



NEWSLETTER

www.woldingham.com/parishcouncil

NOVEMBER 2015

Parish Councillors:

Frank Myers, *Chairman*
(email: run31@btinternet.com)

Ian Mathers, *Vice chairman*

Rodney Fuller
Keith Jecks
Sally Marks
Alistair Pirie
Deborah Sherry
Clive Tucker

Parish Clerk: Karen Newman
(email: parish.clerk@woldingham.com)

See *Woldingham Directory* for full contact details.

Other useful contacts:

District Councillor:
Sally Marks (tel: 653134)
(email: sally.marks@surreycc.gov.uk)

County Councillor:
David Hodge (tel: 0208 5418003)
(email: david.hodge@surreycc.gov.uk)

Police Community Support Officer: Rupert Kelley
(tel: 01483 630822 or 101 ext. 30822)
(email: kelley12599@surrey.pnn.police.uk)

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

We are making a start on publicising the Election of the new Parish Council in May 2016. This will give residents plenty of time to find out more about the work involved and consider whether to stand for election.

By 2016 some of us will have served eight years (two four-year terms) and a more select few will have served since the very

January) with a starting date to be decided. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my heartfelt thanks to all my colleagues for the loyal support they have given me, particularly over the formation of the Neighbourhood Plan. We shall announce the new Chair in the *Woldingham Magazine*.

We are a small Council with no office base and just two part time



start of the Council (in 2000). I intend to retire from the Council in May. I have been Chairman for two and a half years, a little longer than expected, in order to allow for completion of our work on the Neighbourhood Plan. This has now been submitted to Tandridge Council and is technically out of our hands. I feel that this is a good time to make way for a new Chair, who will have the opportunity to prepare for the implementation stage and also encourage a strong team to stand for election in May. We will elect our new Chair at the November Council meeting (the last before the end of

staff, so we have no cumbersome bureaucracy to sap our energy and time! However, it also means that prospective councillors need to be willing to put their own time, drive and enthusiasm into their work. If you like that kind of challenge, the Parish Council may be for you. We can use whatever skills you already have and you would have access to councillor training programmes. This edition carries accounts of the personal experience of two Councillors – I'm glad to say that they sound positive!

Over the last two years our work has been channelled into the



production of a Neighbourhood Plan but this has by no means displaced the wide range of other things that we do. In fact, the whole point of the Plan is to empower future Councils in key areas of their work. A scan of our section of the Woldingham Magazine, together with our Newsletter and web pages, will show the range of what we do. Four major blocks of work are shown below:

- Commenting on planning applications; contributing to local (and occasionally national) planning policies that affect the village; reporting possible planning

infringements to the local authority.

- Running or supporting a long list of events and initiatives for the benefit of residents, including some through our small grants programme: flower displays, Summer Picnic, Litterpick, Carols in The Crescent, defibrillators; national events (Jubilee Beacon, new flagpole on the Green, Remembrance Day), etc, etc.

- Liaising with Surrey County Council to set priorities for maintaining and improving local highways (resurfacing programme, speed reduction measures, danger

spots, cutting back hedges, snow clearance, flood prevention, etc).

- Liaising with Tandridge Council, Biggin Hill Airport, Surrey Police and the whole range of village organisations to further the interests of residents.

We hope you will seriously consider becoming a councillor. Please approach Karen Newman, our Parish Clerk, or any councillor, if you want to explore the idea further.

*Frank Myers,
Chairman*

YOUR VILLAGE (AND ITS PARISH COUNCIL) NEEDS YOU!!

I first moved into Lunghurst Road, Woldingham, in 1996. I was attracted to the Village by its rural nature, village atmosphere and the fact that rail links to London (where I worked for most of my career) were so excellent.

The trouble was that after 18 years, I realised that I knew almost no-one in the village, other than those I met whilst walking my dog! Realising that I was always relying on others to do the necessary work to keep Woldingham the way I liked it, I thought it would be about time I got more deeply involved and applied to join the Parish Council in 2014.

WHAT IS A PARISH COUNCIL?

What is the Parish Council and why do we need it? Well, first, let's make one thing clear: it is nothing to do with the Church. The Parish Council's remit is defined by the Civil Parish (not the Church Parish) boundary. In our case, it is also non-political. Apart from one member, who is a Conservative

Surrey County Councillor, I do not even know the political leanings of the other councillors. A Parish Council is the level of government closest to the community, with the district authority (Tandridge) above it in the hierarchy. As it is the authority closest to the community, the Parish Council is often the first place people will go with concerns or ideas. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee and therefore, although it does not take the final decisions, there is a statutory obligation for Tandridge District Council to consult the Parish Council. This gives it considerable influence.

WHY BECOME A PARISH COUNCILLOR?

You may be forgiven for thinking that Parish Councillors are a group of (probably older) people who meet now and then in a draughty village hall. Actually, ours is lovely and warm! By becoming a Parish Councillor you become someone your community will look to for help, guidance and support, with the power to influence decisions for

the benefit of the village. Seeing your community change for the better, even in a small way, as a result of decisions you have helped make, is something that can give a real sense of achievement and pride.

WHAT DECISIONS DO PARISH COUNCILS MAKE?

