

Walford Parish Newsletter

Spring
2011

Issue
NO 1

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Photos courtesy of Bridget Vine and Chris Barron

Website: www.walford-pc.org.uk

Parish Clerk: clerk@walford-pc.org.uk

Chairman: Frank Myers MBE

Vice Chairman: Philip Heath

Clerk: Catherine Murray

Disclaimer: Some of the information contained in this newsletter has been supplied by individual Councillors to give an overview and, therefore, does not necessarily reflect the view of the Parish Council as a whole.

An introduction from the Chairman:

Welcome to this, the first of a new series of newsletters being launched by Walford Parish Council. In this edition you will find updates on a number of important developments which are about to take place in the Parish, together with the latest news on ideas which your councillors have been exploring for the future benefit of the community.

The Parish Plan, which was produced about four years ago, has been reviewed and is in the course of being updated. Its status has an important bearing on many of the initiatives which might be undertaken in the future. There are also suggestions, under what has been termed 'localism', that many local powers are to be devolved to the Parish Council in the next few years. The implications of this are reviewed here.

As your councillors, we place great importance on communicating with you, the people who elect us. I hope you find this new series of newsletters interesting and informative and I encourage you to provide us with your feedback. Or better still why not get involved?

The short article below has details of the upcoming elections and gives you some information on how to go about becoming a councillor.

Finally, I would also like to thank our clerk, Catherine Murray, for her diligent work in pulling all of this together.

Councillor Frank Myers MBE – Chairman

Parish of Walford Election 5th May 2011

The combined Council Elections will be held on Thursday 5th May, when voting will take place between 7am and 10pm at Walford Village Hall.

If you are interested in becoming a councillor, nomination papers are available from the Clerk, or Herefordshire Council and should be submitted between Friday 25th March and Noon on Monday 4th April.

Follow the link below for councillor nomination papers:

http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council_gov_democracy/elections/27164.asp

In any case, please make your vote count on 5th May and have a say in how your Parish is run.

Things that are happening in the Parish:

The Walford Parish Plan

In 2006 Walford completed a Parish Plan. This was constructed from extensive surveys and meetings with the parish residents, and is a guide to what the residents want within the parish. It was formally adopted by the Parish Council, which takes a lead on implementation, but all residents who may have specific interests that align with the plan are encouraged to get involved.

Every few years the plan is updated to ensure the issues highlighted within it are still current, to check what progress has been made and to raise any new issues. Enclosed with this newsletter is a short survey for each household to complete, which is your chance to support or change what happens in the parish.

Specific issues raised in the 2006 Parish Plan were:

1. B4234; non-car use hazardous & unpleasant, several stretches in particular have been identified with proposed actions
2. Major support for a parish recreation area
3. Extension to network of footpaths & bridleways desirable
4. Need for cycleway & for integration of non-car byways
5. Development; retention of green belt between Ross & Walford, no major developments within Walford, development should be spread out and minimal, and in-keeping with the vernacular style, ribbon development unsupported
6. High value placed on countryside & AONB status, and concern to balance impact of farming with community and tourism
7. Lack of village facilities such as a shop in Walford
8. Minimise street lighting and other light pollution
9. Maintain roads footpaths and bridleways

Because these issues have been raised in the plan, the Parish Council has been able, either by direct action, or by lobbying the relevant authority, to achieve the following:

- Speed indicators in 2 locations on a biannual rotation
- Variable speed limit at school with speed indicators
- Low impact lighting at school

- Overflow car parking at school
- Feasibility study for the Walford Links project
- Several important consultations completed representing the views of residents, including the future direction of building development in Herefordshire
- Rights of way, local roads and footways have been actively maintained to a good standard

To progress the other topics the Parish Council has made several commitments to ensure issues are not just left behind. Some of these take the form of a register, or to do list, such as:

- A list of road locations that represent an unacceptably high hazard
- A list of desired improvements to the Parish network of footpaths and bridleways
- A list of maintenance work and minor improvements to the road network

For each register, anyone may propose new items that could be added (subject to approval by council), and the council will periodically review the lists and take appropriate action.

Other commitments are to support specific projects:

- Improvements and instatements to the footway provision along the B4234
- The creation of one or more parish recreation areas
- The creation of a cycleway network
- Preparation of a village design statement

Information supplied by Councillor Marc Thomas – Finance Chairman

Please take the time to fill in the enclosed Questionnaire and return to Walford Parish Council. Your views will help us to shape the Parish Plan in the future. [See back of Newsletter]

What a load of Rubbish!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Walford Parish have organised a community litter pick on Sunday 10th April at 10am, when we will be meeting at Walford Village Hall.

