

WALTHAM ST LAWRENCE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting of the Waltham St Lawrence Parish Council held on Tuesday 26 April 2016 in the Neville Hall at 7.00pm

Present:

John Birkett (Chairman)
Mike Kay (Vice Chairman)
Maggi Bevan
Katie Sarsfield
Suzy Young
Mark Hipgrave
Clive Scott-Hopkins
Sally Burtenshaw (Parish Clerk)

Also present 13 members of the Public

1. APOLOGIES:

Received from Li-Juan Ellerton (Headmistress of School) & Scott Ganson (Landlord of the Bell)

2. MINUTES

It was noted that the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 28 April 2015 were approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman at a Parish Council meeting held on 12 May 2015

3. REPORT FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL :

The Chairman read out his report – a copy is attached

4. REPORT FROM THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL :

David Crawley-Boevey read out his report – a copy of his speech is attached

The Chairman thanked him for attending and addressing the meeting.

5. REPORT FROM COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS:

Simon Guest from The Shurlock Inn read out his report – a copy of his speech is attached

The Chairman thanked him for attending and addressing the meeting

6. REPORTS FROM LOCAL CHARITIES

Richard Sykes, Chairman of the WSL Charities, read out his report - a copy of his speech is attached

The Chairman thanked him for attending and addressing the meeting

John Birkett Chairman of the Neville Hall Charitable Trust read out his report – a copy of his

speech is attached

7. UPDATE FROM THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

In the absence of the headmistress, Clare McIntosh a parent/governor read out the report - a copy of which is attached

The Chairman thanked her for attending and addressing the meeting

8. REPORTS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Nick Philp, a representative from Church Farm read out his report – a copy of which is attached

The Chairman thanked him for attending and addressing the meeting

Clive Scott-Hopkins advised on the history and role of the Preservation Society – a copy of the report is attached

The Chairman thanked him for attending and addressing the meeting

9. GENERAL QUESTION TIME:

A member of the public asked a question about the finality of upcoming court decisions on the Travellers

Richard Sykes thanked the Parish Councillors on behalf of all local parishoners for all they do for the three villages that make up the Parish

8. A.O.B.

The meeting closed at 20.08

Parish Council Chairman's Report 2016

This is my first report as Chair for the Parish Council. I have the pleasure to welcome four new Parish Councillors. Mark Hipgrave, Mike Kay, Maggie Bevan and Suzi Young. I also say a farewell to Stuart Craig, Sandy Quinn, Jenny Baish and Martin Hayes.

I note from the previous Chairman's report from April 2015 of some outstanding issues that are still current. The unauthorised Gypsy encampment on Shurlock Road, completion of the restoration of land known as the Downfield Tip, the electrification of the Great Western railway from Maidenhead to Reading and the provision of public open space also on Shurlock Road. The redevelopment of Bellman Hanger is going ahead. The developers did approach the PC to see if we would support some 16 smaller properties in place of the permitted three which would have gone outside the existing footprint. This the PC was unable to support. The Milley Road railway has been raised and is now something of an eyesore in our Parish. The Broadmoor Road, Twyford Road culvert has been finished. The village school now has its separate dining room and the telephone box in The Street WSL is now a defibrillator location. The Neighbourhood Plan staggers on with a pre submission plan out for consultation. So many of these things take time.

On the finance side we have had to raise the Parish precept from £14,000 to £17,500. One of our new councillors pointed out that we needed to tidy up our budget and make proper provision for future expenses. In past years your PC has been using reserves to cover some unexpected expenditure. I hasten to add the precept has not changed from the time I joined the council and is still the one of the two lowest than any other parish in the Borough. Many if not all documents are now posted on the PC web site.

Finally I wish to thank all councillors past and present for all their hard work. A special thank you to Sally Burtenshaw our long serving Parish Clark.

We now move to other reports.

