

# Tewin Parish Council

*Clerk: Mrs Caroline McFarlane, 2 Badgers Walk, Tewin Wood, Welwyn, Herts AL6 0HP  
Tel: 01438 798969 E-mail: [caroline.mcfarlane@virgin.net](mailto:caroline.mcfarlane@virgin.net)*

## **Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting, 2 April 2012**

### **Councillors**

Seven councillors were re-elected to represent Tewin's North and South Wards in May 2011. The eighth seat, which had become vacant, was filled by the election of Cllr Pat Fulford, who served until February 2012. This new vacancy, in the North Ward, will be filled by co-option. Cllrs Kristina Lawson and Keith St Pier were re-elected as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively.

### **Meetings**

Ten full meetings were held during the year, including the Annual Parish Meeting in April and the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May. Three extraordinary meetings were also held, to make urgent decisions and consider planning applications.

### **Communication**

As usual, the Parish Council's activities have been reported in the Parish News and on the Tewin Village Website ([www.tewinvillage.co.uk](http://www.tewinvillage.co.uk)).

A Parish Council newsletter, containing the Chairman's report to the Annual Parish meeting, was distributed.

### **Finance**

In the budget for 2012-13, the Parish Council has asked for a precept of £26,300, compared with £24,800 in the previous financial year, because the Parish Paths Partnership no longer provides grants for grass cutting work on public rights of way.

*Table of expenditure is attached.*

The financial risk assessment procedure has been followed and quarterly internal audits by Councillors undertaken.

The Parish Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were reviewed during the year to ensure compliance with current legislation and guidance.

### **Planning**

The Parish Council has the right to be notified about applications for planning permission in Tewin and is entitled to make representations to East Herts Council. Parishioners are allocated a few minutes at the start of Parish Council meetings to make comments in favour or against current applications.

During the year the Parish Council received and commented on 39 planning applications compared with 32 last year. EHC has granted 22 of these to date and refused nine. Decisions from EHC on a further eight are awaited. Two applicants went to appeal last year, one was granted and another decision is awaited.

The planning documents are now made available online only, so Councillors view the plans in advance and specific printouts are available at the meeting for viewing as required. Some parishes, and particularly the East Herts group EHAPTC, have expressed reservations about the new system.

The Parish Council has continued to follow the progress of the new plans for development and new housing allocation under East Herts Local Development Framework Core Strategy. Caroline McFarlane, together with other Parish Council Clerks, and representatives of landowners and house builders, attended EHC's first Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) meeting in September, where the attributes of potential new development sites were considered.

A Parish Councillors' Briefing Session on the Local Development Framework was attended by Councillors K. Lawson, J. Sheridan and K. St Pier in November. The Consultation on the Core Strategy will take place this summer. East Herts Council has provided a guidance document on the creation of the new Neighbourhood Plans, under the Localism Act, but funding for such plans is likely to be a major obstacle.

A response to the national consultation on Neighbourhood Planning was made in early January.

The planning application for eighteen houses on the Sevenacres site, originally approved in 2008, was renewed in March 2011 and an application made, by Taylor Wimpey, for minor revisions to the plans. In early February, once it became known that work on the site would be starting, the Parish Council held its first meeting with the developers to facilitate a good working relationship with the community whilst the work is in progress. Councillors attended the public exhibition, in the Parish

Room, in February on the proposed plans for a further ten houses. A new planning application will be submitted, together with some additional changes to a small number of the original eighteen, and discussions are continuing with EHC about aspects of the road layout.

The redevelopment of the former garage site in Upper Green Road is still under discussion.

Meanwhile, the housing association Riversmead, which already owns houses in Tewin, held an exhibition of its own plans for eight new homes on parcels of land off Grass Warren. Comments raised by the Parish Council and individual Parishioners were forwarded to Riversmead to assist them in preparing the planning application.

The Parish Council intends to continue to monitor these new proposals as well as the development in progress.

