

Chairman's Update – 15th March 2016

Having seen a transformation in the weather over recent days, it's nice to finally see spring on its way. I for one have been looking forward to the lighter evenings and warmer days and the chance to get out and about a bit more. Finally the albeit relatively mild winter seems to be behind us and gardens and verges can begin to show some colour and brighten up the days.

There are a number of things to report on the parish council front and I'll apologise in advance for jumping from one issue to the next.....

Firstly, the bus service. As most of you will be aware, the bus service has been under threat due to a drop in the subsidy offered by West Berkshire Council. As things stand the parish council are discussing with West Berks the possibility of providing a subsidy to allow the service to continue and it is hoped that at least an off peak service with a reasonable number of runs will be retained for every day except Sunday. From our point of view, we have agreed to pay what is being asked for and now await for the proposed service to be confirmed (or not).

Elsewhere, we have been asked to support Pangbourne library as it looks into the feasibility of going it alone should the proposed closure materialise. It is too early to say how far our involvement will go, however, we have informed the group that we would be prepared to offer a one-off grant if they are able to get plans off the ground. We will continue to watch this area with interest and for those looking to get involved there is a Facebook page, search 'Save Pangbourne Library'.

On a more general front, we now have bike racks in place for St Stephens Church and a further one lined up for St Barts in Lower Basildon, which we hope will be used heavily over the coming months. We also have a new litter bin at the top of Bethesda Street and a second one on the railway bridge half way down Church Lane. Hopefully both will help counter litter that was a common feature to both areas.

Footpaths continue to be monitored and thanks to West Berkshire Council cleared. During the last month or so we have had fallen trees across a couple of our paths which were logged and cleared. There has also been a large fly-tipping incident on Mead Lane which we have requested is cleared as soon as possible as it is partially blocking the road. Further fly tipping was also reported in the copse behind Wakemans in what is becoming an easy unload for those that think this is an acceptable thing to do. We continue to be frustrated in this area and I will again raise it at the next neighbourhood action group meeting I attend.

This month we will be discussing the proposals for the village green, following up the parish plan and there will also be further meetings to cover the bus service, railway action group and (at the start of April) the neighbourhood action group. All of these meetings take up councillors' time and evenings and I'd like to place on record my thanks for them giving up their time to attend.

Our next meeting will also be in St Barts which we hope offers residents of Lower Basildon the opportunity to walk down and raise any issues they have.