

**MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting of Melksham Without Parish Council held at Whitley Reading Rooms, Middle Lane, Whitley on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at 7.00pm.**

1. **Present:** Cllrs. Richard Wood (Chairman), Alan Baines, Paul Carter, Gregory Coombes, Paul Taylor, Mary Pile and Kaylum House.  
  
Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk), Jo Eccleston (Parish Officer) and Marianne Rossi (Apprentice Parish Officer).
2. **Apologies:** Cllrs. John Glover (Vice-Chairman), Mike Mills, Nick Holder and Joanne Pattison.
3. **Not Present:** Cllrs. Steve Petty and Terry Chivers.
4. **Welcome & Housekeeping:** The Chairman, Cllr. Wood warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.
5. **a) Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2016:** The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2016, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.  
  
**b) Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.
6. **Chair's Report:** The Chairman gave his report of the work of the Council during 2016/17 (*See Appendix 1.*) and thanked all the volunteers who kept the Parish Council notice boards up to date and checked the 8 community defibrillators in the parish.
7. **Reports on Melksham Neighbourhood Plan:** Nick Westbrook, Health Lead on the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, gave an update on the Neighbourhood Plan process to date. He explained that Neighbourhood Planning was about giving communities the opportunity to influence future planning. He stated that the joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan was nearing completion of the preparatory work for site assessments of sites brought forward via the Wiltshire Council SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) for potential future development. There are currently 67 sites on the SHLAA for the Melksham Area, and the Neighbourhood Plan Housing Task Group had whittled these sites down using a criteria based process to approximately 15 sites which would now be assessed for their suitability by an independent consultant. He reported that the Steering group were waiting until after the General Election on 8<sup>th</sup> June, before holding any public consultations, but that public feedback was an integral part of the Plan process. He stated that although the Canal Link and possible Eastern Bypass were not immediate projects, that the Steering Group were mindful that there was a possibility that they could come forward with the next 10 years, up to the end of the Plan Period which was 2026 in line with the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
8. **Report on Future Plans for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Operational HQ:** Kevin Reed, Wiltshire Air Ambulance Charitable Trust Head of Operations, gave an update on the move of the Air Ambulance from Devizes to the Parish on land at Outmarsh Farm, near to Melksham Police Station. Kevin explained that historically the Wiltshire Air Ambulance had been a combined service with Wiltshire Police, up until 2014, and since then it has been a

stand alone air ambulance. The Air Ambulance helicopter needs to move out of its home in the grounds of Wiltshire Police HQ and therefore a brand new airbase HQ and home for the fundraising arm of the Charity, which is currently based in Calne, is being built in the Parish. Just over 2 weeks ago work commenced on site and it is hoped that the build will take approximately 45 weeks, with the Air Ambulance being operational from this site in May/June 2018. The building itself will house the helicopter, operating 19 hours a day, the paramedics and rapid response cars, the administration and fundraising team, and community based facilities including 2 classrooms to host learning and development training. In addition to the operating costs the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Charitable Trust has had to find £5.1m to fund this project. To date they have £1m left to fundraise, but the team are working hard to achieve this. He encouraged people to look at their website to find out how they can help and get involved with the appeal.