BT's first application for a high speed broadband cabinet at the corner of School Lane was refused by EHC. The Parish Council has been liaising with BT and EHC and it is hoped that installation of the cabinet will now go ahead.

### **Highways and Parish Paths**

The Parish Council monitors highways maintenance work, in liaison with Hertfordshire Highways, and the Minutes of each Meeting include a schedule of works in progress.

On-road parking and obstruction of footways is now a serious hazard to pedestrians and other road users in some parts of the Parish, particularly around Lower Green and Hertford Road. This is also causing difficulties for large vehicles making essential journeys in the village. Householders are reminded that the safest place to park is off the road, where space is provided.

The Parish Council has continued to raise the issue of the poor state of Upper Green Road and Orchard Road. Extensive patching of potholes was completed in the spring of 2011 but surface dressing of the full length of Orchard Road, to Desborough Drive, remains outstanding.

The Council is continuing to look for ways to provide safe pedestrian access along the roadside between Godfries Close and Upper Green. A more permanent solution is being sought to the strip of crushed granite on the verge.

The Council is responsible for maintenance of the public footpaths and bridle paths within the Parish, together with grass cutting, tree pruning and repairs to Council property. Some grass cutting expenditure is reclaimed from HCC, EHC and Riversmead Housing Association.

The Parish Council will have to pay for grass cutting along parish paths as funding is no longer available through the Parish Paths Partnership. The Annual Risk Assessment identified some works which needed to be undertaken.

Liaison has taken place with the higher tier local authorities and Riversmead Housing Association over the repair of the service road to the Godfries Close substation which has multiple owners.

Other matters dealt with during the year included the condition of Back Lane and the location and refilling of grit/salt bins.

### **Common Land, Village Greens and roadside verges**

The Parish Council has responsibility for the upkeep of most of the grassed areas within the Parish, including Village Greens, Common Land and roadside verges, which define Tewin's rural character. Lower Green, in particular, has been damaged by vehicles on numerous occasions. Repairs are expensive and claims are made to vehicle owners if these can be identified.

Several complaints have been received about dog fouling, particularly in Cannons Meadow and Grass Warren. Dog owners are reminded that it is an offence to allow dogs to foul grassed areas, public footpaths and pavements and dog waste can be deposited in disposable bags in any waste bin.

Two issues were dealt with concerning areas of Common Land, in the care of the Parish Council, in Queen Hoo Lane, involving removal of dead trees and clarification of the boundary of Common Land adjacent to a footpath.

## **Transport**

The Parish Council continues to monitor any proposed changes to bus services that could affect Tewin residents. The 388 service continues to be well used by passengers from Hertford, Welwyn Garden City and the villages as well as Tewin residents.

As the final part of the consultation process for Local Transport Plan 3, comments were made on HCC's draft Bus Strategy in June. Consultation on the Rural Transport Plan is currently in progress.

## **Representatives of outside bodies**

As of May 2011 the Parish Council's nominated trustees, for Tewin Charities, continue to be Cllr David Howson and Roger Temple. Their current terms expire in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

The Parish Council's informal representatives were confirmed for the Memorial Hall, Parish Paths, Transport issues, Tewin website committee, Locality Policing, Pavilion CIC and Flag raising.

## **Policing**

Contact with the local police is maintained although there have been fewer Locality Policing meetings. Neighbourhood Watch remains active.

There were 20 reported incidents in Tewin in the year to 31 March, compared with 25 in the previous twelve month period. Only one was a burglary from a dwelling, down from five the previous year.

Parishioners are advised to be vigilant and report anything suspicious but it should be remembered that crime is still very low in this area.

## **Community activities**

The Parish Council has legal responsibility for the organization of events on the Village Greens, including the Classic Car event, the Christmas Tree and Carols on the Green. The events are run by members of Friends of Tewin, including Councillors. The Parish Council also supports the Senior Citizens' Lunch and in 2011 provided third party sponsorship for an application to Biffaward for grant funding by the Memorial Hall Committee.

A group, initiated by Friends of Tewin and with the support of the Parish Council, was set up last year to look after the Upper Green Pond. During the summer guidance was obtained from HCC and Natural England. The work involved removal of dead trees and planting of native bulbs and wild flowers. The Woodland Trust has now provided saplings to create a hedgerow at the back of Upper Green and an oak tree to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

East Herts Rural Parish Conference was attended by Cllr Doreen Lloyd in September.

## **Sport and recreation**

The Parish Council continues to provide support for sport and recreation in Tewin. The playground at Upper Green continues to be well used. Weekly inspections and the annual risk inspection, by East Herts Council, have taken place successfully, with some minor issues being resolved.

Gosling Youth FC Adult team was granted the use of pitch for one season, subject to conditions. The football posts remain in place at other times for use by casual players.

Tewin residents are reminded that occasional use of the tennis courts can be made without being a member of the Tewin Tennis Club, in accordance with the notice displayed at the Pavilion.

The Pavilion has been available for hire for eighteen months, run by Tewin Pavilion Community Interest Company. The Parish Council retains responsibility for health and safety issues and, at present, for maintenance. Priority is given to Tewin's residents and further information is available on the Tewin Village website. Enquiries about the use of the Upper Green for sporting activities should be made to the Clerk to the Parish Council.

## **Acknowledgements**

Finally, I would like to thank the Clerk, Councillors and Parishioners for their hard work, help, and support during the year.

Kristina Lawson  
April 2012

**Tewin Parish Council**  
**Summary of Income and Expenditure for the Year 2011/2012**

	£
<b>Income</b>	
Precept	24800
Grass Cutting (HCC, EHC, Riversmead)	3617
Parish Paths	0
Interest	20
Allotment Rent	315
Electricity Meter/land rental	29
PWLB Loan	0
Grants	0
Donations	698
<b>Total</b>	<b>29450</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Administration	10936
Grass Cutting (HCC,EHC, Riversmead)	3617
Parish Grass Cutting	3663
Parish Paths	1214
Playground (annual inspection & new nets)	349
Contingency Fund (Memorial Hall donation)	900
Allotments	522
Electricity (Lower Green)	157
Xmas Tree	457
R&M (posts, litter bins, signs, dead tree upper green, well cover repairs	1137
Parish News	135
Pavilion R&M (snagging lights, heaters, stopcocks, mains limiter, toilet seats)	916
Pavilion Refurbishment (signs & keys)	572
Loan Repayment	5834
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>30409</b>
<b>Total Income less expenditure</b>	<b>-959</b>

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## **VACANCY FOR PARISH COUNCILLOR**

The job of the Parish Councillor is voluntary and non-political. The Parish Council meets on the evening of the first non-bank holiday Monday of each month except for January and August, but Councillors can expect to volunteer more of their time between meetings. The use of email plays a significant part in the day-to-day operation of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council's work includes the following:

1. Setting a budget each year, from which we set the precept to obtain funds via the Council Tax. All expenditure and income is monitored against the budget.
2. Upkeep of both village greens, various pieces of common land, and 100 Year Wood. The Parish Council also owns the pavilion on Upper Green, the playground on Upper Green, the phone box opposite the Rose & Crown, the bus shelters, the flag pole on Lower Green, and most of the benches in the Parish.
3. Examination of all planning applications in the Parish and commenting to EHC as necessary.
4. Projects such as the provision of a playground on Upper Green in 2007, and the recent refurbishment of the pavilion on Upper Green.
5. Close liaison with Hertfordshire Highways to ensure that any problems with the roads are addressed.
6. Shared responsibility with HCC for the maintenance of footpaths and bridleways.
7. Input as necessary to various consultation documents issued by other authorities.

The full scope of the Parish Council activities can be seen by reading past minutes and newsletters on the village website [www.tewinvillage.co.uk](http://www.tewinvillage.co.uk)