

Tewin Parish Council

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Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting, 8th April 2013

Councillors

The seven councillors re-elected in May 2011 continued to represent Tewin's North and South Wards throughout the year. The eighth seat, in the North Ward, was filled by the co-option of Cllr Nick Moore at an Extraordinary meeting in July. Cllrs Kristina Lawson and Keith St Pier were re-elected as Chairman and Vice Chairman in May 2012.

Meetings

Ten ordinary meetings were held during the year, together with 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

The Parish Council's activities have been reported in the Parish News, more recently in the Tewin Magazine, and on the Tewin Village Website. A newsletter, containing the Chairman's annual report, was distributed following the Annual Parish Meeting.

Finance

The Parish Council has asked for a precept of £27,000 for the 2013-14 financial year, compared with £26,300 last year. Changes to the method of calculating parish council tax rates and tax benefits have been introduced and some councils will receive grants, to offset a loss of income and limit overall council tax increases.

Each year, Parish Councils submit their precept request, which is a specific total amount to be funded from the Council Tax. At its November 2012 meeting, according to the normal schedule, Tewin Parish Council agreed to increase its precept by £700 to £27,000 for 2013-2014, equivalent to a modest 2.7% or £0.86 annual increase for a Band D property.

Since then, the Parish Council has been told that from this year the Council Tax will be spread over fewer households because of changes to Council tax benefit payments. This made Tewin's precept increase appear to be 5.3%.

In January 2013 Parish Councils were offered grants to compensate for this loss of income and so that they could reduce their precept and thus lower the apparent percentage rise.

For some Parish Councils, this has even resulted in their precepts being lower than last year.

At the Parish Council meeting on 4th February 2013 the Parish Council unanimously agreed to keep the precept at the previously agreed level because:

- (a) we set the precept according to the correct procedures and to the correct timetable
- (b) we were not told about the changes until after the precept had been set
- (c) we never rely on offers of grant money until we have it in the bank
- (d) next year they may put a 2% cap on the precept increase without taking into account artificial precept reductions made this year
- (e) there is no guarantee that the grant will be available after this year
- (f) the changes were not clearly defined

In addition, Tewin received a sum of £2,366 as New Homes Bonus, which will be reserved for specific essential projects. Taylor Wimpey has also allocated £6,000 to be paid to Tewin in due course. Some funding is also expected from the so called Section 106 allocation as a result of the Sevenacres housing development.

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

An addendum to the Councillors' Code of Conduct was made in June to include Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Code of Conduct training was attended in October by the Clerk and Chairman.

Planning

During the year the Parish Council received and commented on 50 planning applications compared with 39 last year. EHC granted 21 of these and refused 16, six were withdrawn and decisions on seven are awaited. Of the 16 refusals nine went to appeal and four have been dismissed by the Inspector, two allowed and three are awaiting a decision.

Much of the Council's time has, therefore, been spent dealing with this large number of applications and other associated issues.

The Parish Council has continued to follow the progress of the new East Herts District Plan (formerly known as the Local Development

Framework - Core Strategy) which will define the planning strategy to 2031. The date for the public consultation had been revised to spring 2013 but has now been postponed again due to outstanding issues concerning schools and transport in the east of the district.

Parishes were advised to wait until the District Plan is in place before producing Neighbourhood Plans which must, in any case, be consistent with the District Plan. Funding for the production of these plans is very limited. However, funds from the new Community Infrastructure Levy will be greater for parish councils which already have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

A period of consultation on the new statement of community involvement for East Herts public consultations started on 21 March.

Taylor Wimpey began construction of the first eighteen houses on the Sevenacres site. Following the public exhibition in February 2013, a new planning application was submitted for an additional ten houses, the demolition of Sevenacres house and some minor changes to the original eighteen. The plans were displayed in the Pavilion in May and approved in October. Councillors and the Clerk attended the Open Day at Sevenacres show house in October. Regular contact continues to be maintained with Taylor Wimpey during the construction period.

The Parish Council has continued to monitor plans for the redevelopment of the former garage site in Upper Green Road and is encouraging a solution for housing that will be in-keeping with neighbouring properties.