9. **Report on Work of CAWS (Community Action: Whitley Shaw) CEG (Community Emergency Group):** Brian Roberts, Chairman of CEG, gave a welcome to everyone present stating that they were sitting in the CEG's Control Room and that this was where they coordinated any emergency response from. He gave a brief history of how the CEG came into being. Following the 1 in 100 year storm in September 2014, two elderly residents of Whitley were evacuated from their home and other houses and vehicles were flooded. In October 2014 a public meeting was held at Shaw school with in excess of 200 attendees. The message from Wiltshire Council at this meeting was that both villages needed to help themselves, thus the CEG was created with Melksham Without Parish Council assisting by producing flood leaflets, a community resilience toolkit and providing a phone line and internet connection to Whitley Reading Rooms so that it could be used as their Control Room. Wiltshire Council provided flood warden training and a supply of sandbags for use by the food wardens, and a local business provided the storage for their equipment, much of which the group had been able to purchase from applying for grant funding. The Group now had flood warning road signs which had been deployed following that last incident of flooding. The CEG realized that as well as acting in response to flooding issues that they could extend this to other emergencies, such as snow, fuel and energy disruptions, flu epidemics and other health pandemics. There is a Steering Group of 6 members who meet six times a year, whose contact details area published around both villages, with approximately 30 volunteer members who are able to assist in an emergency. There is a system of call out, which was tested a few weeks ago and 19 people were available to be at the CEG HQ within one hour. Brian thanked the Parish Council for all their help and support. Cllr. Wood stated that the Parish Council were very proud of the work undertaken by the community groups in the Parish and that the CEG had been held up by Wiltshire Council as an exemplar of good practice.
10. **Short Film on Voluntary Work in the Melksham Community Area:** A short film, produced by Rhys Schell, Melksham Community Area Engagement Manager, was shown which highlighted all the fantastic work carried out by voluntary groups and organisations in the Melksham Area, and the variety of clubs and groups available to all ages and abilities.
11. **Wiltshire Councillor Reports:**
  - a) **Cllr. Roy While – Melksham Without North:** Wiltshire Cllr. While stated that he attends many Melksham Without Parish Council meetings and that he is always very impressed with the work that they carry out and feels that part of his role is to act as a conduit between the Parish Council and Wiltshire Council. He stated that he was

pleased to see that the Parish Council had taken on the devolved service of play areas in the parish from Wiltshire Council and also the joint funding of the toilets in the Market Place with the Town Council. He reported that the new Football and Rugby facility was a legacy development and that as a member of the Campus advisory team, he felt that this was a project that would eventually come to fruition. He informed that the main area of spending for Wiltshire Council was young people and the elderly and that it will be interesting following the General Election how this spending will be affected.

- b) **Cllr. Phil Alford – Melksham Without South:** Wiltshire Cllr. Alford had sent his apologies for this evening's meeting.
- c) **Cllr. Jon Hubbard – Chair of Melksham Area Board:** Cllr. Hubbard stated that as Chair of the Area Board he wanted to attend as many various parish council meetings in the Melksham Area as possible as he was mindful of these residents as well as town residents. He paid tribute to Cllr. Terry Chivers who had been unsuccessful with re-election as a Wiltshire Councillor, and commended him of his hard work and commitment over the years.

**12. Written Reports from Community Organisations in the Parish:** The Following written reports were noted:

- a) **Melksham Neighbourhood Police** - Appendix 2.
- b) **Melksham and District Neighbourhood Watch** - Appendix 3.
- c) **Community Area Community Safety Group** - Appendix 4.
- d) **Melksham Community Area Partnership** - Appendix 5.
- e) **Transport:**
  - (i) **CATG (Community Area Transport Group)** – Appendix 6.
  - (ii) **Melksham Rail Users Group** – Appendix 7.
- f) **Action Groups:**
  - (i) **BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group)** - Appendix 8.
  - (ii) **BASRAG (Berryfield & Semington Road Action Group)** - Appendix 9.
  - (iii) **CAWS (Community Action Whitley Shaw)** - Appendix 10.
- g) **Village Halls:**
  - (i) **Bowerhill Village Hall Trust** - Appendix 11.
  - (ii) **Shaw Village Hall and Playing Fields** – Appendix 12.
  - (iii) **Whitley Reading Rooms** – Appendix 13.
  - (iv) **Berryfield Village Hall** – Appendix 14.
  - (v) **Rachel Fowler Centre** – Appendix 15.
- h) **Schools:**
  - (i) **Melksham Oak Community School** – Appendix 16.
  - (ii) **Forest & Sandridge CE Aided Primary School** - Appendix 17.
  - (iii) **Shaw C of E Primary School** - Appendix 18.
- i) **Youth Organisations:**
  - (i) **2385(Melksham) Squadron** – Appendix 19.
  - (ii) **Broughton Gifford & Holt Scout Group** – Appendix 20.
- j) **Melksham Phab** - Appendix 21.
- k) **Happy Circle Day Centre** - Appendix 22.
- l) **Wiltshire Mind** – Appendix 23.
- m) **Read Easy Melksham** – Appendix 24.
- n) **Shaw and Whitley Garden Club** – Appendix 25.
- o) **Melksham Gardeners' Society** – Appendix 26.
- p) **Whitley Art Group** – Appendix 27.