John Birkett



THE ROLE OF THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

The Society was formed in 1970 as a registered charity with a Constitution to "protect, preserve and stimulate public interest in the parish" with powers reserved to a CTTE of 12. Originally started by 4 local stalwarts lead by Group Captain Morris who was our Cllr on the old Cookham RDC, with Lady Frank as secretary, to oppose sand and gravel extraction on the Reading beds at Beenhams. It is essentially a pressure group supporting the PC to ward off unwanted development. I was involved at an early stage and I recount 3 examples of major planning threats in which we participated:

FIRST - a well known public company, English China Clays, in 1969 acquired 11 acres behind Ivy Bank Farm from a previous owner and submitted application after application to develop the land for housing with access onto the Street between Dolphins and the Old Post Office. I decided to confront them and acquired the minimum of 2 shares which entitled me to attend the next AGM in London, full of shareholders and the press. I lambasted the Board for repeatedly trying to develop in a Conservation Area. I must have got through to the Chairman, also president of the Royal Horticultural Society, because soon after they handed the land back. It has made me realise how vulnerable we can be under the new 'Rural Exception Site' policy "well related" to a Recognised Settlement, in the Neighbourhood Plan.

SECOND - In 1990 we were faced with another landfill proposal, this time at Park Farm the Straight Mile part of the Haines Hill Estate. The landowner came to see me at my office in Windsor to explain that he was doing a service to the community by digging an 80 acre hole for gravel extraction and dumping Wokingham's waste over a 20 year period. I told him there was bound to be resistance on HGV traffic grounds – 200 a day for 2 years and 100 a day thereafter. We formed an Action Group with other villages and a member produced this 'STOP DUMP' badge as it was fronted by a 'Terry Adams'. We majored on the lorry traffic and David Lee, who was into haulage then, provided a huge 12 wheel truck which 'broke down' at the crossroads in Twyford during a Friday morning rush hour, with several of us handing out leaflets to alert residents and commuter traffic to what was to come if the application succeeded and the Advertiser photographed the demonstration. At the Public Inquiry in Shire Hall Mr Adams said to the Inspector "and there was this man dressed as a vicar handing out leaflets in the middle of Twyford" – we all hooted with laughter because it was the vicar, the Rev. Peter Radley, who entered into the spirit of it. The outcome was we won on traffic grounds with the Inspector saying "it would cause significant harm to the area and the highways network has substantial deficiencies".

THIRD – by far the longest and most intensive campaign was fighting a Motorway Service Area on the M4, first at Warren Copse and Bushy Lees at SR, later at Great Hazes straddling Beenhams and Binfield – as an aside at Bracknell Town Hall we were horrified to hear one Cllr proclaim that this would be the new 'illuminated gateway to Bracknell' – we won the vote, just!; later still at Great Wood in Shottesbrooke, all four being ancient woodlands pre 1600. The Warren Copse campaign lasted almost 20 years and was in 3 stages:

Stage 1 – maximum publicity. We were fortunate to have in the parish a talented artist – Sheila Mannes-Abbott - who painted a picture of all the 'flora and fauna' in both woodlands as her letter of protest to the Department of Transport. This was reproduced in the Sunday Times colour magazine and resulted in a huge international response with cheques sent for print copies – one is in this hall,

we now had a fighting fund and articles appeared in the Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph, London Standard and local press.

Stage 2 – the Government launched a review into MSA standards known as the Prior Committee Report which included a section on ‘Siting and Spacing’. I contacted Peter Prior (the chairman of Bulmers Cider) to see if he would like to feature the issues at our proposed MSA. He readily agreed as he told me his committee was only interested in service standards. As a result we were the only site in the country to be specially featured and he condemned it as being: ‘in the wrong place’, ‘on high ground’, ‘too close to SR’, ‘full of wildlife’, ‘in the green belt’ and ‘expensive to develop’. This was enormously helpful.

