

Tewin Parish Council

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NEWSLETTER

June 2007

The same eight councillors have continued to serve on the Parish Council throughout the past year. It is with regret that the deaths were announced of two former Councillors and Chairmen from the 1970s and 80s, Alan Lawson and Christine Graves.

In May 2007 all the Councillors had agreed to stand for election and, there being no other nominations, were elected unopposed as of 3rd May. Councillors Evans, Hill, St Pier and Stott now represent the North Ward, and Cllrs Howe, Howson, Lawson and Lloyd hold the seats in Tewin South. At the Parish Council meeting on 14th May they all signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and must complete a Register of Interests within 28 days.

The Parish Council is pleased to confirm that at the Annual Parish Council meeting on 14th May 2007 the Parish Council unanimously agreed to elect Cllr K Lawson as Chairman and Cllr K St Pier as 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. Three newsletters were also circulated during the year. The first of these reminded 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 and consisted of the '*Conservation Area Character Statement*' (first published in 1990) and planning guidelines for Conservation Areas.

Throughout the year, the Parish Council received copies of Planning Applications relevant to Tewin Parish, for discussion and comment. During the year, 31 of these have been examined and commented on, compared with 27 the previous year. East Herts Council granted 20 of these and refused three; one was withdrawn and decisions on seven are awaited. Last April, the Parish Council began notifying residents closest to the planning application of the date of the meeting at which the application would be discussed, so that neighbours' views could be taken into account. This has been a significant improvement, according to feedback from parishioners.

Maintenance of parish paths, grass cutting, tree pruning, and general repairs of Council property have continued. Cllr St Pier has worked with the Parish Paths officer on improvements to the surface and general accessibility of rights of way in the Parish. Cllr Hill arranged for the repair and re-setting of Clibbons post at its site on Bramfield Road.

The precept for the financial year 2007-08 will rise from £14,200 to £15,700. The increase is due to planned expenditure on three specific items: the Parish Plan, the installation of an electricity supply and meter box on Lower Green and the Parish Council's contribution to the resurfacing of the St Peter's Church drive.

The Parish Council has continued to monitor items of highways maintenance work, which are the responsibility of Herts County Council. It was frustrating for all concerned to find that in spite of the major works in 2004, and further remedial work in 2006, flooding continued to occur in School Lane.

Flooding at the junction of Margery Lane and Churchfield Road has also been a problem for many years. Following one of many discussions with Highways, the Parish Council arranged for small drainage channels to be cut into the ditches along Margery Lane. Although an improvement, this has not solved the problem in Churchfield Road. Discussions are continuing with Highways as to how the water can be drained off the road into the field without causing additional problems.

The Parish Council is responsible for the repair and protection of the grassed areas, both Village Greens and roadside verges, for the benefit of those who enjoy Tewin's rural character. Damage to these grassed areas,

caused by careless driving and parking, creates additional expenditure. Parking on pavements, is a hazard, which has become more evident in some parts of the Parish.

Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, local councils have new powers to deal with abandoned and nuisance vehicles (including those untaxed and illegally parked), litter, flyposting, graffiti and dog offences. Nevertheless, these problems can prove to be difficult to deal with and persistent. The Parish Council is trying to work with East Herts Council to minimize their impact. Fly-tipping has also become a major problem of late, and measures are being taken to identify the culprits.

The Parish Council has continued to provide support for the Parish Plan, by administering the grant and giving supplementary funding, following the establishment of the Parish Plan Steering Committee in February 2006. A copy of the Constitution of the Steering Committee was received by the Parish Council in June and regular reports have been presented on the progress of the questionnaire.

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

The recommendations in the Inspector's Report to the East Herts Local Plan are due to be adopted in April 2007. The Parish Council has raised concerns with East Herts Council about the increasing 'urbanization' of Tewin Wood and a written reply is awaited.

Cllr Stott organized the response to the new East Herts Council Planning Policy documents and the modified East of England Plan.