As a Parish Council we take pride in our lovely Village and we are looking for some volunteers to help us.

Amey have kindly said they are going to supply us with high visibility vests, grabbers, gloves and rubbish bags.

So come along, let's see what we can do...

Information supplied by Councillor Geoffrey Symonds.

Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch

We have in our parish potentially one of the most important tourist attractions in the country. The canoe launch site, situated just alongside Bishopswood village hall is the busiest canoe launch site on the River Wye.

At the end of last year, the River Wye was voted the public's favourite river in England and Wales in a contest organised by the Our Rivers campaign, to celebrate the nation's rivers and highlight threats to wildlife.

The Wye was described as "magical and timeless" and the awards were backed by WWF Cymru, RSPB, Angling Trust and the Salmon and Trout Association.

They were launched in August 2010.

So we have the busiest site on the most popular river and, to add to its importance to our Parish, works are planned during the coming summer months to make it more accessible.

Clearly, it will become even more popular and as part of its review of services Herefordshire Council has approached the Parish Council with a view to our taking over the running of the site. They are suggesting a Community Asset Transfer and are offering help with the set up costs and the legalities.

Currently it is estimated by Herefordshire, based upon AONB Society figures, that the site is used 40,000 times in a year (20,000 on, 20,000 off) and this is forecast to grow. Research has concluded that demand for use of the site will exceed its capacity for a considerable time to come.

This is an important opportunity, not least because the launch site already has an adverse impact on the village hall during its busier months. With a shared entrance and adjacent car parks it is inevitable that there will be conflict between the two activities, from time to time. This invitation gives us an opportunity to consider taking control of the management of the site for the benefit of the people of the parish and to deliver one of the aspects of the Parish Plan – to promote tourism in the area.

Our discussions with Herefordshire Council will include improving the traffic management at the entrance.

At a recent meeting, involving representatives of the village hall, local businesses and canoe hire operators, it was unanimously agreed that a management regime will be essential to satisfactory operation in the future and that this regime will cost money.

We may also have to consider how we can provide income generating services at the site.

We are therefore putting together a business plan which will include evaluation of all options including

- a system of licensing for canoe hire operators
- fees for launching and landing
- pay and display car parking
- the opportunity for enhancing the services already provided locally

We would welcome any input to our considerations and ask you please to write or email Catherine Murray – Clerk to the Parish Council.

Information supplied by Councillor Frank Myers MBE - Chairman

The Village Warden scheme

A meeting took place on Wednesday 16th March between, Paul Baker - Chairman of Walford Parish Residents' Association, John Jarvis - Ward Councillor for Kerne Bridge, Jo Mc Donald - Localities Manager for Ross and Golden Valley, and Kate Darch - Manager of the Gloucestershire Village Wardens Scheme.

The purpose of the meeting was to investigate how this successful scheme could be adapted to meet the needs of the elderly and vulnerable in Kerne Bridge Ward.

The warden would be able to ensure medical care can be directed towards those in need, advise on benefits available and look after many of those day to day problems that worry people.

A report and presentation will be made to Walford Parish Council at the Annual Parish meeting on Wednesday 13th April, if you are interested please come along.

The Annual Parish meeting will take place at Bishopwood Village Hall on Wednesday 13th April at 7.30pm.

*Information supplied by Paul Baker – Chairman of Walford Parish Residents' Association
And Ward Councillor John Jarvis*

HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY TO THE WYE VALLEY AONB!!!!

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1971 – so this year is the 40th anniversary of its establishment.

An AONB is a legally designated area of significant landscape quality worthy of conservation and around 75% of Walford parish lies within the boundary.

The Wye Valley AONB is unique in that it straddles the border of 2 countries (England and Wales) extending over 128 square miles (362 km²) and covering a 57.5 miles (92 km) stretch of the river Wye south of Hereford. It extends into the 3 counties of Herefordshire, Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire. Around 25,000 people live within the AONB and Ross on Wye is the only town within the boundary area. Farming is a significant activity throughout the area and there are about 2.5 million annual tourist visits. It is the most extensively wooded AONB in England and the Wye Valley is noted for its spectacular scenery, abundant wildlife and impressive geological features such as Symonds Yat.

The Wye Valley AONB is managed by the Joint Advisory Committee and administered by the AONB unit based in Monmouth. The JAC is a non-elected partnership of representatives from local, regional and national organisations and agencies whose role is to guide and advise the constituent authorities and partners and direct the work of the AONB unit. This unit works in partnership with individuals, local authorities, government agencies and interested groups in order to maintain this internationally protected landscape. It also aims to conserve and enhance the physical, ecological and cultural landscape of the Wye Valley.