**q) *The Melksham Food and river festival* – Appendix 28.**

**r) *Melksham Choral Society* – Appendix 29.**

- 13. Comment & Question Time:** Many of the groups and organisations present thanked the Parish Council for their support and put in a plug for forthcoming events. Cllr. Wood reported that the future of two local village magazines, Bowerhill Villager and Shaw & Whitley Connect, were in jeopardy. The issue for both of these publications was not one of funding, but one of volunteers. He reported that the situation for both had reached crisis point and appealed for volunteers or suggestions on how either publication could move forward and keep going.
- 14. Presentation of Grant Aid Cheques:** The Chairman presented the 2017 Grant Aid cheques to groups and organisations who had been awarded a grant as they provided a service which benefitted the residents of the Parish.

Meeting closed at 8.43pm

Chairman, 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2018

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**18<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is my fourth Chairman's report for the Annual Meeting. Last year we could celebrate the survival of the Melksham Without Parish Council as a separate council working for the benefit of all the villages surrounding Melksham. This year the consequences of the boundary review have just been enacted, with 833 houses in the east of Melksham, and on the George Ward site being transferred to the Town Council, at our suggestion. As a consequence, our precept fell by £46,000 more of which later. One major change this year was the employment of an apprentice, Marianne Rossi. This innovation has worked well, and is one we are likely to repeat in future.

### **PRECEPT**

The Precept set for 2017/2018 is £178,000 a decrease of £43,000. This results in a small percentage rise of £1.71 (1.81%) per D band property because the transfer of properties to the Town Council significantly decreases out tax base. Last year's large increase was in response to the devolution of services from Wiltshire Council to Parish level, and enabled us to assume the management of play areas in Berryfield and Bowerhill, with a view to an eventual asset transfer of the play areas from Wiltshire Council. We are also committed to taking on equipped play areas in new developments in the parish. We will continue to explore ways in which we can continue to provide services which Wiltshire Council cannot fund.

One new scheme under consideration will be the takeover of the "far fields" at the George Ward site. These fields are surplus to requirements by the developers, and we have joined with the Town Council in considering how to develop the fields for the benefit of all the people of Melksham. Allotments, a community orchard, tree planting and a managed open space are all being evaluated.

### **PLANNING**

Reviewing and commenting on plans submitted to Wiltshire Council are an important part of MWPC's responsibilities, one we take very seriously. This year we received 115 planning applications, including 13 large developments. In addition to the large housing developments this number includes applications for the new home for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, a hotel and new Jaguar dealership on the A350, gas fuelled back-up generators in Roundponds and an anaerobic digester plant in Sandridge which was withdrawn by the applicant.

Last year I was able to welcome the virtual completion of the east of Melksham development and the associated school and commercial centre. The new pub is playing a key role in the area, and almost all the shops next to the Co-op are occupied. I had the great pleasure on April 3<sup>rd</sup> of formally opening the new vets, part of an expanding chain in West Wilts.

We still await the beginning of work on 100 houses at Sandridge, 450 houses behind the Spa, and the extension of Eastern Way to Spa Road. This new road potentially forms part of a future Melksham eastern bypass.

We are also expecting the start of work on the developments at Pathfinder Way and Semington Road. These developments were rather controversial, especially the Pathfinder Way one which threatens to close the gap between Bowerhill and Melksham, and provide a school, the associated traffic for which could cause serious congestion at peak periods. Unfortunately, our ability to resist developments such as these had been compromised by the Wiltshire Council's failure to guarantee a five-year supply of housing land. This lack has now been remedied, giving the Wiltshire Council a greater ability to resist inappropriate developments. We have already seen the refusal for houses in Woodrow Road and we now have a better defence against the development at Townsend farm, which would greatly exacerbate the congestion of the A350

The Wilts and Berks Canal:

