

Tewin Parish Council

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Dear Parishioners,

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

At the Annual Parish Council meeting on 8th May 2006 Cllr K.Lawson was unanimously elected as Chairman and Cllr K St Pier was unanimously elected as Vice Chairman for a further year.

TEWIN PARISH COUNCIL YEAR END ACCOUNTS

In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulation the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2006 will be available for inspection from 2nd June until 29th June by appointment with the Clerk.

Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting, 3 April 2006

During the past year, two of the longest serving Councillors, Steve Glew and Chris Pool, resigned after more than five years and six years respectively and their places were filled, by co-option, by Bryan Evans and Doreen Lloyd.

The Parish Council expressed condolences to the family of (former) District Councillor Tim Robertson who sadly died in July. Following a by-election, Linda Haysey was elected to represent Hertford Rural South, which includes Tewin South Ward.

The Parish Council has continued to report its activities in the Parish News, and on the Tewin Village Website and three newsletters have been circulated, most recently on the issues of the East Herts Local Plan and East of England Plan.

As a reminder to residents in the 'Conservation Area', around Lower Green, Hertford Road and the southern part of Upper Green Road, of the special nature of this part of the parish, preparations have been made to circulate the Character Statement document (first published in 1990) and to include this information on the website.

During the year, 27 Planning Applications have been examined and commented on, compared with 39 the previous year. EHDC granted 21 of these and refused two; one was withdrawn and decisions on the remaining three are awaited. The Parish Council is always willing to listen to views on applications before making its own comments, but EHDC will make the final decision.

As usual, maintenance of parish paths, grass cutting, tree pruning, and general repairs of Council property have continued. Some additional trees have been planted in Hundred Year Wood, following recommendations from the earlier Woodland Management Survey. Through a recommendation from the Parish Paths officer an Easy Access route for pedestrians has been introduced starting from the footpath by the Rose and Crown.

The precept for the coming financial year (2006-2007) will rise by 4.4%; insurance costs are responsible for the majority of the increase.

The Parish Council has continued to monitor items of highways maintenance work, which are the responsibility of Herts County Council. Unfortunately, further flooding problems have occurred in School Lane, following the major works in 2004. Action has recently been taken to lower the gullies to prevent flood water flowing across the road into residents' driveways.

Remedial works are also under consideration at the junction of Margery Lane and Churchfield Road, where flooding has been a problem for many years and the gullies become blocked with silt. Any other works which require attention will be noted, as usual, during the Annual Risk Assessment in April/May.

The Parish Council has always taken pride in its work in the repair and protection of the grassed areas, both Village Greens and roadside verges, for the benefit of those who choose to live in Tewin and enjoy its rural character. It still a disappointment, therefore, to see that some residents and visitors carelessly drive over and park on the grass.

The County Council has recently issued a reminder that it is illegal to allow gravel from driveways to spill out onto the Highway. Parishioners are advised, therefore, that HCC could consider legal action if gravel caused a persistent danger to traffic or blockages in the drains.

Illegal parking on pavements, causing an obstruction to pedestrians, is another issue to which the County Council has drawn attention in the new Local Transport Plan. The law is likely to be more rigorously enforced from now on.

Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, local councils have new powers to deal with abandoned and nuisance vehicles, litter, flyposting, graffiti and dog offences. We hope that there will not be any need for the Parish Council to use these powers!

Residents have sought help from the Parish Council about how to deal with an increasing rabbit population invading their gardens. Although the Parish Council has limited powers to deal with these issues, information about the current methods of pest control, recommended by Defra, and suitable plants to deter rabbits, has been forwarded to the householders.

The creation of a Parish Plan is a means for a village to describe in one document its collective views and aspirations for the future of the community. Encouraged by an initiative from Tewin Society, the Parish Council agreed to hold a joint meeting in September to discuss the purpose of Parish Plans and consider creating one for Tewin. Although the response was initially a little sceptical, Tewin's Parish Plan Steering Committee was set up in February. It will operate independently but has been enthusiastically endorsed by the Parish Council.

As usual, the Parish Council has been asked to comment on several local policy documents during the year.

We have consistently maintained an objection to Tewin becoming a Category 1 Village under the East Herts Local Plan. Comments were invited on a list of eight potential building sites, which had not been included in the original draft plan, known as 'Omission Sites'. The Parish Council held an extraordinary meeting in August to discuss this and the East Herts Local Plan Review.

The Inquiry into the East Herts Local Plan was held in January. Cllrs St Pier and Stott attended the Inquiry as observers and the Inspector is due to report in the summer of 2007.

The Local Transport Plan for 2006/7 – 2010/11 was published on 31 March. Comments were made on three occasions to the separate documents which accompany the plan and a meeting prior to the final consultation was attended by Cllr Lawson in January.

We are pleased to note that usage of the 388 Bus Service has increased since the timetable changed last year and the increase has been maintained. The issue of free travel passes in March proved very popular with the over 60s.

The seat in the bus shelter opposite the Rose & Crown has been reinstated and the bus shelter was expertly painted by John Sheridan of Friends of Tewin.

Representation on the 'outside bodies' has been maintained, with Members of the Council participating in the Tewin Memorial Hall Committee and the Tewin Website Committee.

Former Councillor John Burton remains the Council-nominated Governor of Tewin School for a short while until the new instrument of government comes into force. Cllr David Howson and former Councillor Roger Temple are still the Council's nominated Tewin Charities Trustees.

As no volunteers were able to devote sufficient time to completion of the detailed application forms, Tewin was not able to enter the Village of the Year Competition. The Parish Council has continued its support for the village carol service.

The mobile police station, operated by Hertfordshire Constabulary, visits Tewin on the first Wednesday of every month. Residents are welcome to discuss local policing issues. Cllr Howson has attended the new Locality Policing Panel meetings.

Although the number of reports of vandalism has reduced, one serious incident this year has involved the theft of the telephone from the kiosk outside the Rose and Crown and damage has occurred to the flag pole rope. The Parish Council is liaising with BT and EHDC to ensure that the telephone will be replaced as soon as possible.

The Parish Council continues to encourage sport and recreation in Tewin. Discussions have been held with the sports clubs over possible improvements to the facilities at the Pavilion.

Following the Play Audit undertaken the previous year, which had shown that there was significant demand for play facilities for small children, and in line with the demands of a petition presented to the Council in April 2002, the Council continued to investigate possible sites. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Governors of Tewin School, and neighbouring residents, to consider whether a site in the school grounds could be feasible.

Having circulated a Youth Club Questionnaire last year, and boosted by the new enthusiasm of Cllr Bryan Evans, the Council held a Drop in Day for 10-19 year olds in collaboration with Datchworth Parish Council, in Datchworth Village Hall in December. The event proved very successful, with 15 clubs and over 60 children and young people attending.

As a result, two further events have since been held, to encourage youngsters to participate in new activities: organized by the Lea Valley Shooting Club and the Barn Theatre. We hope to continue with more successful events.

Finally, I would like to thank the Clerk and Councillors for the hard work, help, and support they have given throughout the year.

Kristina Lawson

April 2006