Stage 3 – with the valuable help of our own MP, Dr Glyn for both Windsor and Maidenhead, he successfully lobbied 3 different Transport Ministers which resulted in no less than 3 statements in Parliament that an MSA would not be built at Warren Copse – the final statement is reproduced on that picture. The press photographed the Minister, the MP and me on the footbridge over the M4; we had won the battle of Warren Copse and Reading Services sits on a reclaimed rubbish dump at Theale exactly equidistant between Heston and Membury – 30 miles apart.

But I want the last word to go to the artist, who sadly is no longer with us, she published ‘The Four Seasons; the life of the English countryside’; taken from the picture with a short extract from her forward:

“In January 1978 the Sunday Times published an artist’s ‘letter of protest’ Warren Copse, which became her most celebrated picture. A keen conservationist she spent five months on the painting in her effort to protect a threatened woodland from motorway planners. Its publication aroused strong international interest and largely resulted in the Department of Transport cancelling the project”.

Much more recently we engaged and funded an expert on flooding through the ‘Institute of Hydrology’ at the first Traveller Public Inquiry, which established that most of the site was in the high risk flood zone 3.

Our role is essentially to support the PC in fighting major development proposals – we face constant pressures, but we have the funds, the contacts e.g a planning barrister and a solicitor, and the supporters but we do always need more members and that means you!

Clive Scott-Hopkins April 26th 2016

Who and What is the Parochial Church Council?

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is very similar to the Parish Council, in that it looks after the needs and interests of people living not only in the Parish but also further afield. The church is central to what it does, but it offers a great deal more than just looking after people's spiritual needs.

The PCC is responsible for organising many events and activities, not just what happens in church on a Sunday. The church is available for weddings, christenings and funerals, and you don't have to be a churchgoer to enjoy what the church has to offer.

The PCC has been responsible for starting up and running the St. Lawrence Cafe on the third Sunday of the month, and 3G which takes place every Thursday morning. Both are held in the Neville Hall, and are a wonderful opportunity to meet people in a relaxed and non-religious environment.

It is also responsible for organising Messy Church once a month, the six choir Choral Festival on 14th May, the Flower Festival in June to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday, Church Teas every Sunday in August as well as the Parish Fete. This started life as a church fete, but now involves the whole community and benefits the School, Cricket Club and Neville Hall as well as the Church.

Like the Parish Council, the PCC is made up of a number of volunteers. The chairman is normally the Priest-in-Charge; the other members are the two Churchwardens who are responsible for looking after the church - both the fabric and what happens inside - on behalf of the Bishop, two Deanery Synod representatives, nine elected members and currently a co-opted member who is the Treasurer, who incidentally is not a churchgoer. The PCC is indebted to a host of other helpers including the vergers, sidesmen and sideswomen, lesson readers, intercessors, bell ringers, flower arrangers, cleaners, a clock winder, a flag raiser, all those who bake cakes for events and many other volunteers. Many of these people do not go to church, but they are happy to help.

The biggest difference between the Parish Council and the PCC is on the financial front. The Parish Council sets a precept, currently at £17,500 per annum, which they receive from the Borough Council, who raise the money by adding an amount to every residents' council tax bill. In 2015 the PCC had outgoings of almost £80,000 and every penny of

that sum came from donations. Sadly, only about 5% comes from the Sunday Service collections. The majority is from 'Planned Giving' where people will give money on a regular basis by Standing Order. We also raise funds through appeals for such items as the repairing of the churchyard boundary wall, the audio-visual system or a new boiler. Further work is required on the churchyard wall and there will be another Appeal this year.

Many people who donate money either on a regular basis or at the time of an appeal hardly ever go to church but they realise the importance of the Church as a focal point of community life, and they never know when they may need to use it.

If the St. Lawrence Church doesn't raise the necessary funds it cannot pay its way, and ultimately it will close. It is the responsibility of the PCC to ensure that never happens.