Plans for the Wilts and Berks canal to Melksham from the Kennet and Avon have received further blows recently, with the withdrawal of another landowner, and critical reports from the Environment Agency. We understand that a preliminary development of a marina at Semington and a short piece of canal may be brought forward in the coming year. Even this modest proposal will need some associated enabling development at Outmarsh Farm. We await new developments with great interest.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

Neighbourhood planning is potentially a way to shape future development to the needs of Melksham rather than the needs of developers. Melksham Without Parish Council and Melksham Town Council continue with their work on our own Neighbourhood Plan. A short list of possible development sites has been produced, but as Melksham already has its housing quota for the period until 2026, and the County has a 5-year land supply in place, only exception sites would be allowed. Our work is to be assessed by AECOM, an outside agency, and we hope to complete the plan this Autumn after further consultation on our proposals to date.

## **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

The year has seen the consolidation of all the work of last year on emergency planning. Flood wardens in Shaw and Whitley, and CAWS, the new community group for Shaw and Whitley were able to show the efficiency of the planning when there was a very heavy downpour last November. CAWS have received another grant which enabled them to buy more emergency equipment.

One unforeseeable and very personal emergency is a heart attack. We have now installed eight defibrillators. They are at Shaw Village Hall, Whitley Reading Rooms, The New Inn at Berryfield, the Water Meadow in East Melksham, The Pilot in Bowerhill, St Barnabas Church, Beanacre, The Pavilion at Bowerhill Sports Field and inside Bowerhill Village Hall.

## **RECREATION**

The significant increase in last year's precept was made in response to the severe constraints placed on Wiltshire Council's spending by central government. The parish Council agreed to contribute towards keeping the toilets by the Art House café in the Market Place open, and we now manage the play areas at Kestrel Court and Berryfield with the aim of taking on the one at Hornchurch Road. We have already refurbished Berryfield and Kestrel Court.

In addition to costs incurred on these play areas, and our existing ones in Shaw and Beanacre, and the MUGA at Hornchurch Road, we have the Bowerhill Sports field and Pavilion to look after. Unfortunately for

us (but not for Melksham as a whole!), the new facility at Oakfields has led to a significant drop in bookings for our three pitches at Bowerhill. We are actively looking for alternative uses and would like to remind everyone what a great pavilion, we have, available for hire at very reasonable rates.

## **COMMUNITY GROUPS**

CAWS (Community Action: Shaw and Whitley) have gone from strength to strength. We are all looking forward to their now annual event at Shaw playing fields in July. The group has proved to be a formidable fund raiser, and in conjunction with the Shaw Hall committee much progress is being made. A new community group in Beanacre had an inaugural meeting in July with their first community event in November, and their Beanacre Speedwatch team has proved one of the most active in Wiltshire. BRAG in Bowerhill and BASRAG in Berryfield have also continued to be active in their communities. BRAG's work on the canal side picnic area has been exemplary, as has the work of their legendary litter pickers. BASRAG's Easter egg hunt attracted record numbers this year.

## **THE FUTURE**

The Parish is in good heart as we face another four year term. It was a little disappointing that we did not have enough nominees to fill all the vacancies on the Council but we will be sure to co-opt people who are committed to continuing the good work of the Council.

It is tempting to think that after a flurry of building developments in the past 5 years that there may be a lull until 2026. Alas we know how fatal it is to drop one's guard and we will continue to be vigilant in our examination of all future planning applications, in concert with the Neighbourhood Plan. One thing is certain. MWPC will continue to develop new projects, and will work tirelessly to continue the community work which is such a feature of our constituent villages.

## **A PERSONAL NOTE**

Finally, I'd like to thank the hard-working staff who always deliver a top-class service whatever the workload or the occasional provocation. Teresa has continued to develop her skills and is a tireless and innovative clerk; I believe that she is leading us from strength to strength. Just last month we decided that she go full time, which is a sure indicator of the ever increasing workload that all parish councils face as a consequence of County Councils being starved of money.

Our Finance Assistant, Sharon has completed her first year with us, and has been working on the adoption of our new accounting procedures.