The unit arranges events and walks in the AONB area which are advertised in its 'Wye So Special' leaflet and 'Picturesque' Newsletter. In addition publications are regularly issued giving information about the attractions and self guided walks within the area. The most recently published, 'Walk this Wye', describes a selection of 12 walks accessible by public transport. If you're interested you can volunteer to help with the conservation tasks or events and activities regularly held each year in the area.

During this 40th birthday year there will be a special series of free celebration events focussing on the four themes of hidden industry, viewpoints, river connections and hill forts : 'Hands on History' at the Old Station, Tintern on 16th April, 'Iron Age Rampage' at Symonds Yat Rock Iron Age hill fort on 22nd May, 'On the Way to the

Wye' at Ross riverside on 18th June and 'Mediaeval Mayhem' at Chepstow Castle on 18th September.

Further information about the WVAONB, the events, activities and volunteering can be obtained by contacting the WVAONB Administration Officer on Tel No: 01600 713977 or on the Website: www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk



*Information
supplied by
Councillor Bridget
Vine
AONB
Representative*

*Wye View
Photograph
courtesy
Councillor Bridget
Vine*

Superfast Broadband

Superfast broadband can be a significant factor in achieving business success. Over the last 3 months a survey has been carried out in Kerne Bridge Ward by a company called Rutland Telecom. They have established that we can improve our current broadband offer to speeds in excess of 20Mbps. This will be at least 10 times faster than the current service. Our schools will be greatly served by this improved service as well as the general public. Herefordshire Council has just won a competition for funding and will have £5 million to improve broadband in South Herefordshire.

In the week commencing 21st March you should have received a letter from Ward Councillor Jarvis together with a form to register an interest in faster broadband. It is extremely important that you respond to the questionnaire if you want to enjoy an improved service. If you do not receive a letter, together with the questionnaire please contact him on 07973 673866 and he will make sure you can register your interest.

Information supplied by Ward Councillor – John Jarvis

Recreational Field for Walford Parish

Walford Parish Council elected to form a working group whose remit was to explore the possibility of creating a recreational facility in line with recommendations within the Parish Plan.

It is proposed that we provide a recreational facility which can both provide a meeting place for all residents and also explore ways to generate a revenue stream to allow for the maintenance and up keep of the project and also improve it over time.

There is a lack of such facilities in the Parish, however, research has shown there is room for a sports ground suitable for rugby, football, and cricket to name a few and Walford Parish has areas that are ideal for such use. There is currently nowhere that children can play safely together that is central to all villagers and is relatively safe.

We have no noticeably identifiable outdoor centre. Footways along the B4234 are less than adequate for the safety of children and the absence of dedicated off road cycle ways militates against healthy outdoor exercise and the need for children to mix and play with others of their own age.

For the adult population there is also a need to share outdoor activities, we currently have an active football team who go elsewhere to play. Communication is the other factor to consider here. We would benefit from an outdoor meeting place that could provide a variety of interests encouraging villagers to use it, creating a community spirit. These activities will either be free or low cost to Walford Parish residents, but a chargeable revenue for visitors from far and wide.

Initial research is already under way, site visits to other counties have begun to look at how such facilities are managed and maintained, and costs are already being sought.

The committee carried out a site visit armed with suggestions from all committee members about what facilities could be made available on this site.

These include:

- Football Pitch
- Caravan Park/camping
- Pavilion
- Fishing Lake

- Canoe/boating lake
- Soft play area for under 5's
- Child playground
- Bowling Green
- Cycle centre outlet

In addition to these activity areas we would like to incorporate a senses area for the visually impaired, raised beds for the disabled to enjoy, and benches for rest areas. These proposals are not set in stone and are open for discussion.

Please take the time to fill in the enclosed Questionnaire and return to Walford Parish Council. Your views are important to us. [See back of Newsletter]

Information supplied by Cheryl Carpenter – Chair of the Recreational Ground working group.

The Walford Links project

The principal finding of the Parish Plan was the domination of the Parish by the necessary but busy and dangerous road, the B4234. As a result of the consultation process it was made clear that the community wanted a safer alternative to having to use a car that would also serve as a recreational opportunity in itself, whilst giving access to amenities by foot, by bike and hoof. The Walford Links Project aims to provide just such an alternative. The intention is to use, where permitted, the old railway line that runs through the Parish, starting from Bishopswood Village Hall and connecting up with the Town and Country Trail in Ross. Herefordshire Council are also keen to connect the Peregrine Way to the Walford Links via a route from Whitchurch to Goodrich.