David Crawley-Boevey (Acting Chairman, Parochial Church Council)

SPEECH GIVEN BY SIMON GUEST FROM THE SHURLOCK INN 26/04/2016

Firstly, a quick potted history of the last 6-7 years, for those who aren't aware of the background. In late 2008, the original White Hart had 'lost its way', had virtually zero trade and was in imminent risk of permanent closure. 16, mostly villagers, clubbed together, bought the freehold and reopened as The Shurlock Inn in early summer 2009. The aim was to create a viable pub/restaurant business within 3-5 years and sell it on as a going concern. Finally, some seven years later, with a number of challenges surmounted along the way, we believe we have achieved that and found a buyer for the freehold who can assure its retention as a pub for the long term. They, in turn, have lined up an independent commercial operator to develop the pub and run it day to day.

All the feedback we had over the years was that it needs more dining 'covers' to be consistently profitable and not risk ending up going the way of the erstwhile Royal Oak or Star. Our buyer felt exactly the same, so we made the application to use the space housed in the marquee as a permanent structure and to move the internal toilets to a new block on the side, allowing for a larger bar area. The Parish Council were very supportive and we remain very grateful for that.

Permission was granted a few weeks ago and we started drawing up an arrangement with the buyers resulting in solicitors being instructed in the last few days.

When the transaction is complete we will be able to explain more and introduce those we hope will run the pub for some time to come.

Simon

WALTHAM ST LAWRENCE CHARITIES

Report for 2015 to Annual Parish Meeting

2015 was another record year for the Waltham St Lawrence Charities in which we made grants, all to residents in the parish or to organisations that benefit the parish, totalling over £34,400. The annual distribution in January 2015 to qualifying residents represented as usual the main allocation of funds. Under this distribution just under £14,500 was disbursed to 44 people.

The Charities' scheme for educational grants has now completed its fourth year. The purpose is to assist young people resident in the Parish who have left school and are in, or are about to be starting, further education or training, such as university, college or an apprenticeship. The scheme was again advertised in the Lych Gate and by word of mouth and resulted in 27 individuals receiving a total of £12,350 in grants under the scheme.

The Bell is the Charities' principal asset and the Trustees are very appreciative of the way in which Scott and Iain Ganson continue to manage it as a successful and popular enterprise while at the same time maintaining its traditional atmosphere. Work to the kitchen roof and ceiling, identified towards the end of the previous year as needing to be done, was carried out in the early part of 2015.

Ongoing projects to which the Charities have remained committed during the year include help with transport and the provision of Lifeline personal alarms. Help with transport comprises two elements: a taxi service, and also the People to Places bus service which the Charities organised and subsidised for visits to Morrisons in Bracknell and Waitrose in Twyford on an alternate weekly basis. Following the closure of the NatWest branch in Twyford in November the visits to Waitrose in Twyford were replaced by visits to Waitrose in Woodley. A donation was again made to the Twyford Volunteer Drivers to help with their running costs as they have provided transport to hospitals and doctors' surgeries for a number of residents in the Parish.

Since the year end Mrs Margaret Railton has stepped down from her role as coordinator of People to Places, a role she has undertaken effectively and without fuss on behalf of the Trustees since time immemorial. The Trustees are most grateful to her both for this and, I should add, for her many years before that as Trustee. She actually became a Trustee in 1978 so has had a role with the Charities serving the village for 38 years. Mrs Polly Pollecutt has kindly agreed to take on her People to Places role, with Mrs Peggy Smith's continuing invaluable help.

The Charities agreed to provide funding for another two year period towards the cost of a coordinator for children's activities run by the church. We continued to provide the Newbery Reading Prizes for the school, named after our original benefactor who gave the

Bell to the village, and in addition we paid for two interactive LED screens for the school. A grant was also made to the Playing Field Trust in the village.

I would personally like to thank my fellow Trustees during the year – Cynthia Philp as Deputy Chairman, Nigel Backer as Treasurer, Maureen Mortimer until March 2015 and Polly Pollecutt since then, Prue Williams and Nick Kohl – for their hard work, unstintingly given, in achieving the Charities' results during 2015. I expressed the gratitude of the Trustees this time last year to Maureen Mortimer for her great contribution to the Charities over 17 years as a Trustee.