Jo is our planning guru; she is that rare person, a keen student of all matters planning! She also has the virtue of great patience as she explains the more arcane aspects of council powers to concerned parishioners.

This year the first face visitors will see is Marianne Rossi, our apprentice. Marianne has fitted in very well at Crown Chambers, and has been quick to pick up the skills needed in her role, and the variety of work she can carry out has steadily increased. We wish her well for the coming year, when she will complete her time with us and venture out into full time employment.

Terry Cole continues to excel in his role as parish caretaker; every year he has to take on extra responsibilities as the role of the Council changes, and always copes with good humour and efficiency. He is effectively one of the important public faces of MWPC.

They all support us wholeheartedly and are the very heart of MWPC.

## **Melksham Neighbourhood Policing Report for 2016/17**

The general crime rate for Melksham rural over the last 12 months was exceptionally high. We recorded 101 crimes instead of the expected average of 69. Driving these high statistics were above average rates of Violent Crime and Criminal Damage and Arson. Most other crime types were average for what we would expect over this time period. There is no definite cause for the increase, and as the figures are generally relatively low, it is not unlikely for statistics to be skewed by one or two unusual incidents.

## **Neighbourhood Watch**

The aim of Neighbourhood Watch is to bring neighbours together to create strong, friendly, active communities where crime and anti-social behaviour are less likely to happen. We are lucky here in Melksham in having an award-winning volunteer resident coordinator who supervises the scheme and liaises with the police, passing on information and messages to keep everyone in touch with activities. It must be recognised that the scheme is a community initiative, which is supported by the Community Area Partnership and the police, not run by them. The group undertakes a great deal of work in the Melksham Without area in particular. It is planned to continue to introduce SmartWater across the whole Melksham area in 2017-18 to make it a safer place to live and work in.

## **Melksham Area Community Safety Group**

The MCAP Melksham Area Community Safety Group meets on the last Thursday of every month and has been successful in introducing a volunteer-run state-of-the-art digital CCTV system to Melksham Town Centre and a highly commended Safe Places scheme, as well as serving as a focal point for Neighbourhood Watch, Community Speedwatch, the PCC, and the Neighbourhood Policing teams to ensure that community safety priorities are identified and tackled. Community Speedwatch in and around Melksham has also been a major success, notably in Atworth, Steeple Ashton, Beanacre, Snowberry Lane, Shaw & Whitley and Semington Road.





# MELKSHAM COMMUNITY AREA PARTNERSHIP

## Annual Report 2016-17

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Melksham Community Area is set in 99km<sup>2</sup> of rural Wiltshire, and includes the parishes of Atworth, Broughton Gifford, Bulkington, Great Hinton, Keevil, Melksham, Melksham Without, Poulshot, Seend, Semington and Steeple Ashton. The total population is approximately 30,000 people. The market town of Melksham itself is an important centre for people who live in the community area to access a wide range of services including health, education, leisure, shops and employment.

The community has a vibrant energy which becomes particularly evident at the local events, festivals and fairs that take place throughout the year and across the community area.

### 2. BACKGROUND

On behalf of the local community, MCAP seeks to:

#### **Identify the community's priorities for action**

We have established a wide-ranging network of community organisations, groups, clubs, societies, schools, churches and businesses as well as interested individuals in order to connect with as many local people as possible.

#### **Reflect local concerns and ideas**

We are looking to bring about positive change through a combination of encouraging local projects and finding ways to raise awareness.

#### **Maintain strong links with our partners**

We engage with unitary, town and parish councils and other partners to build effective participation, consultation and community engagement community. We serve as an advocate for engagement and enable the creation of and empowered communities. We provide meeting and event facilitation, and management. In December 2016, we Groups and Organisations Meeting to bring everyone planning an event during 2017 successful that we've been asked to do it of this year.



across the civic strong, resilient excellent administration facilitated a together which was so again at the end

#### **OUR KEY AIMS are to:**

**DEVELOP:** To develop the capacity and skills of our community groups, enabling them to perform their roles

**SHARE:** We endeavour to provide a platform for the community organisations to share information, ideas and best practice so as to foster efficient and informed working. **PROFILE:** To raise awareness, understanding and support for the organisations and the work they carry out in our community area

**NETWORK:** One of our primary aims is to build and maintain relationships with partner organisations and key stakeholders. We are skilled in networking and encourage engagement via social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn, and have links to well over 1,000 Twitter users.

