



# WEEDON BEC PARISH COUNCIL



## ANNUAL REPORT

Year Ending  
31st March 2013



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Following last year's election process, the Parish Council has operated with a full contingent of councillors, all of whom brought valuable experience to help ensure that your Parish Council has continued to operate at the highest level for Weedon Bec. I would like to thank all councillors for their contributions during the past year, giving freely a considerable amount of their time which has resulted in a positive influence within the village. I would also like to thank our clerk, Sue Halkett, whose experience and knowledge is an asset to the village.

This past year we have maintained our Quality Council Status. We have worked with the residents of Calvary Fields and the police to help improve the noise and disturbance caused by lorries parking inconsiderately in this area. We have worked with the relevant authorities to try and alleviate the problems caused by the excessive rain we had during the past year. We participated and were placed in the Best village Competition and hope to do even better this year.

It has been an exceptional year with all groups coming together and to help make the village a real community, particularly the Diamond Jubilee events which involved all age groups. Residents and Councillors were heavily involved in the organisation of the Jubilee celebrations, which was a huge success from start to finish, providing a very memorable weekend for the residents of Weedon Bec, despite some rather inclement weather at times. All rounded off by an amazing firework display funded by the Parish Council. The dedication ceremony for Jubilee Field as a Queen Elizabeth II – Field in Trust field was also carried out during the Diamond Jubilee celebration weekend. This campaign was part of the Queens Jubilee Year legacy to protect outdoor recreational spaces in communities all across the country as a permanent living legacy of this great event.

I would also like to thank all residents who are involved with the variety of clubs in our community and the events they have run throughout the year. More information can be found for all events on the village website.

We have worked hard and negotiated well to ensure that the Precept for the village did not increase for the forthcoming year (apart from the grant awarded to us).

Whilst looking back at our achievements this past year, I would also like to look forward. Here are some goals I would like to set the Parish Council for this forthcoming year. These are:

- Wider knowledge within the community of what the Parish Council does and a higher profile of its councillors to ensure better communications and stronger relationships with the residents and the groups in our village.
- Improved changing rooms at Jubilee Fields
- Investigate further parking under the arches at Church Street to help improve congestion in that area.
- Improving the facilities offered for allotment holders following the purchase of the Riverside allotments.
- Working towards keeping our village a village whilst moving with the times

Stuart Jacks

Chairman, Weedon Bec Parish Council

### PARISH COUNCILLOR INFORMATION (as at 31 March, 2013)

**Chairman:** Mr Stuart Jacks - 01327 341811 (jacks487@btinternet.com)

**Vice Chairman:** Mrs Ginette Pilkington - 01327 340268 (gpilks@gmail.com)

**Councillors:** Mr Neil Anthony (n\_anthony@hotmail.co.uk)

Ms Sue Butler (suebutler@hotmail.com)

Mr David Charnock (mail@davidcharnock.co.uk)

Mr Stephen Corson (stephencorson@metronet.co.uk)

Miss Libby Hart (libbyhart@btinternet.com)

Mr Trevor Hutchinson (trevorhut@btinternet.com)

Mr James Mantz (james.mantz2009@btinternet.com)

Mrs Carolyn Matthews (carolyn.matthews2@btinternet.com)

Mr Barry Pilkington (bpilks492@gmail.com)

Mrs Ann Ranshaw (ann@nbdoha.co.uk)

Mrs Corrine Shortland (cozshortie@hotmail.com)

All Councillors are contactable through the Clerk

**Clerk:** Mrs Susan Halkett, 16, St Mary's Way, Weedon Bec, NN7 4QL

**Tel:** 01327 341057 **Email:** weedonbecpc@btinternet.com

### The Parish Council is responsible for:

Street lighting - Grass cutting (verges and playing fields) - Bus Shelters - Playing field maintenance and play equipment (Jubilee Field, Croft Way playing field, Cavalry Fields play area and Regency Close play area) - Village Gateways, Benches and seats around the village - Litter bins / dog bins - Two Allotments sites (Church Street and Riverside Drive) - Weedon Bec Cemetery

**Quality Council:** Weedon Bec Parish Council is a Quality Council. This means we are representative of and actively involve all parts of our community. We are also;

- Effectively and properly managed with members upholding high standards of conduct
- Work closely with voluntary and community groups, articulating their needs through effective communication
- Committed to ongoing training and development
- Work in partnership with other local authorities and agencies to get the best deal in service delivery for the local community.