The Parish Council forwarded comments to the Riversmead housing association following the public exhibition of plans for the garage site and other parcels of land off Grass Warren early in 2012. Further comments were made on the planning application in May. A site meeting was held in August with representatives of Riversmead and East Herts Council. To improve access to both new and existing properties, the Parish Council suggested removing part of the grassed area in front of the bungalows. The revised plans were approved in February, with conditions.

Assistance was given to the Memorial Hall Management Committee with the application for the scout hut extension and recladding.

A CPRE Planning Training Day was attended by Cllr Lloyd in November. Meetings of East

Herts Association of Parish and Town Councils (EHAPTC) with EHC planning have also been attended.

Highways and Parish Paths

Herts County Council reorganised highway maintenance in autumn 2012 and meetings have taken place with the new representatives to learn about the new system and discuss outstanding works in the Parish.

The Parish Council continued to raise the issue of the poor condition of Upper Green Road and Orchard Road. Resurfacing of the full length of the road between Back Lane and Desborough Drive, was completed in early April.

Several complaints have been reported about parking problems in Cannons Meadow and particularly on the northern side of Lower Green. The Parish Council has liaised with the police, Tewin Cowper School and residents to discourage parking which is inconsiderate to other householders, or causes obstructions or potential hazards to pedestrians and other road users.

The Council is pursuing plans to provide safe pedestrian access along the roadside between Godfries Close and Upper Green. Funding for the paths north of Godfries Close and across Maypond Green is being sought from the Section 106 allocation and Highways have agreed to undertake feasibility work this year to ascertain the viability and likely cost of the project.

The Parish Council continues to take care of parish paths. A grant application has been made for improvements to the footpath alongside Hundred Year Wood, at the back of Upper Green. In addition to regular monitoring, the Parish Council undertakes an Annual Risk Assessment of land and property which comes under its care.

The persistent flooding of Hertford Road, at Lousehole Bottom, is being investigated with HCC and landowners.

A directional sign for Tewin Stores has been requested at the junction with Churchfield Road and the B1000. The Parish Council is also investigating whether the new 40mph limit can be extended to include this junction.

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.

Apart from the effects of additional heavy traffic due to the construction work, damage has been caused to both the Upper and Lower Greens by heavy vehicles manoeuvring or avoiding parked vehicles. A source of funds for the work on Lower Green is being investigated. When the cause of such damage is known, efforts are made to recoup the cost of repairs.

Transport

The Parish Council continues to monitor any proposed changes to bus services that could affect Tewin residents. The schedule for the 388 was changed without warning, in October. The current timetable can be accessed via the Intalink website. The HCC Passenger Transport Unit and the bus company were notified of several complaints from parishioners regarding the irregularity of the service.

Comments on the Draft Rural Transport Plan, within the new HCC Local Transport Plan were submitted in May.

Representatives of outside bodies

From May 2012 the Parish Council's nominated trustees, for Tewin Charities, continue to be Cllr David Howson until 2013 and Roger Temple for a further four years until 2016.

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.

Community activities

The Parish Council has legal responsibility for the organisation 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 Parish Councillors. The Parish Council also supports the Senior Citizens' Lunch.

Support and funding was provided for the first issue of the Tewin Magazine, as successor to the Parish News, for distribution to all households. The Parish Council also provided a grant to St Peter's Church for cleaning and repair of the War Memorial.

A group, initiated by Friends of Tewin and with the support of the Parish Council, was set up in 2011 to look after the Upper Green Pond. The Woodland Trust provided saplings to create a hedgerow at the back of Upper Green and an oak tree to commemorate the Queen's

Diamond Jubilee and the planting took place in November and March.

The Council has continued to monitor issues concerning the River Mimram.

Sport and recreation

The Parish Council continues to provide support for sport and recreation in Tewin. The most recent example is the introduction of children's football on Saturday mornings, on Upper Green. Football posts remain in place at other times for use by casual players.

Tewin residents are reminded that occasional use of the 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 since autumn 2010, run by Tewin Pavilion Community Interest Company (CIC). The Parish Council retains responsibility for health and safety issues and, at present, for maintenance.

Provision for easier disabled parking for visitors to the Upper Green and Pavilion is being explored.