**SUSTAIN:** We seek to ensure an independent partnership that is fit for purpose, sustainable and able to support the community organisations in their work.

**Below are just some of the highlights of Melksham Community Area Partnership in the previous year.**

## 1. DEVELOPING

### Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council are working together to support and facilitate the production of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, and a Steering Group has been formed



with their support to oversee the process. A key element of the process is the effective participation of the public in the plan preparation process and support of local residents for the final Melksham Neighbourhood Plan.

MCAP has been engaged in this process since 2015 and forms a key element of the Steering Group, as well as providing administrative support. Partnership staff also played a key role in the development of a **Sustainability Scoping Report** for Melksham, an eighty-page document covering such diverse issues as: Land and Soil Resources, Water resources and flood risk, Air quality and environmental pollution, Climatic Factors, Historic Environment, Landscapes, Population and Housing, Healthy Communities, Ethnicity, Education and Skills and Transport.

## 2. SHARING and NETWORKING

Our network of **theme groups** look at issues and arrange projects and report the partnership Officer. We also link to groups that are active in the community.

**Theme: Environment**

**Community Apple Pressing Day** was held September 2016. These events have very popular since we started them in Board grants were applied for and kindly



specific direct to existing

on 18<sup>th</sup> become 2012. Area awarded

which enabled the Environmental Group to purchase a powerful pulping machine and a much larger apple press. The group also had a stall at the gardening Show which took place on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

It's planned to hold similar such events again later in 2017.



**Community Seed Swap** This took place on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and is something else which the Environment Group has established as a regular attraction in the Melksham community area calendar of events. Anyone that's been a gardener for any length of time, whether simply growing a few flowers in a border at home or keeping the kitchen well stocked on an allotment or two, will be bound to have a few spare packets of seed lying around. The

Melksham Community Seed Swap is a great opportunity to exchange some of those seeds, crowns or sets for something else. We welcome flowers, vegetables, any kind of seed. People simply have to turn up with seeds to swap

(clearly labelled and saved in packets or envelopes), take a look at what's on offer and swap seeds either directly with other gardeners or from the Community Collection.

### Theme: Health & Well Being

#### Project: Establish a Health Forum

Working closely with the Spa Medical Centre's Patients Reference Group, MCAP volunteers have successfully launched a series of public health forums which have been extremely well attended. Since 2015 these have tackled men's health, obesity, mental diabetes.

In the past year the group Women's Health Information October 4th 2016 and a Information Evening 21st 2017, which prompted Helen professional from Carer's Wiltshire to write:

"Thank you so much for event last night and giving opportunity to talk to so was great to see such a good was pleased to be able to answer so many questions both in the group and individually afterwards. This event was extremely well organised and it was very clear that Carers feel looked after."



issues such as health and

have hosted a Evening on Carer's February Gough, a Support,

arranging the me the many Carers. It age range and I

Volunteers also manned an information stall at the **Food and River festival** during the summer which saw 5,000 people pass by during the day.



The next planned event is on 16th May 2017 featuring a practice Doctor and a Pharmacist addressing the subject of "how to make the most of your visit to the doctors"

During June 2016 MCAP volunteers also undertook a series of presentations to Wiltshire MIND groups raising awareness of Dementia Friendly Melksham, Safe Places, Neighbourhood Watch, Smartwater and emergency support provision (such as help during power cuts).

### Project: Establish the Melksham Community Area Dementia Action Alliance

In 2015 we helped form a steering group to drive forward a Dementia Friendly Melksham initiative with advice from local Trowbridge-based charity Alzheimer's Support. Our previous success with the Safe Places scheme provided a good starting point and the first steering group meeting took place in January 2016. According to Alzheimer's Support, there are approximately 370 people in Melksham living with dementia.