Parish Councils make all kinds of decisions on issues that affect the local community. Probably the most common topics that parish councils get involved with are planning matters, crime prevention, managing open spaces and campaigning for and delivering better services and facilities. The organisations that make the final decisions (such as Tandridge council, health authorities, police etc) know that a Parish Council is closest to a community, and its views will be taken seriously. In this respect Parish Councils can be extremely influential.

Keith Jecks



BEING A PARISH COUNCILLOR

What is like to be a parish councillor? Would I recommend it? I have to admit that I had very little idea of what it would involve when I was persuaded to stand for election and, to my surprise and mild alarm, elected nearly 4 years ago. But it has been a fascinating, rewarding and enjoyable experience. And, yes, if you have the time to do it and are interested in the future of the village where you live, I would strongly recommend it.

The minimum time commitment is not huge: a meeting of the full council on the last Thursday of each month (except August and December) with less frequent ad hoc meetings to discuss planning applications and an annual “public meeting” to give a full account of our work to the village. All meetings are held in the evening so it’s possible to be a councillor and to work full time – and it’s very important that the parish council can continue to draw on the experience of people who are pursuing active careers. Of course, there is some “homework” but you can do that

when it’s convenient.

And what have we achieved? The last 4 years have been dominated by the Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan. This has been a novel and challenging experience for all of us. We had the advice of consultants but almost all of the work - from designing the survey of resident’s views to actually writing the plan – has fallen on the councillors themselves and in particular on the most experienced councillors. I was not one of those but it’s been a privilege to play even a small part in this unique, community-led endeavour to define a vision of the future of the village over the next 15 years.

And the good news for the next Parish Council is that there is plenty still to be done. In fact, they will have the job of turning the plan into practical reality.

What else? Well, by taking an appeal to the School’s Adjudicator we ensured that young children living in Woldingham have a

much better chance of getting into Woodlea School. And we helped to persuade Whitehall to correct a particularly bizarre and damaging anomaly in the planning regulations.

Otherwise, the largest element of the Council’s work is commenting on planning applications. Our role is only advisory: Tandridge District Council take the decisions and we don’t always agree with their decisions. But we are all Woldingham residents and between us we can contribute first hand knowledge of the village, as well as benefitting from the accumulated experience of previous planning applications (now preserved on the council’s own dedicated database).

Finally, my specific responsibility has been to organise the twice-yearly village Litterpick. This draws people of all ages from over 80 to less than 12 months to take part in tidying up our village. And so far the weather has always been good!

Clive Tucker

PLANNING

The work of Tandridge District Council (TDC), on preparations to replace its 2008 Core Strategy is continuing, but the evidence it is assembling and its resulting proposals are not expected to be released until December. Key aspects will be TDC’s assessment of the Green Belt and the Objective

Assessment of Need for additional housing that will be proposed, both of which could impact on Woldingham.

We commented on 40 planning applications in the period from April to September 2015, slightly fewer than in the previous half year. We

objected in a higher proportion of cases than in the previous period, and TDC allowed more of them despite our objection, a matter from some concern. One of the key functions of the Neighbourhood Plan will be to exert more influence on these decisions.

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>No Objection by the Parish Council</i>	<i>Objection by the Parish Council</i>
<i>Withdrawn</i>		3
<i>Allowed</i>	20	10
<i>Refused</i>	3	2
<i>Split decision</i>		1
<i>Pending</i>		1
<i>Total</i>	23	17



UPDATE ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

At the time of writing there is not much further news on the Plan. We are waiting to hear the Examiner's comments on the Plan that we submitted to Tandridge Council in August for the 'Regulation 16' Consultation. Since then we have reported any developments in the Woldingham Magazine, including a summary of Tandridge Council's comments to the Examiner and an indication of what responses there have been to the Consultation.

VILLAGE WEBSITE

We are (at last) making some tangible progress on updating the website. We hope to have some good news shortly.

Merry
Christmas



**Woldingham Parish Council
Would like to invite you to join
in their annual Christmas
Celebrations**

**AT THE CRESCENT
ON SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER 2015 AT
6PM**

Join us again to celebrate the turning on of the Christmas lights followed by a short Carol Service.

The Salvation Army are booked to lead some hearty singing so do come along with your family, friends and neighbours to start our Christmas Celebrations in style! Everyone is welcome.

**DON'T FORGET TO BRING
YOUR TORCH!**



WINTER IS ON ITS WAY!

Winter is on its way and we have adequate stocks of salt. We are having a very mild autumn. But then again so we did in 1947 when winter finished with the most snow and ice since records began...

Residents need to park sensibly. We need 3 metres width for the snow-plough! You also need to make sure that your hedges and

trees are cut to the regulation maximum of 5.4 metres height and will not overhang and obstruct the road when they are laden with snow.

It only needs one low branch and you will not get your road ploughed and salted.

Your Snow Team

Dates for your Diary:

**Saturday 12 December 2015
– Carols in the Crescent**

**Parish Council Meetings:
Last Thursday of the month,
Arthur Herbert Room,
Village Hall
7.30pm**

**Jan 28
Feb 25
Mar 31
April 28**