The Trustees continue to look for new opportunities for providing financial support in the parish. If you believe there is an individual in need or a worthwhile charitable cause in the parish please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or with one of the other Trustees. We welcome suggestions! The Trustees usually meet four times a year, in March, July, September and December. Applications for financial assistance will normally be considered at the next Trustee meeting following receipt of an application, but they can also be considered between meetings when circumstances require.

Richard Sykes
April 2016

Neville Hall Charitable Trust Chairman's Report 2016

Another successful year for the Trust.

Total income for the year ending 31st March 2016 was some £24,800.00 but total expenditure was some £21,000.00. Net income was £3,726.77. Sadly we have lost Argentine Tango. They were so successful the Hall became too small for their requirements. We also lost Pilates and Health Workshop.

In 2012 the Trustees set up a management scheme at the suggestion of a number of residents. This has been most successful and thanks must go to DCB, Serena Bowe, Nigel Baker, Rick Marshall and Mark Hipgrave. The Trustees still have ultimate responsibility for the Hall. I have headed a fund raising committee for a number of years now and in the year we have been able to contribute some £1,700.00 to the Hall. My thanks to Katie Sarsfield, Charles Ancliffe, Simon Shaw and Sarah Whitfield. There will be another fund raising event in the autumn so I make a plug for an event that does not yet have a name or date.

Users and residents will have noticed that this last year the car park wall has been re-pointed and missing cop stones replaced, chimney repairs, new curtains and toilet flooring replaced. Cost of these items was some £8,800.00. There is still work to do to the car park, additional works to the walls and re-graveling of the surface. All those who have a listed building well know the costs of maintain old buildings are not cheap. The noisy heaters in the main Hall are still up for replacing or making them quieter.

So if you are looking to hold an event please consider hiring the Neville Hall.

I also have to thank all those who have attended the various functions held in the Hall.

I am John Birkett

Chair of the Neville Hall Trustees





Report to WSL Parish Council Tuesday 26th April 2016

Thank you for inviting me to the Parish Council APM, I apologise for not being able to attend this meeting. I am pleased and grateful that Clare McIntosh has agreed to represent the school in her role as a Parent Governor.

There have been a lot of changes in school, here is an update on the development and achievement of various aspects of the school.

Children and Achievements

Currently we have 114 children on roll. We are proud of our children's achievements last year. Please see the attached.

Values Education

At WSL we continue with Education in Human Values (EHV) as part of our PSHE Curriculum following the Five Core Human Values: **Truth, Love, Peace, Right Conduct and Non-Violence** and incorporating SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning) Programme, focusing on Change for the Summer Term 5 & 6 to prepare children for transition in their next phase of education.

We actively promote the British Values of **democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs**. Our values are right at the heart of who we are, driving what we do and how we do it. As a whole school our values permeate every aspect of school life, so that our children truly believe and understand it. We empower our children to take responsibility and become successful in making the right choices regarding their behaviour and actions. All staff and children are encouraged to use values

- as standards and principles
- for consistent reference points
- to motivate and prioritise
- to manage feelings effectively
- to develop positive character traits

As part of promoting the fundamental British Values, the school is aware of the need to be vigilant when it comes to any extremist attitudes or behaviour and appropriate actions will be taken accordingly. All staff had training on the government's counter-terrorism Prevent Strategy and are aware of the need to alert the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body if they have any concerns of this nature.

Health & Safety / School Security/Safeguarding

Unreservedly the Health and Safety of pupils comes first. Health and Safety Site Inspection is regularly carried out by RBWM Advisor and Governors and Headteacher.

All staff have had updated training on Safeguarding /Child Protection and attended Awareness course for medical conditions e.g. Severe Allergy Reaction, Epilepsy, Asthma etc.

