

Tewin Parish Council

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Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting on 12th April 2010

The seven Councillors elected in 2007 and Cllr Sheridan, co-opted in 2008, have continued to represent Tewin's North and South Wards. In May 2009, Cllr Kristina Lawson and Cllr Keith St Pier were re-elected as Chairman and Vice Chairman. Cllr Steve Stott stepped down, in the week before this meeting, after almost eight years, creating a vacancy in the North Ward.

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

During the year, two newsletters have been distributed: in June the Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting and follow up to the Parish Plan were accompanied by notice of the forthcoming changes to the refuse collection and associated village meeting. The second newsletter, in November, explained the proposals for refurbishment of the pavilion, invited comments and gave notice of open mornings held at the end of the month

Planning

In 2009-10 the Parish Council received and commented on 32 planning applications compared with 34 last year. East Herts Council granted 20 of these and refused five; four were withdrawn and decisions on a further three are awaited. Two appeals were made: one was allowed and one dismissed.

New regulations concerning safety of BT workers resulted in the erection of taller, nine metre, telephone poles at two locations in the Conservation area. The Parish Council became involved in the process as one of the locations was on Village Green, but in practice public and private landowners have limited influence on the location of such poles.

The Parish Council also takes note of the progress of developments which are subject to planning permission and liaises with EHC on enforcement issues. This includes so called Certificates of Lawfulness which householders can apply for to prove the existence of planning permission or that proposed works are within permitted development.

An East Herts Council Planning Information Session was attended at Wallfields, Hertford, on 28 September, by four Councillors and the Clerk.

Earlier in the year, the Council responded to the Welwyn Hatfield Core Strategy Consultation, raising concerns about neighbouring sites, particularly at Panshanger Aerodrome and Digswell. More recently, comments were submitted for the East Herts Draft Sustainability Scoping Appraisal Report Consultation, raising serious concerns about Tewin being designated within the "A1 (M) corridor" spatial area.

Following East Herts' Call for Sites, a briefing paper was prepared by Cllrs St Pier and Stott and circulated to Councillors in November in preparation for the Local Development Framework "Issues and Options Consultation", expected to take place during spring 2010.

Recently the Parish Council received confirmation from the Environment Agency that the proposed water abstraction borehole in Hertford Road would not be going ahead, but that "other options" are being investigated.

Footpaths

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.

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Clerk has liaised with the water company, Veolia, and with the householders on the problem of water running in Back Lane.

Pavilion

In line with the decision to proceed with the extensive refurbishment of the Pavilion, the Parish Council has budgeted for a precept of £24,800 for the financial year 2010-11. Although this appears to be a large increase over the £16,900 raised last year, the tax paid per household is very close to that of villages of similar size in East Herts.

The financial risk assessment procedure introduced in the previous financial year has been followed and quarterly internal audits by Councillors undertaken. On the advice of the external auditor the Fidelity Guarantee insurance cover has been raised to take account of the level of reserves and will be raised again to cover the expected income from grant funding for the pavilion. The model publication scheme. Under the Freedom of Information Act, was published on the website in 2009.

Highways

The Parish Council has continued to monitor highways maintenance work in liaison with Hertfordshire Highways and the Minutes of each Meeting include a schedule of works in progress.

The condition of the local roads has worsened as a result of the winter weather. HCC implemented a Winter Recovery Programme which included repair of damage in Upper Green Road and Orchard Road and work in the centre of the village and Hertford Road has been undertaken.

Following repeated flooding in the summer, Highways lowered the kerb and introduced a new gully in School Lane in November, with a view to conducting further works in the coming year. Work to alleviate flooding in Upper Green Road has also been considered and problems at Lousehole Bottom, in Hertford Road have been noted. 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.

Progress has been limited regarding the road safety issues in Upper Green Road. The Parish Council has continued to press for the creation of a rural pathway or footway between Godfries Close and the Tewin Garage site. A flashing speed sign would require further assessment by Highways; meanwhile, alternative static signs are being investigated. Signs for the Village Hall and Scout Hut are due to be installed.

Village Greens

The Parish Council is responsible 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. This is often because there is insufficient room for passing and

turning at the points of the Green, due to on-road parking.

In line with EHC's dog litter policy, dog owners are reminded 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 Parish Council has assumed total responsibility for Hundred Year Wood, following the closure of Tewin Society.

The telephone box opposite the Rose and Crown was on BT's list for removal last year. The Parish Council agreed to adopt it, as a feature in the Conservation Area. Contrary to an initial proposal to disconnect the electricity supply, this has been retained. Assistance with funding for restoration was provided by the local societies, Friends of Tewin and THACS.

Parish Plan

The remaining recommendations of the Parish Plan were considered. In May the council decided against setting up a Working Group to consider the development of a Village Design Statement. The report by the Further Analysis Group was discussed in July. It was concluded that issues such as parking and street lighting would continue to be monitored by the Parish Council rather than a separate group. Transport issues will also be dealt with by the Parish Council, as before.

To increase awareness of the 388 bus service, copies of the current timetable were circulated to all households and information on bus services was provided in the Parish News.

Cllr Stott attended a Car Share Initiative Seminar on 5 October and reference to the scheme was made in the Parish News. Cllr Lawson attended the HCC Transport Planning and Policy Workshop at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City on 28 October.

From May 2009 the Parish Council's nominated representatives on Tewin Charities continue to be Cllr David Howson, until 2012 and Roger Temple for a further four years until 2013.

In May 2009 the Parish Council's informal representatives were confirmed for the Memorial Hall, Parish Paths Partnership, Transport issues, Tewin Society, Tewin website committee, Locality Policing and liaison with the Sports Clubs.