Acknowledgements

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

Kristina Lawson
April 2013

Tewin Parish Council
Summary of Income and Expenditure for the Year 2012/2013

	£
<i>Income</i>	
Precept	26300
Grass Cutting (HCC, EHC, Riversmead)	3795
Interest	53
Allotment Rent	315
New Homes Bonus *see below	2366
Other Income incl Donations (War Memorial repairs, xmas tree & repairs to Upper Green verge)	1269
Total	34098
<i>Expenditure</i>	
Administration	12221
Grass Cutting (HCC,EHC, Riversmead)	3766
Parish Grass Cutting	3488
Parish Paths	1144
Playground Inspection	47
Contingency Fund (Maypond Green tree removal, Tewin Magazine donation)	456
Allotments	522
Electricity (Lower Green)	30
Xmas Tree	613
R&M (School Lane bench, War Memorial, repairs to Upper Green)	1316
Parish News	135
Pavilion (Heater Guards, Water Softener, tables)	2030
Loan Repayment	5834
Total Expenditure	31601
Total Income less expenditure	+2497

* It is currently planned to put the New Homes Bonus of £2366 received in 2012-13 towards the provision of disabled parking at the Upper Green car park.

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Superfast Broadband

The Parish Council are supporting Herts County Council's campaign to bring superfast broadband to the northern part of Tewin.

If you would like to support this campaign please go:

- 1. online to www.superfastforherts.org & register your support for free or**
- 2. Call 0300 123 4040** (Charges are the same as to standard landline numbers beginning 01 and 02.)

This registration helps identify the level of potential demand for improved broadband in northern Tewin therefore proving it is a commercially viable project for suppliers to invest in raising the broadband speed. There is no obligation to subscribe to the service if it becomes available.

Tewin Parish Council is not responsible for the content of www.superfastforherts.org website or to any other websites that it may link to.

Recycling

In the autumn of 2013 East Herts Council will be improving the recycling collections with the addition of a new wheeled bin for mixed recyclables to complement the existing brown and black bins.

The new bin will be a black wheeled bin with a blue lid for: mixed glass, cans, plastics, cardboard, cartons (used for juices, milks and soups) and tin foil. There will also be an option for a "paper tray" which will sit inside the bin so you don't have to use kerbside box if you don't want to.

This means there will be more space in your brown bin for food waste and garden waste. Both the brown and black bin can still be used for food waste, giving you a weekly collection.

Only paper needs to be kept separate so no more sorting of the other materials.

Recyclables will be easier to wheel to your kerbside than several full kerbside boxes

These details are available on www.easthertscouncil.gov.uk and further information will be sent to everyone before the changes happen later in the year.

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In Hertfordshire, NHS Direct has been replaced by NHS 111, and Tewin Parish Council has been provided with the following handout.

NHS “111”

You think you need A&E. But you're not sure. There's now 111 number to call.

111 is an NHS telephone number that makes it easier for you to access local health services. If you live in or are visiting Hertfordshire, you can call 111 when you need medical help fast, but it's not a 999 emergency.

You will be assessed, given advice and directed straight away to the local service that can help you best. That could be a late opening pharmacist, community nurse, an out of hours GP, a minor injuries unit, an urgent care centre or an A&E department.

You can ring the 111 number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Calls from landlines and mobile phones are free.

You should use the NHS 111 service if:

- you need medical help fast, but it's not a 999 emergency
- you think you need to go to A&E or another NHS urgent care service
- you don't know who to call for medical help or you don't have a GP to call, or
- you require health information or reassurance about what to do next.

For less urgent health needs, you should still contact your GP or local pharmacist in the usual way.

For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, continue to call 999.

You can find out more at www.nhs.uk/111

News Update

Dr Keith Hodge is a GP in Hertfordshire and has been closely involved in the development of NHS 111 in Hertfordshire. Dr Hodge said, “The 111 service has received some poor publicity in the national media recently. This is a great shame as the Hertfordshire service that launched in October 2012 is working very well and has not encountered the problems so vividly described elsewhere. The local service is robust, well established and coping in a timely manner with all the demands placed upon it. I would like to take this opportunity to assure local people that 111 in Hertfordshire remains the number of choice for urgent and out of hours medical care”.