The Village Website is at [www.weedonbec-village.co.uk](http://www.weedonbec-village.co.uk).

This website is updated regularly and contains information on the Council, its Councillors as well as all groups and activities in the community. It is always good to hear comments, whether positive or negative, about the work we undertake in the village. We cannot be everywhere and rely on residents informing us of things that require attention and even making suggestions for improvements. We cannot operate without this feedback and are extremely grateful to those residents who take the time to assist us in our work.

*Some items contained in this report were presented at the Annual Parish Meeting which was held on Tuesday 16th April 2013. A summary of the draft minutes of this meeting are available on request.*

**THE PARISH COUNCIL** has one committee and six task groups. These consist of:

**Planning Committee:** Ann Ranshaw, Sue Butler, Steve Corson, David Charnock, Trevor Hutchinson, Jim Mantz,

Carolyn Matthews, Corrine Shortland

**Environment Task Group (incorporating Community Liaison):** Sue Butler, Neil Anthony, David Charnock, Barry, Pilkington, Ginette Pilkington.

**Playing Fields Task Group:** Corrine Shortland, Sue Butler, Neil Anthony, Trevor Hutchinson, Barry, Pilkington

**Jubilee Field Regeneration Group:** Trevor Hutchinson, Neil Anthony, Steve Corson, Barry Pilkington

**Cemetery & Allotments Task Group:** Ginette Pilkington, Steve Corson, Libby Hart, Jim Mantz

**Policy & Asset Review Group (PAARG) Task Group.** Libby Hart, Ginette Pilkington, Sue Halkett

**Finance & General Purpose Task Group:** Stuart Jacks and Sue Halkett, (Chairman of Groups - Ann Ranshaw, Sue Butler, Corrine Shortland, Trevor Hutchinson, Ginette Pilkington, Libby Hart)

The Planning Committee is the only group that has delegated powers to respond to planning applications and other planning matters on behalf of the Parish Council.

#### **What the Council has been up to during 2012/13**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 2012/13 has been busier than ever as people have taken advantage of the government's Localism legislation which makes it easier to submit planning applications. Two major concerns have been the application to build 30 houses on open country alongside Lovers Lane at the junction of Croft Way and West Street and the Tesco development at the Globe. Both still rumble on. The Parish Council is opposing both applications and we are aware that many local residents share this view. It seems that the only way we can prevent or at least ameliorate opportunist applications for large housing developments is to draw up our own Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish. In order to do this we need your help as the rules require that local residents are involved and consulted throughout the process. It could take a couple of years to get a plan together but if you are interested in the future shape of your village and can spare us some time we would very much like to hear from you. We have to accept that Weedon probably qualifies as what the government calls a 'sustainable' village because we have shops, services and good transport links - we may well be asked to absorb more housing.....all the more reason to get involved in planning our neighbourhood so that our present services are improved and not overwhelmed by excessive development.

#### **ENVIRONMENT (incorporating Community Liaison)**

**Environment:** Approx 35 new street light fittings were replaced that use energy efficient light bulbs in March/April 2012. This is the start of a move towards replacing more of the older type Mercury fittings. The invoice for the village's electric supply to our lampposts is approx £7,000 per annum. Winstanley Landscapes retained the verges grass cutting contract and Yates Landscapes retained the maintenance contract for the village. The old finger post was repainted and realigned at Queen Street and four new notice board were erected in the village.

**Community Liaison:** The website has been re-launched and is now located at [www.weedonbec-village.co.uk](http://www.weedonbec-village.co.uk). Cllr Mantz has joined PCSO Kev Thompson to walk round the village to meet and greet residents and the Speedwatch programme is again up and running.

**PLAYING FIELDS:** Dog fouling was once again a major issue. The Council invested in a couple of dog bag bins for Croft Way and Jubilee playing fields and more dog fouling signs, especially for Jubilee Field. Tender submissions were received for the playing fields grass cutting contract which was subsequently awarded to Winstanley Landscapes. The Sport England grant of £50,000 to improve the drainage underneath Jubilee Field and to upgrade the pitch has been undergoing surveys, assessments and tender bids. The work will start shortly.

