

Tewin Parish Council

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Chairman's Report 2014-15

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The hot topic of the moment is the HCC proposal to decimate the bus services through Tewin. Obviously for most of us, the car is always there, and we give no thought to the far off day when that is no longer an option. But we are doing our best for those parishioners for whom the bus service is an essential part of their daily lives in getting to work or to medical services etc. The consultation is now closed, but as a result of the excellent response to the petition, we will have the opportunity to make a further presentation directly to the relevant HCC committee.

Another source of major concern to parishioners is the state of various verges in the village after the depredation of heavy construction traffic.

We are in the process of getting the corner of Lower Green by the Memorial Hall covered in cobbles so that larger vehicles can cut the corner without making a mess.

When the building work is complete on the north side of Lower Green we will set about repairing the verge along here.

We are still pressing the Riversmead contractors to repair the verges at the entrance to Grass Warren.

We have now entered the financial year 2015-16 so we should see the County Council install the pathway from Godfries Close to Upper Green, which should sort out the mess on Maypond Green. We should also finally see Highways sort out the problem that is causing the hole on Lower Green.

East Herts District Council continue their methodical progress towards a new District Plan. They are only too aware that other local authorities have had their new plans thrown out by the inspector because they have failed to take account of the constant stream of new legislation from central government. It is a moving target which is almost impossible to keep up with.

EHDC are still proposing that Tewin will drop into the Group 2 category, limiting new housing to only infill sites within the existing village boundary. The only objections to the consultation last year were from various landowners who had put forward sites for development around the boundary of the village.

Until a new District Plan is approved Tewin has some protection, in that most of the immediately available land within the village boundary has already been developed and land outside the village boundary is Green Belt.

Even without new development, there will still be construction traffic as houses are sold, and some, particularly in Tewin Wood, are the subject of large scale improvement.

The Parish Council precept for 2015-16 is £28500.

On behalf of the Parish, I thank the Clerk and the other Councillors for their work throughout the year. Thanks also to our District and County Councillors, and our local MP, Sir Oliver Heald, for their assistance on various topics.

Finally, we get comments from parishioners and visitors alike, that we are lucky to live in such a nice village with such a rich community spirit. Please join in and help us keep it that way, even if it is just for two hours once a year manning a stall at the fete or picking up any litter that you see in the road outside your house.

New netting and screening for the Upper Green tennis courts.

For many years, the eastern side of the tennis courts at Upper Green was screened by a line of tall conifers.

The original planning application for building houses on Sevenacres showed that these conifers would be removed, but this was subsequently changed to retain them. During the building work, a couple of sections of the conifers died. This was probably an adverse reaction to something in excavated soil that was piled alongside them. It also became apparent that some of the conifers were unacceptably close to the new houses – in getting the plans changed to retain the conifers, everybody had either overlooked or ignored the fact that the houses should have been moved further away from the boundary.

Eventually the conifers were removed leaving no mutual screening between the houses and the tennis courts. We believe that there is still an outstanding planning condition to plant a hornbeam hedge behind the fence, but of course this will not be any higher than the fence, and so will not provide any extra screening.

The Parish Council did look at a proposal to plant a line of pleached hornbeams (a tall narrow hedge on bare trunks) between the courts and the fence, but the County Council would not let us compromise the width of the Right of Way which runs along here.

The Parish Council is now preparing to fund a request from the Tennis Club to erect a screen on the eastern netting of the courts. This will be the same sort of material as currently around the practice court. It will cover the top 2 metres of the 3.6 metre high netting. To cope with windy conditions, the metal uprights will need to be strengthened, and we will take the opportunity to renew the wire netting.

Separately, the adjacent landowner replaced vegetation to the south of the tennis courts with a brick wall. Some hedging has now been planted to hide the wall by the Tennis Club with the help of a donation from Friends of Tewin, but at certain times of the day, players are still being blinded by having to look directly towards the sun. The Tennis Club has also requested that new 3.6m netting plus screening is erected on the southern aspect (along as far as the practice court).

The total cost of this to the Council will be just over £5000.