Activity started in 2006 with frequent meetings involving the interested parties led by Councillor Philip Heath. A feasibility study was funded and produced and the establishment of the rights of way process has started with due diligence checks being conducted by Herefordshire Council.

It is difficult to say when the project will be complete, as we are reliant on so much outside help, namely from Herefordshire Council. But there is no doubt that the Walford Links project will enhance the lives of many in the community. It will also boost local businesses that rely on tourism.

Information supplied by Councillor Philip Heath – Vice Chairman.

The Localism Bill – What it means for Parish Councils

One of the most important pieces of legislation going through the House of Commons at the moment is the Localism Bill.

This Bill heralds a ground-breaking shift in power to councils and communities seeking to overturn decades of central government control and starting a new era of people power.

There is a belief that over time government has become too big, too interfering, too controlling and too bureaucratic. This has undermined local democracy and individual responsibility, and stifled innovation and enterprise within public services.

There is a view that for too long everything has been controlled from the centre, and that by letting councils and communities run their own affairs we can build a stronger, fairer Britain.

This Bill will see a radical shift in the balance of power and will decentralise power as far as possible. As well as giving power back to local government the philosophy is to trust people to take charge of their lives and it is intended to push power downwards and outwards to the lowest possible level, including individuals, neighbourhoods, professionals and communities as well as local councils and other local institutions.

Residents can feel put upon by developers and councils. They can feel powerless as wind farms or supermarkets or housing developments are given the go-ahead without their approval. Above all they can feel as if they are not being listened to.

There is also a widely held feeling that the authorities pay lip service to the whole process of consultation. Time and time again unpopular developments seem to be rammed through against the express wishes of local people, creating a lot of anger and frustration in the process.

The Localism Bill seeks to recognise that this is no way to treat local people. Planning is an important issue and councils should be bending over backwards to ensure that residents are fully involved in the decision making process.

The Bill ensures that this will happen in future. It sets out a number of proposals which will give far more power to local communities, including:

- Local referendums
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Abolition of Regional Strategies.

The Bill will transform the relationship between local authorities and communities and give residents a far greater say on planning matters.

Information supplied by Councillor Frank Myers - Chairman

Walford Village Hall

The Village Hall serves a large part in what activities are available to the Walford community. As our treasurer reported last month, “The Hall is now well supported by regular users: dancers and dogs continue unabated and a martial arts group has joined us on Wednesdays. With Beaver Scouts and Cub Scouts joining us, the Hall is in use every evening Monday to Friday. The Playgroup has extended its use to both Monday and Wednesday afternoons, and three other groups have use of the Hall during the day. Children’s parties continue to account for 50 per cent of one-off bookings; however, income from fund-raising events and interest from our reserves are significantly down.”

Generally, for the Hall social events this year, there will be a contraction of available dates since the regular Hall users have booked all the nights of the week (though not weekend nights) throughout the year. It would seem then that we have pitched the prices very competitively so this makes it good and bad news really, as social events will now have to fit in their nights to target the school half-term and full-term breaks when gaps in the bookings crop up!

Fridays seem to be the most popular social nights so we plan to have a full quiz night in April and a puddings night with an add-on mini quiz in the following period.

Advice on these will be by posters on the Hall rails, by notices on boards in the usual places, and in the monthly “Walford Flier”.

Or you can find out more by contacting Terry Snow by email or phone: terry.snow@dsl.pipex.com or 01989 567639

Information supplied by Terry Snow

Please note that we also hope to include information from Bishopswood Village Hall in our next issue.

Explaining our Rights of Way

Rights of Way (ROW)

Walford Parish has over 25 miles of footpaths, byways and bridleways. These are public rights of way that are listed and described in Definitive Maps and Statements (legal records of public rights of way).

Each ROW has a different set of users who are allowed to access it and it is useful to know who can and cannot use which particular ROW.

Footpaths

This public right of way is meant for pedestrians only. You are allowed to walk your dog as long as it is under your close control. When walking a dog, you must ensure that it keeps to public footpath and does not trespass into nearby properties. Prams, pushchair or wheelchairs can also be used on a foot path.

Bridleways

These are meant for walkers, horse riders and bicyclists. Bicyclists are expected to give way to walkers and horse riders.

Byways Open To All Traffic (BOAT)

These byways are normally marked "byways" and are open to motorists, bicyclists, horse riders, motorcyclists and pedestrians. As with public tarmac road networks, motorists must ensure that they are legally authorised to use BOATs (i.e. registered, taxed, insured and MOT'd).

Restricted Byways

Restricted Byways are created under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. They are open to the traffic mentioned above in BOATs, but exclude motor vehicles and motorcycles.

