees, hall rental (£15 per night) and minor incidental costs.

Future

The next season starts in October, and we currently expect to play 2 teams again, although if there is sufficient genuine interest we could consider running another team.

In the past a number of people from the village and nearby belonged to the club and would play a club night once a week, but interest reduced over the years to leave just five members playing in a team in the Newbury League.

It was good to have five more experienced players joining the club in 2007, to form another team to play in the league, increasing the size of the club, but we have not seen any interest from players or newcomers in the village wanting to play in a club night. If such an interest does arise it will be necessary to obtain a second table and for the experienced members to take charge, in turn, to supervise and coach. It should be possible to obtain a second table from the Newbury League on a loan arrangement, but the main problem would be how to store the table and for it to be readily accessible.

Deryck Crossley (Secretary 01235 767 717)

West Ilsley Tennis Management Committee

I am delighted with the work of the Committee which I believe has proven to be a great success. I am also thrilled that the court is being used by so many villagers, even over the winter months. Long may its popularity continue.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their work and enthusiasm, and indeed for the support of the Parish Council. We remain most grateful to the Parish Council for reducing the trees on the eastern boundary, this has not only reduced the volume of debris on the court, thereby making it safer to play on, but also increased natural light to neighbouring properties.

We took over responsibility for the court in November. Our principle objective was to increase its use so that it became a more integral part of village social life. In order to facilitate this, it was decided to end access via a key and provide a combination lock.

An online booking system was therefore set up and in return for a yearly subscription, villagers get the combination number. This can be per household or on an individual basis. I believe the increase in the use of the court has vindicated this new approach. The opportunity still exists to use the court without paying an annual subscription and signs outside the court and in the Harrow tell people how.

We began the process of opening a new bank account in the Committees name and this is now up and running.

We then turned our attention to the condition of the court. In addition to regular brushing, we purchased an industrial "hoover" and also arranged for the court to be treated with moss killer and power sprayed (the latter by contractors) to remove it. This combination, which requires tangible repetition and hard work, is proving to be very effective. Hence, we managed to play on the court throughout the winter. This continual maintenance also makes the court safer (a requirement we are very committed to) as it facilitates a better grip underfoot,

To comply with insurance requirements, a Risk Assessment was prepared and notices have been displayed on the court asking for courtesy and caution at all times.

As the number of subscriptions began to rise, we decided to purchase a new net. This plays (no large holes!) and looks a lot better and has been insured.

Monthly articles in the WIN have kept the village fully informed of our plans and our meetings are open to anyone. As winter turned to spring subscriptions continued to be taken up.

Work continues to improve the surface of the court and at the time of writing we are waiting for contractors to undertake some minor repairs to the surface. This includes filling small divots, flattening any small raised areas and filling any cracks. This will make the court safer still and improve the quality of the tennis by ensuring a "truer" bounce.

Ever conscious of the need to provide local children with a genuine variety of leisure activities we had a series of very successful junior coaching sessions during the April school holiday. This was run by a professional coach and was so popular it was significantly over-booked. We charged parents for this as it was over and above their subscription which simply provides access to the court. The coach divided the children into 3 separate age groups (with a total of 20) and I believe everyone agreed that he did a thoroughly good job. It was an absolute delight to see the children having fun and enjoying themselves, whilst at the same time learning the rules and nature of the game.

The popularity of the coaching sessions led to yet more subscriptions coming in. Given their success and overbooking another series of sessions is being held at the end of May. We plan to look into coaching for adults too.

As requested by the Fete Committee, we are keeping the court free on the day of the fete and discussions are taking place to see if an event could be organised for that day to support the fete and raise funds for it.

The number of households who have subscribed currently stands at 22 which equates roughly up to 100 players and speaks for itself.

Our finances are healthy but we are acutely aware of not only continued maintenance requirements but also larger capital projects such as resurfacing and new fencing, both of which are on the horizon.

Yes, we have had a few minor problems such as unauthorised access but no system is faultless. We are continuing to monitor all procedures and these will be changed if necessary.

If the value of the court to village life is to be measured by the level of its use, by locals of all ages, then it is my view that the court is considered by many to be a real asset.