Police

Contact has continued to be maintained with the local police. 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. She attended a Locality Police Meeting last May and the launch of the new Herts Policing Plan on 29 March.

According to the Police Community Support Officer, several burglaries and thefts have taken place in the village. Incidents of vandalism, including removal of the playground poles and netting, have also been reported. Parishioners are advised to be vigilant and report anything suspicious but it should be remembered that crime is still very low in this area.

East Herts Rural Parish Conference on 27 May was attended by Cllrs Doreen Lloyd and John Sheridan.

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 and Councillors.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to congratulate all those involved for their work on the production of the book, A History of Tewin by the People of Tewin, which was published in December.

Refuse & Recycling

A new refuse and recycling collection scheme was introduced in November, involving blue boxes for plastic bottles and alternate week collections. 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. A meeting to explain the changes, held on 2 July, was attended by over fifty parishioners

Allotments

Land adjacent to the Tewin Cowper School is rented by the Parish Council for use as allotments and leased to the Allotment Association. In May 2009 an additional piece of land was added due to increased demand: the rental agreement with the Landowner was extended for five years and the Allotment Tenancy Agreement for a further five years.

Playground

The Parish Council has continued to support sport and recreation in Tewin. The playground

continues to be well used. Weekly inspections and the annual risk inspection, by East Herts Council, have taken place successfully.

Datchworth Veterans football team continued to use the pitch on Upper Green for a third season. A Stevenage youth team has played there for two seasons and the football posts are available for use outside the main season. Two or three other teams have recently expressed interest in using the pitch. A circuit training class used the Upper Green in the summer

Pavilion

In July 2008, the Parish Council had agreed to 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 spent additional time, together with Cllr Bryan Evans, investigating the possible options, liaising with the sports clubs and continuing to develop proposals for the way forward. They have visited and liaised with numerous Councils and clubs in the surrounding area and further afield, and sought advice on refurbishing and running these facilities.

The building is in urgent need of renovation having had little work on the internal facilities for forty years. In making its decisions, the Parish Council has taken into consideration the fact that Pavilion should be open to all Tewin's Parishioners (as it is owned by the Parish Council and is on Village Green) and therefore the Pavilion should be refurbished to a standard suitable for Community uses, including disabled access.

Initially, it was hoped that grant funding would cover the majority of the proposed work. Applications totalling £198,000 have been made to Lafarge, Comma, People's Millions, Sport England, East Herts Council Partnership Investment Fund and Biffa.

By November 2009, a total of £37,000 had been secured, including £22,000 grant funding, £10,000 from the sports clubs and £5,000 from the Parish Council. The grants are dependent on the pavilion being used as a community facility, not just for the existing clubs. On the basis of quotations received, this was deemed insufficient to carry out the necessary works and further grant funding continues to be sought. The estimated cost of a full refurbishment is £115,000.

Another source of funding was then identified in the form of loans available from the Public Works Lending Board.

Having obtained the necessary drawings and quotations, a newsletter was circulated to all Tewin households and two open mornings were held at the pavilion at the end of November. These were well attended by interested parishioners, but only a small proportion of Tewin's households returned the comments form indicating an opinion.

At the December meeting, the Council voted to proceed with the full refurbishment. In January the Planning Application was submitted and approval has recently been granted.

In February, the Parish Council agreed to apply for approval to borrow £80,000 from the Public Works Lending Board at a fixed rate of

approximately 3.83% pa over 20 years, equivalent to £5,762 pa from the Precept, or £9.60 per household (Band D).

Further investigations are being made into the legal and tax implications, to find the most cost effective way for the pavilion to be run.

Acknowledgments

I would therefore like to thank the Clerk and Councillors for their hard work, help, and support during the year, in particular those who have been involved in the pavilion refurbishment project. Finally, on behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank Steve Stott for his contribution to the Council since 2002.

Kristina Lawson
Chairman
April 2010

Summary of Income and Expenditure for the Year 2009/10

Income	
Precept	16900.00
Grass Cutting (HCC, EHC)	3502.44
Parish Paths	1000.00
Interest	31.44
Allotment Rent	315.00
Electricity Meter	187.00
Donations/grants	14352.52
Tennis Club Donations	12249.00
Total	48350.40
Expenditure	
Administration	-10054.47
Grass Cutting (HCC,EHC)	- 3045.60
Parish Grass Cutting	- 2724.08
Parish Paths	- 1175.88
Playground	- 48.00
Contingency Fund (Shop & Pav Refurb)	- 1118.00
Allotments	- 837.74
Electricity	- 254.48
Xmas Tree	- 456.45
R&M	- 1393.79
Parish News	- 135.00
Pavilion Refurbishment	- 3005.31
Tennis Courts	-12246.00
Misc	- 3789.76
Total Expenditure	-40284.56
Total Income less Expenditure	8065.84

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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 current project to refurbish 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

COMMON RAGWORT (*Senecio Jacobaea*)

This is a common weed found throughout the British Isles however it is very toxic to horses and other livestock and can have potentially fatal consequences if ingested either in its green or dried state.

Under the Weeds Act 1959 the Secretary of State may serve an enforcement notice on the occupier of land on which injurious weeds are growing, requiring the occupier to take action to prevent the spread of injurious weeds. The Weeds Act specifies **five** injurious weeds: Common Ragwort, Spear Thistle, Creeping of Field Thistle, Broad Leaved Dock and Curled Dock.

By promoting good practice and good neighbourliness it is hoped that this weed can be controlled.

If you find you have it in your garden please put rubber gloves on and remove the plant and either place it in the black bin or burn it to prevent livestock eating it.

Fragments of root will remain in the ground so new growth will have to be monitored and removed year after year.

Search for more information on the identification and control of ragwort at www.defra.gov.uk