Parents continue to follow the voluntary One-Way System at the beginning and end of school day and use the 'Stop and Drop' Zone from 8.40-8.50am. This has worked very well. Thanks to a group of parents who help to run this service.

We have improved the school security by completing the following priorities as identified in our School Improvement Plan (SIP):

- New School Gate and New chain-link fence were put up along the Adventure Playground to separate pupils from Staff Car Park on the playground
- New Staff Car Park was created including a parking bay for visitors who have a Disabled blue badge
- The gate to the Playing Field was replaced and locked at all times except during PE and Clubs within the school hours
- Parking has been improved for parents and visitors by removing the Single Yellow Lines and Restriction Sign in front of the school.
- Single White Lines were painted at the entrance and exit of resident's driveway to ensure they are not obstructed.
- All road users are advised to follow the Highway Code and be considerate to our neighbours when parking at all times.

Maintenance and Improvement of the School Learning Environment and the New Dining Building

Our New Dining Building was completed in November 2015 and has since been in full use. Not only do children thoroughly enjoy the freshly prepared good quality hot meals on site, but also enjoy the much improved positive lunchtime experience with their friends all under one roof!

We were also very pleased with completion of modernising and refurbishing the old Dining Room at the end of January 2016, which is now used as a proper teaching and learning room for Year 1 children. With the raised money through the PTA and generous donations from parents and the school community, some new desks, chairs storage units were purchased for the children. During the Easter Holiday a brand new 'Teaching Wall' including white boards and storage space was installed.

We are also very grateful to The Village Charity for their generous donations which enabled us to purchase two interactive TV Screens for the Year 1 Room and Red Kites. They are being used daily and have enhanced both teaching and learning.

This extra Dining Hall has created a lot of spaces and flexibilities for teaching and learning during the school day as well as offering opportunities for extra-curricular activities and further extending after school services e.g. Breakfast club or After School Care Club etc. Last Friday we held Quiz Night organised by the PTA in the Dining Hall and it was a great success.

The children enjoy using the Playground Markings funded by the PTA.

The overall learning environment in school has been improved tremendously.

As a school we are constantly improving our school environment for the benefit of our children, often we are constrained by the very tight budget and will seek different sources for funding some projects as identified in our School Improvement Plan. We would be grateful for any donations from the school community.

To further improve the learning environment for EYFS, we are planning to have a conservatory built as an extension to the existing EYFS classroom. However, this will have to be postponed due to the constraint of budget as we have not got enough budgets for this either. RBWM will not provide extra funding.

Building Services from RBWM are still working on the following jobs which are funded and done by RBWM:

- Re-decorating the Bell Tower and the eaves
- Stripping back to the wood of the existing windows, the front windows and side windows, filling where needed and re-painting them all

Waltham St Lawrence Primary School PTA

At the recent meeting it was discussed that the WLSA should revert to the old name of Waltham St Lawrence Primary School PTA. This is to avoid confusion with the charity and bank as it has proved difficult to change the details. We are in the process of getting this sorted. The PTA have been very busy organising events to raise money for school. There are a few projects that the WLSA will focus on and raise money for, such as, more Playground Markings, Football Goals, lockable Storage Units for Games/equipment, Outdoor weather-proof Clock, Reference Books for Library and paints for redecoration of external walls etc.

Staffing

Due to career development and family commitments we have one member of staff left last term, with one leaving shortly. This has created an opportunity for us to restructure our staffing. We are in the process of appointing a KS2 teacher for September.

The focus of WSL Governing Body:

- Continue to ensure safeguarding of all pupils and achievement of all groups
- Oversee the implementation of SIP and evaluate the impact
- Ensure the stability of school finances including overseeing additional fundraising efforts, and ensure our spend maximises value for money
- Strive to increase our profile within the school community and improve its understanding of what role the Governing Body plays
- Continue to develop our own skills and knowledge
- Continue to monitor our effectiveness

Links with other schools

With the budget cut leading to the withdrawal of many sources of support from the Borough the cluster head teachers meet once a term to share ideas and organise other professional development opportunities for staff meetings and trainings e.g. teachers and TAs share good practice and swap roles and learn from each other.