- You are not allowed to disturb or harm any wildlife found on a public ROW.
- You should not drop or leave litter on a public right of way.
- You should not trespass on neighbouring lands to public rights of way. At all times keep to the legal limits.

Walford Parish is part of the P3 Footpaths scheme, receiving a grant to fund the work carried out by a local Contractor – to maintain the Rights of Way. Councillor Michael Downey is our Rights of Way Officer.

To raise issues regarding any ROW please contact the parish clerk.

The Lengthsman – What does he do?

The Lengthsman is employed by Walford Parish Council to keep the verges, footways and drainage grips clear in the parish. He also attends to the cleaning of the road signs and the bus shelters. The Lengthsman co-ordinator is Councillor Luke Freeman who is responsible for managing the Lengthsman's work schedule.

A local Contractor undertakes the work, you might see him working on the side of the road from time to time in the parish. The role is only part time, but the parish is very grateful for the grant that we receive which allows us to complete this work to keep the area looking tidy and up together.

If you want to raise any issues regarding work in the parish that might require the attention of the Lengthsman, please contact the parish clerk.

Information supplied by Councillor Luke Freeman.

Your Parish Councillors are:

Frank Myers MBE – Chairman and Finance Committee member

Philip Heath – Vice Chairman and Walford Links Project leader

Marc Thomas – Finance Committee Chairman

Simeon Cole – Emergency Co-ordinator and Finance Committee member

Heather Evans – Finance Committee member

Eric Drummond – Finance Committee member

Bridget Vine – AONB representative

Luke Freeman – Lengthsman Co-ordinator

Michael Downey – Rights of Way Officer

Geoffrey Symonds

Sandra Cole

Derek Allen

Alan Whitlock

Clerk to the Parish Council: Catherine Murray

Rose Cottage, Coughton, Ross on Wye, HR9 5SF.

E mail: clerk@walford-pc.org.uk Tel: 01989 562476

PARISH WEBSITE: <http://www.walford-pc.org.uk>

NEXT MEETING: ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF THE ELECTORATE – Will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 13th April at Bishopswood Village Hall. Please come and join us.

ALL COUNCILLORS AND PARISHIONERS ARE INVITED TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER, PLEASE CONTACT THE CLERK IF YOU WISH TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE FOR CONSIDERATION.

DEADLINE FOR SUMMER 2011 ISSUE: FRIDAY 20TH JUNE.



RECREATIONAL FIELD PROJECT – FEASIBILITY STUDY SURVEY

It would be appreciated if you could take a few minutes of your time to complete and return this survey by one of the methods described below as this will help our decision making process. [Add an extra page to your reply if you need to]

Do you agree in principal to the creation of such a facility? Yes / No:
Comments:

Q1: How many people in your household?

Q2: What age groups?

0-4	5-10	11-15	15-18	18-21
22-30	31-40	41-50	Over 50	Over age of Retirement

Q3: What activities would you or and your family like to see this project provide?

Q4: What sports/ activities would interest you and your family?

Q5: What sports would you or a family member take part in?

Q6: How often would you or a family member use the facility?

Q7: What days would you say would be more suitable for this/these activities?

Q8: What time of day?

Apart from physical activities – the committee are looking at the provision of a senses area for the visually impaired, raised beds for people with disabilities, benches and quiet areas where people could relax and enjoy the countryside. If you feel that we have missed something and should consider an idea you have please contact us with your views.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM USING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS:

- 1) Use the drop box marked 'Walford Parish Council Survey' at your Village Hall.
- 2) Post to the Clerk – See contact details in the Newsletter.



WALFORD PARISH PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE:

[PLEASE SEE OVER PAGE FOR HOW TO SEND IN YOUR REPLY]

Q1. The topics raised in the 2006 Parish Plan are listed below. For each one rank it in order of importance to your household with 1 = most important, and 9 = least important. If you disagree with the direction of a topic or you would not support action on it, mark it with a X instead. Please also add any specific comments next to the issue or in the additional space below or attach a separate sheet.

	Topic	Rank or X	Comments
1	B4234 non car use hazardous & unpleasant		
2	Parish recreation area		
3	Extension to footpath/bridleway network		
4	Cycleway		
5	Development should be spread out and minimal, and in keeping with vernacular style		
6	AONB status highly valued, balanced impact of farming with community and tourism		
7	Lack of village facilities such as shop in Walford		
8	Minimise street lighting and light pollution		
9	Maintain roads, footways and rights of way		

Q2. Is there anything that is not on the list which you feel should be? For instance tell us about what you would like to see developed or protected in the local area, or community initiatives you would like to see.

Q3. Is there anything that you feel would encourage a greater sense of community cohesion and belonging?

Additional Comments: