

Tewin Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs Caroline McFarlane, 2 Badgers Walk, Tewin Wood, Welwyn, Herts AL6 0HP

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www.tewinvillage.co.uk

11.6.09

Dear Parishioners,

1. Parish Plan Analysis Group

The Parish Plan document published last year highlighted the need to review and clarify the outcomes from the completed questionnaires with respect to three important issues, parking, street lighting, and footpaths/pavements. The Parish Council agreed to set up a Further Analysis Group, to include volunteer Parishioners, with the following Terms of Reference:-

- Parking -To identify what parking problems exist in the Parish, and to advise on how serious these might be.
- **Street Lighting** - To ascertain if there is a clear requirement for street lighting in the Parish.
- Footpaths and Pavements - To clarify if respondents to the Parish Plan questionnaire were confused between footpaths and pavements in making their submissions and to identify what, if any, problems exist.

The Analysis Group analysed the database of responses received to the questionnaires, using pivot tables, carried out visual monitoring within the Parish and held discussions with key people.

Conclusions

Parking - The analysis works undertaken and the visual monitoring, had both mirrored and identified the same parts of the Parish where parking problems exist. None of the parking problems are serious at this point in time but ongoing monitoring is deemed essential

There are parking problems in roads close to the village school both in the morning and afternoon as parents drop and collect children from the school. The Head Teacher is encouraging parents to use the Rose and Crown car park and walk across the Village Green or use the "walking bus" scheme now operating twice a week. There are also known parking problems around Lower Green outside school hours and in Harwood Close, often caused by vehicle owners parking indiscriminately and without regard for other users.

Parking problems were also noted at Upper Green when football and tennis were taking place, with parking on verges a regular feature. The Parish Council is currently considering the possibility of increasing the size of the car park.

Street Lighting - 87% of the Parishioners who returned questionnaires responded to the street lighting question, of which 60% were satisfied with the present arrangements. There were very specific adverse comments against increased street lighting in various parts of the Parish. The bungalows in Cannons Meadow and Grass Warren were cited as parts of the Parish where additional lighting is sought.

The Group concluded that there was no clear general demand for the installation of additional street lighting but the issue should be kept under review.

Pavements and Footpaths - There was very little evidence to be found that Parishioners were confused by the references in the questionnaire between footpaths and pavements. There was a clear and strong demand for a pavement between Godfries Close and Upper Green and a lesser but growing request for a pavement between Tewin Wood and Upper Green.

86% of Parishioners who responded on the issue of footpaths were satisfied with the present arrangements.

2. Parish Plan Housing Group

At the meeting on 11th May 2009 the Parish Council agreed not to form a working group, in the form of the Parish Council, which would consider whether a Village Design Statement would have any benefits.

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Dear Parishioners,

Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting, 6 April 2009

Seven of the eight Councillors elected in May 2007 have continued to represent Tewin's North and South Wards. Cllr Mike Howe having resigned at the beginning of 2008, and no election being called, the vacancy was filled by co-option and Cllr John Sheridan took his seat in May 2008. Cllr Kristina Lawson and Cllr Keith St Pier were re-elected as Chairman and Vice Chairman for a further year.

As usual, the Council's activities have been reported in the Parish News and on the Tewin Village Website.

Two newsletters have been distributed during the year: one for the Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting in June and another on Affordable Housing, the Housing Capacity Assessment and other planning issues in September. A letter from the Chairman accompanied the distribution of the Parish Plan, also in September.

During the year the Parish Council has received and commented on 34 planning applications compared with an unusually high number of 46 the previous year. EHC granted 17 of these and refused six; another six were withdrawn and decisions on a further four and the result of one appeal are awaited. The main reason for refusal was the cumulative effect of the development.

The Parish Council also takes note of the progress of developments which are subject to planning permission and liaises with EHC on enforcement issues. Particular attention has been given to several new infill developments within the village boundary. Aspects of the Seven Acres Development are still under discussion, including a Section 106 Agreement. The Parish Council also provided comments on an application for 'Affordable Housing' on a 'Rural Exception Site' outside the designated village boundary, which was part of Site 8 (known as 'the chicken field') north of Godfries Close. As the village boundary was redrawn in 2007, the Parish Council objected to these plans for affordable housing outside the boundary, which almost certainly would be a precursor to further development on the site. We also informed EHC that any changes to the boundary would be unacceptable.

Comments on the EHC Housing Capacity Assessment and Edge of Settlement Survey were made in April. The resulting response from EHC was subsequently published in a newsletter. Although Tewin Wood is no longer a designated Environmental Zone, it is outside the village boundary and EHC has applied other policies in several recent planning decisions on applications which have been considered unsuitable in the Metropolitan Green Belt. Comments on the Welwyn Hatfield Core Strategy Consultation have been invited recently.

The Council continued to monitor developments on the proposed water abstraction borehole in Hertford Road and Benington Wind Farm and communicated with the local MP, Oliver Heald, on both issues. A representative from Three Valleys Water attended the meeting to give a presentation on the borehole proposal in October.

The Council has continued maintenance of the public footpaths and bridle paths within the Parish, together with grass cutting, tree pruning and repairs to Council property such as the Pavilion. Two wooden benches were installed on Lower Green, in time for the summer, to replace the old seats which had become expensive to repair.

The Parish Council has budgeted for a precept of £16,900 for the financial year 2009-10, compared with £16,700 the previous year – a rise of just 1.2%. A small increase has been possible because several large projects were completed in the previous financial year.

At the beginning of 2009, the Council adopted the model publication scheme under the Freedom of Information Act and agreed to publish the scheme and guide to information.

A financial risk assessment procedure was implemented for the 2008-09 financial year and quarterly internal audits by Councillors have taken place, most recently in February. The Clerks' revised contract was signed in May 2008 and the Council also clarified its procedure on co-option of councillors in the event of a vacancy.

Monitoring highways maintenance work and liaising with the County Council, is an ongoing process and a table of works in progress is appended to the Minutes of each Council Meeting. In March this year, unscheduled patching was carried out in Upper Green Road and Orchard Road, as a result of liaison with Hertfordshire Highways.

The efforts to find a permanent solution to the flooding at the junction of Churchfield Road and Margery Lane, involving the creation of a ditch in the adjacent field, appear to have been successful. All owners of land should be aware of their responsibility for clearing ditches and ensuring that water from their land does not flood onto the road.

In the interests of road safety, and in anticipation of the new housing development at Seven Acres, the Parish Council continued to explore the possibility of extending the footway from Godfries Close up to Tewin Garage and the possible installation of a flashing speed sign on Upper Green Road. Signs for the Village Hall and Scout Hut have been requested, but not yet installed.

The Parish Council is responsible for the repair and protection of most of the grassed areas within the Parish, including Village Greens, Common Land and roadside verges, which define Tewin's rural character. Too often, these are damaged by vehicles. Another issue of concern is inconsiderate parking, on pavements and along narrow roads, which causes a hazard to pedestrians or other road users. The Parish Council has decided against a request to introduce dog waste bins, but reiterated EHC's dog litter policy, reminding dog owners that it is an offence to allow dogs to foul these grassed areas, public footpaths and pavements: the waste can be placed in litter bins or taken home.

The telephone box opposite the Rose and Crown is on BT's list for removal. After some consideration the Parish Council agreed to adopt it, subject to certain conditions, so that it can be retained as a feature within the Conservation Area. Village groups have agreed to donate funds for the electricity disconnection, and we have just received notification that this process will go ahead.

The Parish Plan and associated Action Plan were adopted by the Parish Council in May and in July the Parish Council agreed to a timetable to take the Parish Plan forward. Copies of the full document were distributed to all households in the Parish in September. The Action Plan made provision for Working Groups to be set up to take forward a number of issues raised by the Parish Plan and where feasible to involve Parishioners who had expressed interest in those issues.

Terms of Reference for a Further Analysis Group to look in more detail at issues including parking, and for a Transport Group were agreed in December. The Further Analysis Group met early in 2009 and work started on identifying locations in which parking is perceived to be a problem. The Transport Group met for the first time in March and covered issues such as awareness of the current bus service and access to essential services. It was decided that further discussion was needed before setting up a third proposed working group, to consider the development of a Village Design Statement.

Passenger numbers on the 388 bus appear to be holding up well. Return fares to the local stations remain very competitive with daily parking rates, for individual travellers. Over 60s are reminded that a Hertfordshire bus pass entitles them to travel free on most bus services throughout England, with reductions on some local train services.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank the Tewin Stores Association and everyone who has contributed towards the successful running of Tewin Stores, which opened as a community shop more than a year ago, and the reopening of the Post Office in September.

Along with other funding organizations, the Parish Council has contributed a grant towards the development of the café area, in particular to provide access into the garden for prams, pushchairs and wheelchairs.

The Parish Council's nominated representatives on Tewin Charities continue to be Cllr David Howson, for a further four years and Roger Temple whose current term ends in 2009. In addition, in May 2008 the Parish Council confirmed its informal representatives for the Memorial Hall, Parish Paths Partnership, for Transport issues, Tewin Society, Tewin website committee, the Parish Plan, Locality Policing and Tewin Stores Association. Cllr Howson has since become responsible for liaison with the Sports Clubs.

Regular contact has continued to be maintained with the local police. Karen Broad became the new Police Community Support Officer for the area. She attended the Parish Council Meeting in March and walks round the village as often as possible. The Mobile Police van continues to come to Lower Green on the first Wednesday of each month and Neighbourhood watch remains active. Cllr Lloyd continues to liaise on local policing issues and Cllr Evans attended a Locality Police Meeting in May.

Occasional thefts from property have been reported, together with some fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles. Parishioners are advised to be vigilant and report anything suspicious. It should be remembered that crime is still very low in this area.

East Herts Rural Parish Conference on 29 May was attended by Cllrs Doreen Lloyd and Steve Stott.

During the year the Parish Council has taken legal responsibility for the organization of events on the Village Greens, including the Classic Car event and the Christmas tree and Carols on the Green. Members of Friends of Tewin continue to run these events on behalf of the Parish Council.

Discussions were held with Church regarding War Memorial Restoration, but after cleaning it was decided to take no further action yet.

The Parish Council agreed to provide a loan to assist in the production of the book: A History of Tewin by the People of Tewin.

Brown bins were introduced by EHC for the collection of garden waste in April last year. New blue boxes for plastic bottles, and some other changes to collections are expected to be in force in autumn this year. Householders are reminded to find a discreet place to store their bins and boxes and remove them from the roadside as soon as possible after the collection.

The Parish Council rents land adjacent to the Tewin Cowper School for use as allotments and the land is leased to the Allotment Association. The Parish Council recently received an application for additional land, which has now been approved by the landowner.

The Parish Council has continued to support sport and recreation in Tewin. The playground continues to be well used. Weekly risk inspections and the annual inspection have taken place successfully. Several small repairs have been undertaken by the installation company.

Datchworth Veterans football team continued to use the pitch on Upper Green for a second season, for a small charge. A youth team has also been using the pitch this season and the football posts continue to be available for use by local young people outside the main season.

In July, as earlier proposals had halted, the Parish Council agreed that it should set in progress a project to plan the refurbishment or eventual replacement of the Pavilion. Funds had already been allocated for refurbishment and the Clerk has spent additional time, together with Cllr B. Evans, investigating the possible options, liaising with the sports clubs and developing a proposal for the way forward. New funding is more likely to be forthcoming if junior and girls teams are being supported.

Once again, I would like to thank not only the Clerk and Councillors but everyone who has contributed to this year's activities, for their hard work, help, and support.

Kristina Lawson
April 2009

Tewin Parish Council
Summary of Income and Expenditure for the Year 2008/09

Income	
Precept	16700.00
Tennis Courts	4082.00
HCC & EHC Grass Cutting & PPP	4470.79
Interest,	381.08
Allotment Rent	225.00
Other Income	183.25
Pavilion electricity income & other	205.00
Total	26246.23
Expenditure	
Administration	-10690.33
Tennis Courts	- 4082.00
HCC,EHC & TPC Grass Cutting & Parish Paths	- 6539.50
Pavilion Refurbishment	- 2518.41
Parish Plan	- 957.55
Lower Green Meter Supply	- 129.68
Donation to Village Shop	- 1000.00
Allotments	- 400.00
Pavilion	- 853.27
Xmas Tree	- 183.25
R&M (two benches & hot water tank)	- 1824.40
Misc	- 182.99
Total Expenditure	-29361.38
Total Income less expenditure	-3115.15
Met by :-	
Drawn from Parish Council Reserves	3115.15