The initial aims of the group were to encourage as many people in the community as possible to attend a Dementia Friends session. In the last 6 months we have made over 150 new Dementia Friends. The group has grown to include a wide range of local people, including carers and people living with dementia, and partner agencies and organisations. They meet regularly and continue to develop their aims, actions and links to the wider community.



The group has been working hard over the last year to reach out to a huge range of local organisations and groups who may come into contact with someone living with dementia; the library, leisure centre, GP surgeries, Fire & Rescue and youth groups, as well as running Dementia Friends sessions for the Parish Council and residents of Melksham and Atworth.

Local groups and activities include: a Memory

Café at The Arts House Café on the 3rd Monday of the month; Singing for the Brain on Wednesday afternoons in Seend, and Movement for the Mind, Bowerhill Village Hall, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month.

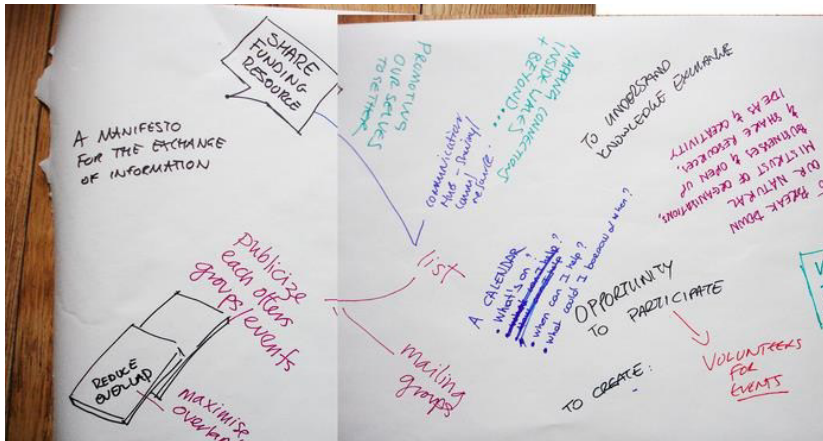
## Theme: Community Safety

The Community Safety group meets on the last Thursday of every month and has been successful in introducing a volunteer-run state-of-the-art digital CCTV system to Melksham Town Centre and a highly commended Safe Places scheme, as well as serving as a focal point for Neighbourhood Watch, Community Speedwatch, the PCC, and the Neighbourhood Policing teams to ensure that community safety priorities are identified and tackled.

The group undertakes a great deal of work in the Melksham Without area in particular. It is planned to continue to introduce SmartWater across the whole community area in 2017-18 to make it a safer place to live and work in, and to that end we have secured enough funding to purchase kits, some of which we can give away to the most vulnerable in our community.

Community Speedwatch in and around Melksham has also been a major success, notably in Atworth, Steeple Ashton, Beanacre, Snowberry Lane, Shaw & Whitley and Semington Road.

### 3. SUSTAINING



#### The Melksham Community Area

Partnership is committed to continuing the good work undertaken in line with the community's wishes but is reliant on grant funding in order to continue. Wiltshire Council's Area Board has in the past been supportive, however they are no longer able to provide revenue funding. Charities in and around Melksham will provide small grants to achieve specific projects, and mindful of

this we are applying for grants where relevant – for example, we have purchased SmartWater kits to protect householders' belongings.

#### **What is harder to fund however is the revenue costs that keep the organisation running, successful and impactful.**

The Wiltshire Council Business Plan states that Wiltshire Council will be “creating stronger and more resilient communities” and we fit into Outcome 2- “People in Wiltshire work together to solve problems locally and participate in decisions that affect them.” MCAP has experience in involving people in service design and delivery to achieve a better outcome and to help people trust each other and the outcomes for the community. MCAP will add value for money in working with the local community to achieve their needs and wants. MCAP has already shown by its community plans and projects that we are skilled and confident with community consultation, so our actions speak for themselves.