The Lych Gate

As a school we continue to contribute work or news from the children to the magazine on a regular basis. Children take pride in their work and it also gives the community an opportunity to keep up to date of what happens in our village school.

Sports and Other Extra Curricula Clubs

We have many after school extra-curricular clubs e.g. Golf, Netball, Sewing and Football, Tennis Clubs continue to be popular sports for after school clubs and our Chess Club and Craft Club run by parents supported by staff are going from strength to strength.

This term we start Athletics –Running to Rio Club, Rounders Club will start once football season is over. We also run Reading and Homework Club to provide extra support to children.

The Village Summer Fete and the Village Show

We will take part in the Parish Summer Fete this June. The children/family will also be encouraged to take part in the Village Show in September and will submit entries to Competitions for different age groups as usual.

I hope you find the information provided useful and if you have any questions regarding this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Once again thank you to Clare McIntosh for representing the school on my behalf on this occasion.

Li-Juan Ellerton
Headteacher



Presentation to Waltham St Lawrence Parish Council April 2016

Firstly may i take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for allowing David Philp and Partners to speak on what we do. Indirectly we probably have significant impact on the rural character of this village

To give you a background my family moved to Church Farm in 1942. I personally have lived and worked in the Parish most of my life. When I was born there were 5 family farms and 4 dairy herds in the village. Today we are the only farming business left in the Parish and there are only 3 dairy herds left in Berkshire.

So what are we about? Our core businesses are arable farming growing wheat, barley, oats, oilseed rape and beans, and producing high quality turkeys for the Christmas market.

For the past few years all the wheat grown in this Parish has either ended up as flour for Tesco or Waitrose in store bakeries or in the Fine lady bakery producing bread for the huge ready made sandwich market in this country. The climate in the Thames valley is very helpful in producing top quality wheat for the bread making market.

One of the major changes we have had to make in the last 10 years to continue to produce top quality wheats is to improve our production chain. Firstly this involved a radical investment in our outdated storage facilities at Church Farm, and secondly a major investment in our most precious asset in the parish _“the soil”.

I do this by using Organic matter, which helps in protected the soil from weather extremes such as flood and drought and is good at holding onto vital nutrients. It used to come from the cows, sheep, and pigs which are sadly no longer in the parish. So where can I get it from? And the answer is “you” the parishioners!

How? There are four major sources:-

1. I won't go into too much detail but Thames water have just delivered 2000 tonnes of sewage cake from Wargrave sewage works!
2. Green waste from your green wheelie bins is taken to a composting site and then returned as a superb high organic matter soil conditioner. Unfortunately all of Windsor and Maidenhead's green waste goes to a site in Wallingford which is too far. The compost at Church Farm mainly comes from Slough borough council.
3. A large proportion of land in the parish that once had dairy herds, has a new form of livestock called Polo horses. These still produce manure in large quantities which we are now utilising on some of our land.
4. Finally our fourth ingredient comes from the food waste bins collected every Friday. The food waste is taken to a digestion plant where it is mixed with bugs and heat in air tight vessels. The process produces large volumes of methane which is captured and either put straight onto the natural gas grid or converted to electricity and put on the grid. The residue after all the gas has been extracted is a high quality organic fertilizer called anaerobic digestate. This is usually applied to our crops when they

need feeding most, which is in the spring and early autumn. In 2015 we completed a major project to construct a storage lagoon for this material at Church Farm. We went to great effort to design and locate this lagoon where it would have minimal impact on the Parish. Since we have started using this material there is a noticeable difference in the health and appearance of the crops where it is applied compared to where it is not.

All these ingredients are part a major plan to make our business as sustainable as possible for the future extremes of weather and market.

On a final note can I thank the vast majority of parishioners for their patience and understanding when we go through our busiest times, especially during harvest.