A further change to the 388 bus service was implemented in September, following the re-routing of the 724 service. Cllr Lawson attended a meeting with HCC to discuss the proposed changes and their impact on Tewin residents. Usage of the bus service has remained strong and is particularly popular amongst the over 60s who are entitled to free travel passes.

Members of the Council have continued to be represented on 'outside bodies' including the Tewin Memorial Hall Committee and the Tewin Website Committee.

- Former Councillor John Burton ceased to be the Council-nominated Governor of Tewin School when the new instrument of government came into force and the Parish Council would like to thank him for being our representative. Cllr David Howson and former Councillor Roger Temple remain the Council's nominated Tewin Charities Trustees.

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 Lloyd is now the representative who attends the Locality Policing Panel meetings.

The Parish Council continued its support for the village Christmas tree and made a contribution towards the Senior Citizens lunch.

The Council was pleased that East Herts Council was able to introduce can and glass recycling, in September. Collection of garden waste is also anticipated.

The Parish Council continues to encourage sport and recreation in Tewin. Further discussions have been held with the sports clubs over planned renovation and improvements to the facilities at the Pavilion, and potential sources of funding. Last summer Tewin Cowper School used Upper Green for their sports day, with approval from the Parish Council.

The Play Audit, undertaken in 2004, had shown that there was significant demand for play facilities for small children in Tewin. In line with the demands of a petition presented to the Council in April 2002, possible sites were investigated.

After discussions with the Governors of Tewin School, and hearing the views of neighbouring residents, the Parish Council concluded in May that it was not feasible to use a site in the school grounds to provide public play facilities. It was decided, at the same meeting, to look for a site at Upper Green – where recreational

facilities are already available for adults and where a playground had been in existence until 1996 – and to examine funding options.

Before the summer break, an application was made to Awards for All (Big Lottery) and Friends of Tewin applied for a grant to Herts Community Foundation (Local Network Fund) to provide additional play equipment. Both applications were subsequently successful.

The suitability of the site was confirmed with East Herts Council's playground inspector, and Hertfordshire County Council's Legal Department, before a planning application was submitted. Attention was drawn, by local residents, to the presence of bee orchids on parts of Upper Green and the proximity to nesting sites of Great Crested Newts in neighbouring ponds.

Planning permission for the playground was granted, subject to eleven separate conditions. Construction of the playground has to take place to take account of the breeding season of newts. The Herts Ecology Officer presided over relocation of a bee-orchid that was growing on the playground site.

It is hoped that areas of the Green – such as some parts not currently used as sports pitches – can be managed in a way that encourages these indigenous species to flourish and the Green can continue to be managed as an open space used for recreation.

The playground is now complete and open for use. The Parish Council hopes that everybody (aged 0-8) enjoys using it and would appreciate it if consideration could be given to the immediate neighbours and other users of Upper Green.

The terms of use of the playground are displayed on a temporary sign on the playground fence. The official sign, incorporating the Big Lottery and Local Network Fund logos, will be put up in time for the official opening at the Family Open on Upper Green on July 15th 2007.

The playground will be inspected regularly, in line with the required risk assessment procedure, but if the children in your care experience any difficulties when using the playground, please contact the Clerk whose telephone number is displayed on the sign. Councillors' contact details are also provided on the notice board at Upper Green.

At the time of writing, the future of the village shop and Post Office appears to be very uncertain. The Clerk has received many phone calls from concerned parishioners and the Parish Council has agreed to monitor the situation. Thanks are given to Jo and John Pilbeam for their time spent running the shop and Post Office.

A date of Monday June 25th at 7.30pm at Tewin Memorial Hall has been set for a village meeting to discuss future options for a village shop.

The Welwyn practice will deliver medicines to the Rose & Crown on Tuesdays and Thursdays and these can be collected whenever the pub is open.

At the end of an exceptionally busy year, I would like to thank the Clerk and Councillors for the hard work, help, and support they have given throughout the year.

The information above is based on the Chairman's report for 2006-07, as presented at the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th April 2007, with additional paragraphs on the outcome of the Election, the completion of the playground and the village shop.