#### **CEMETERY & ALLOTMENTS**

**Cemetery:** The cemetery has been very well maintained over the past year and in light of the additional work undertaken the maintenance contract hours were increased in July 2012 with good effect. There were some issues with the cemetery grass cutting contract but with careful monitoring these appear to have been resolved. This contract is due to be reviewed this year. Graffiti has appeared on the lych gates twice in the last year, on both occasions has been re-painted.

**Allotments:** It has been a challenging year on both allotment sites. After lengthy negotiations and reams of paperwork the Riverside site was finally purchased from Daventry District Council and both sites are now owned and managed by WBPC. Measuring the allotment plots on both sites revealed significant differences in the rental cost in relation to the size of plot. In order to make the pricing structure fair for everyone, the average price was calculated and rounded up to the nearest pence per square metre. Most people agreed that this was much a fairer and more sensible pricing structure. The new, palisade type fencing around the Puddlebank side of Church Street allotments, will give added security to the allotments there.

**POLICY & ASSET REVIEW GROUP:** PAARG meet from January to March and review policies, procedures, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Risk Assessments for the Council. The Council then discuss any amendments or additions that are required.

**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE TASK GROUP:** Under Localism and having met the criteria as set out in the Localism Act 2011 s8, of having a qualified Clerk and two thirds of its 13 Councillors elected at the May 2012 elections, adopted The Parish Council's (General Power of Competence)(Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012. The Government's intention in setting this legislation was to provide eligible Parish Councils to better enable themselves to take on their enhanced role and allow them to do the things they have previously been unable to do under their existing powers. The hope is that this new power will give local councils confidence in the legal capacity to act for their communities. The idea being that councils will use this power to work with others to provide cost-effective services and facilities in new ways to meet the needs of local communities. The General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011 Sec 1 (1) gives local authorities, including eligible local councils, "the power to do anything that individuals generally may do" as long as they do not

**RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS - FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2013**

RECEIPTS	£	PAYMENTS	£
Precept	78,672.00	General Admin Incl. Salaries	28,945.87
Allotment Rents	845.41	S.137 Payments	35.00
Cemetery Fees	3,639.00	Bank Charges	15.00
Highways & Wayleaves	1,010.35	Insurance	2,377.61
Playing Fields rent	120.00	Environment/ Highways	35,914.84
VAT refund	6,212.62	Play Areas	7,893.19
Bank Interest	506.99	Allotments	11,720.87
Other receipts	524.88	Cemetery	8,018.12
		Community Liaison	0.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>91,531.25</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>94,920.50</b>
<b>BALANCES AT 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013</b>			
Current Account			65,833.43
Reserve Accounts			20,670.66
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>86,504.09</b>

**WEEDON BEC VILLAGE FETE**

The Fete, which was held on 15th September, had a sport theme to tie in with the Olympics. Northampton Archery Club provided the main attraction and there were also displays by Weedon's Kyushiki Kwai Judo Club and Active Dance with Laura Brown. The Boogie Babies group showed what they could do alongside the ladies doing Zumba and Bokwa.

The fete was opened by Dave Green from Duston who was one of the local Olympic Torch Bearers who carried the torch through the streets of Northampton on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. Dave walked around with our own local, Gamesmakers Ginette Pilkington and Adrian Cashmore.



Dunchurch Brass Band provided the music.

Along with all the normal fete attractions and wonderful hot weather, a good time was had by all.

Just over £5,000 was raised which was divided between groups in the village.

**Weedon Needs You!**

**What would you do if someone put in an application to build a housing estate on the open space opposite you?**

You may object and decide to write to the District Council? The Parish Council would probably do the same at your request – but would it make a difference?

Increasingly the answer is sadly NO. The present government wants more houses built and has changed planning policy accordingly.

We are already seeing planning applications which comment on the absence of a **Neighbourhood Development Plan** for the village as if we don't care about the place we live in.

Register your interest to help inform local planning decisions. Contact Sue Halkett on 01327 341057 or like us on facebook.



Photographs courtesy of Jane Adams, Sue Butler, & Libby Hart



**DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS**

A great time was had by all at the Weedon Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in June. Fancy dress, street party, live music, sport, fireworks, parades, beer barrel rolling and much more. The inclement weather did not stop anyone from enjoying themselves and what a good time was had by all. A committee was set up of residents, including some parish councillors, and all the hard work they put into the project paid off.

The Parish Council contributed towards the firework display which was held on the last evening.

The Jubilee Field also received its Field Dedication as a Field in Trust.