Again, thank you to my colleagues on the Committee for their sterling work and pragmatic yet innovative approach. A bigger thank you to everyone who has supported us and used the court.

Anyone for tennis?

Andy Driver
Chairman
West Ilsley Tennis Management Committee.
May 2009.

West Ilsley Youth Club

The Youth Club is for the children of West Ilsley and Farnborough aged between 8 and 15 years old and is held twice a month in the Autumn and Spring terms on a Thursday evening 7-8.30pm.

During the last year the children have enjoyed trips to Go Ape in Bracknell and the Calshot Activity centre in Southampton as well as the annual trip to the Corn Exchange pantomime.

Youth Club continues to be well supported with attendance averaging 12-18 children. However, the existing committee are now looking for new members and a parent rota will need to be put in place for the forthcoming year. Further funding also needs to be explored as the grants which enabled the Youth Club to be established have now almost come to an end.

WEST ILSLEY NEWS and WEBSITE

Liz Dray and Andrea Cook

Editors: 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 four homes in the village which, to our knowledge, do not receive the WIN, despite offers to email it or arrange for a printed copy to be delivered.

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.

Residents only emails: this system has been used once or twice a month over the last year and is a speedy way of getting information round the village. The emailed reminder of the PC meeting does seem to attract more villagers to attend, in addition, watches and cats have been reunited with their owners and we've all been kept on our toes with neighbourhood watch information.

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

Website

Martin B 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.

Downland Sports Centre Managers Report for year 08/09

As you may be aware, there have been significant changes at the Downland Sports Centre that stem from a change of Management. Since the 1st July 2008 the Centre has been managed by Parkwood Leisure along with seven other facilities within West Berkshire- Downland was previously managed directly by the Council.

Continuity of staff, opportunities for customers and ensuring that the Centre remains a community driven centre, are high priorities for Parkwood who are working in partnership with West Berks Council to deliver a high quality customer service.

Last July the sports hall was decorated and the floor re-marked and re-sealed. In February 2009, both changing rooms were completely re-furbished with new showers, toilets and ventilation.

April 2009 brought about further improvements with a new resident/non resident card system, which allows West Berkshire residents the opportunity to use all facilities at a cheaper rate to those living outside the district. . Application forms for the cards are available at Leisure Centres and once processed will be returned to the Leisure Centre for collection by the customer. It is essential to have a card proving residency to get the reduced prices.

At the time of writing this report we have just finished our Easter Holiday programme for children aged 5 – 11 years. The children really enjoy attending the activities and we receive many positive comments from both the children and their parents. Long may it continue.

The sports hall is booked to capacity most evenings with Badminton being the main activity. Weekly coaching sessions for Juniors (as young as six) has become very popular and we are delighted to see an involvement in sport from children and young adults.

While we are still only open at the weekends for special events and parties, we have had bookings most weekends for the last couple of months and these run into July/August, when we will once again open the outdoor swimming pool during the summer holidays for general swimming sessions. We will also be supporting the Government wide initiative by offering free swimming to everyone aged 60 years and over.

WEST ILSLEY VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

REPORT TO VILLAGE ASSEMBLY MAY 2009

- Bookings

Bookings remain about the same as last year. Regular bookings include: Toddler Group, Village fundraisers, private parties, Saturday ballet and table tennis. In addition the youth club were regular users over the winter and BAYCP hold holiday activities for village children.

- Maintenance and development of facilities

Cleaning is regular and maintenance is carried out mainly by committee members to whom we are grateful. Our thanks particularly to Fred and Peter for all their hard work. The big project of the year was the new entrance porch which I hope you will all agree is a vast improvement on the old one. We have plans to paint the front of the building sometime over the summer. We are in negotiation with the insurance company at the moment over the floor damage caused by the 2007 floods. Water became trapped under the flooring and it needs ripping up, drying out and replacing. We have quotes and so hopefully this should be resolved by the Autumn.

- Accounts

We have spent most of our savings on the 50% we had to pay towards the porch. The other 50% came from a vital villages grant – thanks again to Alison for managing this project. This has left our account rather empty but we are running some fundraising events to help. Audrey continues to do a sterling job as our treasurer. She is diligent with the accounts and if anyone would like to know our exact financial situation then please speak to her.

- Fundraising

We run two bingo evenings during the year which raise about £300. We also ran a mothers day craft fair in March that was successful. Thanks to Alison for co-ordinating the event which raised about £200. The fireworks party also raised about £400.

- Committee

We still have a strong and thriving committee. However, we are aware that some of our more senior committee members would like to stand down after about 50 years 'shared' service. Although Alison and I have only been on the committee and shared 18 years we would also like to move on to pastures new. If anyone is interested in joining us then we welcome new committee members willingly.

Finally the camp out will take place again on June 7th which is organised by Alison on behalf of the committee.

ILSLEY UNDER FIVES



**Report for West Ilsley Annual Parish Assembly
18 May 2009**

Activities

- Baby and Toddler Group meets during term time on Wednesday mornings, 10am to 11.30am, at West Ilsley Village Hall. The session is an informal meeting, providing playtime for the children, an occasional craft activity, a drink and biscuit with tea/coffee and chat for the parents or carers. The session ends with a singsong. Parents/carers stay with their children.
- Mums and dads are involved in a rota for setting up the hall each week and making teas/coffees and juice for the children.
- At least two craft sessions a term. 1 Committee member responsible for this.
- Occasional "treats" for the children depending on funds eg trips to Bucklebury Farm Park, Crazy Klub, picnics, Christmas party with presents from Father Christmas etc

Membership

- We currently have at least 7 boys and 5 girls attending on a semi regular basis. Most of the children are from families in West and East Ilsley but we also have a several from surrounding areas eg Snelsmore, Compton, Newbury.
- 4 regular attendees however will be leaving the Group to attend school this September which will leave the Group fairly depleted. We need at least 8 children to attend each week to cover the costs of the Hall hire. Hire charges for the Hall increased from 1 April this year.
- We need therefore to attract new regular attendees. We currently advertise in the WI News, the EI Contributor and at the Surgeries in Chieveley and Compton.
- We plan to put an ad in the NCT "Little Person's Guide to West Berkshire" publication and investigate adding our details to other mother and baby/toddler information websites.

Committee

- The current committee consists of 5 members. 2 will be leaving at the end of this school year. We have one person interested in joining the committee from September and will be looking for one more.

Fundraising

- The Group is self-funding. There is a £2 charge per family per session (the first session is a trial and free of charge).
- As numbers attending are not particularly high we rely on various fundraising activities eg sponsored walks and coffee mornings.
- We also take part in local events to assist with fund raising for the Group eg manning a stall at the East Ilsley Sheep Fair and West Ilsley Fete.
- Any funds raised go towards the trips out for the children and to replacing and enhancing our range of craft supplies and toys.

**Louise Taylor and Amanda Hagen
On behalf of the Ilsley Under Fives**

**REPORT ON BEHALF OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH FOR THE
WEST ILSLEY PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY MAY 2009**

The benefice of Beedon and Peasemore, with West Ilsley and Farnborough is now linked with the benefice of Brightwalton with Catmore, Leckhampstead, Chaddleworth and Fawley under the leadership of Revd. John Townend. The church continues to hold three services a month, mainly taken by Revd Denise Brown and either Graham or Kate Stacey, our new curates. Graham and Kate are being ordained as priests in July.

At our annual meeting in April, Alexandra Axtell was elected with me as churchwarden. She has handed over the baton of secretary to Rosanne Pilditch.

The informal monthly children's church continues to be well attended.

There was one wedding and five baptisms in the church last year.

All Saints hosted the area's confirmation service in 2008 and seven of our congregation were confirmed. On the social calendar, we held a Winter Warmer and a Burns' Night, back by popular demand. We also held the annual Plant and Cake Sale.

In contrast to most churches, the PCC continues to maintain that the church should be available for use at all times and I am grateful to Audrey Tizzard for unlocking and locking the church on a daily basis during the week.

The churchyard continues to be a place of peace and beauty enjoyed by all. Dries and Amanda Hagen's grass cutting rota was a success and will continue, although we are grateful to Doug Brown and Richard Gore for bringing ride-on mowers to make the job easier. We held another spring clean in the church and this included some trimming of the hedge up to the graveyard by Dennis Gilmore. We do, however, need to trim the height of the hedge to prevent problems in the future.

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 £7,280. This was met, but as you will all know from a recent West Ilsley News, the church ran at a loss last year.

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.

Ian Fewtrell-Smith

Report on The Ilsley Evergreens 2009

Our membership is reduced to 48 members, this year, as compared with 56 last year, sadly owing to 4 deaths in East Ilsley, and sickness and infirmity in others. We still have 27 members in West Ilsley and Farnborough.

We started the year with our AGM in February at West Ilsley Village Hall, when 23 members were present. The programme of events for the year was drawn up, and officers and committee appointed. We have already had an outing to Salisbury, and further trips are arranged to Gloucester, Exbury Gardens & Bucklers Hard, Bournemouth, Hereford, Street, The Cotswolds and Bath. We will have another stall at the East Ilsley 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 last November and raised £441 for the club funds. As always, we would dearly love more people there to snap up our bargains!. At Christmas we again took the members for lunch at the Windmill Carvery, Nr. Burford, and we will be going there again this year.

All our outings are subsidised to a great extent, and we provide a Christmas Lunch for only £5.00 per member. This is only possible because of generous donations from both West Ilsley Show and East Ilsley Sheep Fair, together with our own fund raising efforts. These include Whist Drives, lots of raffles, a stall at East Ilsley Sheep Fair and the Bazaar. We are looking for a few more whist players, as the numbers have gone down a little. The Whist Drives will start again in the Autumn on occasional Thursday evenings, at either the Swan, East Ilsley or The Cricket Club at West Ilsley. Please contact John Verney (281774) or Alex Lister (281343)for more details. I understand that you do not have to be an expert card player. It is meant to be fun! Our activities are, as always, greatly appreciated by our members, and we have regular friends who help us to fill the coaches.

J.Wells
Hon. Secretary
23rd April 2009

THE DOWNLAND VOLUNTEER GROUP

2008-2009

This was our twenty-third year of operation and the need for our services seems as great or greater than ever.

It was a great blow to the DVG & the majority of our clients when the West Berkshire Council decided to only issue travel tokens to those registered as handicapped from 1st April this year but to offer free Bus Passes to the over 60s. The real need of most of our clients who are elderly, mostly fragile (but not necessarily handicapped) & have no transport of their own is to get to the Doctors' Surgeries, hospitals & dentists, etc. for appointments which are often urgent or very urgent. They are unable to get on & off Public Transport, which is almost non-existent in the Downland area & certainly will not drop them off for an appointment and take them home after 10 minutes or so – thus Bus Passes are of no use to our clients for these appointments. As a Charity the DVG cannot charge for transporting our clients but can only suggest levels of donations to go towards fuel costs – our Volunteers give their time freely but we pay them a mileage allowance. We have been told that the Council may contribute towards the shortfall which will be incurred by Car Provider Schemes such as ours.

Bus Passes are of course acceptable on our Handybus for the regular shopping trips & on our Handybus which the Downland Practice use for weekday mornings for routine Doctors' appointments.

Volunteer Car Drivers

Our bookings for car journeys have remained steady & our car drivers completed 2158 single journeys this year. Although we have approximately 35 car drivers, some only wish to drive locally & are not available every day of the week. Also as most of them are retired they sometimes take long holidays. We are extremely grateful to all our drivers but we are always looking for new Volunteer car drivers. We have 2 drivers from W. Ilsley but would be grateful to have more from your village, even it's only for one or two trips a month.

Handybus

Although the DVG have carried around 5% fewer passengers than last year, we have nevertheless made over 200 trips & carried over 1000 passengers. Combined with Surgery use ours continues to be the most used Handybus in W. Berks. We are also in need of volunteer drivers for the Handybus.

Office

As most of you will be aware, the DVG Office in Compton is open from 10a.m – 12.00 noon every weekday & we can always use more office workers.

All our volunteers have to be CRB approved since we transport elderly & sometimes vulnerable people.

The DVG is a small & friendly organisation & we feel that the services we offer to the Downland Community are worthwhile and much appreciated.

Susan Leman
Hon. Chairman