For further information please contact:

Phil McMullen, Partnership Coordinator – [melkshamcap@gmail.com](mailto:melkshamcap@gmail.com) or Colin Goodhind, Chair of the Partnership [colingoodhindofmcap@gmail.com](mailto:colingoodhindofmcap@gmail.com)

## Melksham Community Area Transport Group (CATG)

The Melksham CATG addresses transport related matters raised as 'Issues' with the Area Board and is attended by Councillor Baines on behalf of MWPC (Councillor Brindle also attended for Bowerhill). Meetings are held at roughly quarterly intervals, chaired by a Melksham Area Wiltshire Councillor, currently Cllr. While. The Group has no formal decision making authority on operational matters or budget expenditure, but acts as an informal discussion forum making recommendations to the Area Board.

All Community Transport issues must be first discussed with the Divisional Member and, where funding is required, subsequently recommended for progression to the CATG by the relevant Town or Parish Council.

Funds available 2016/2017 for Melksham CATG proposals = £13225, plus any monies carried over from the previous year. Contributions are expected from Town/Parish Councils for projects that they put forward and this now seems to be 1/3 with the other 1/3 coming from the Area Board. Further 'CATG Substantive Scheme Funding' for whole county is £250K, for which each CATG can make application, before July, for schemes which would be beyond their budget.

During the 2016/17 year the following schemes in the Parish were addressed:

- 1) Hurricane Road footpath link to Grasmere, towards which MWPC contribution was £1334.
- 2) Drop kerb opposite De Havilland Close Bowerhill for which the estimate changed from £1200 to £839 but ended up costing £1458 due to the need to avoid a non-standard service chamber. MWPC contribution held at original £400.
- 3) Berryfield village sign near Townsend Farm, estimated at £300, but cost £276 - so finally only cost MWPC £76, as it was agreed to be split-funded and the saving then got passed on.

The change of the highways contractor to Wiltshire Council resulted in delays to the implementation of several schemes and revised costings too.

The provision of drop kerbs in Corsham Road, Whitley was one such scheme. Also, the original request was for either side of Middle Lane, but the north side of First Lane was later added. Unfortunately, repairs to adjacent footways could not be funded as part of this scheme, but MWPC are now hoping to fund one piece separately, to be done with the kerbs. The original estimate for the two sets of drop kerbs was £1500, but with the new contractor was likely to be nearer £2000, then adding the further set and the costs of traffic management the final estimate is now £3968. Having only budgeted for the original 1/3 cost of £500, MWPC were then being asked for £1323, but I did manage to negotiate that down to £1000.

A request for "SLOW" markings on A350 at Beanacre, either side of the Westlands Lane junction was agreed, with funding from the normal highways budget.

Having accepted a redundant Speed Indicator Device from Wiltshire Council, together with the Town and Atworth parishes, the replacement batteries were sourced in the UK by MWPC at a fraction of the possible cost of the 'genuine' ones from Germany. CATG were persuaded to fund the full cost of £284 to get the device into operation, but, even utilising the Town caretakers, deployment of the device is costing £100 for each site. It has been deployed at a total of 12 qualifying sites in the 3 parishes and the programme was set to be repeated, but technical issues have arisen which make it currently unusable.

DoNM: Tues 13th June, at Melksham Fire Station at 16.00.  
Cllr. Alan Baines

## Melksham Rail Users Group 2016-2017

The main objective of the organisation is to make Melksham station a viable and practical facility for all who wish to travel to/from Melksham and the surrounding villages.

In June 2016, the Melksham Railway Development Group (MRDG) changed its name to Melksham Rail Users Group (MRUG) to reflect a refocus on Melksham station and passenger issues, with the service throughout the Swindon to Westbury (and beyond) corridor being handled by the TransWilts Community Interest Company (TWCIC). In many ways, this is a reflection of the success of the new service - we no longer have to make the case for trains as was the case when MRDG was conceived 20 years ago.

Currently a service of 9 trains per day in each direction runs, funded by local and government subsidies. The service is reduced on Sunday but still constitutes a useable service. The service is now designated and as such becomes an obligation to the train operating companies as part of their franchise submissions. Extrapolated forecasts show passenger footfall up to 400,000 in the next 5 years.

The rail services benefit those who cannot drive, including the elderly and infirm. They also encourage young people to think of alternatives to car travel, with the consequential reduction in CO2 emission. Of course, such benefits accrue to us all, whatever age and whatever the reason for travel.

The station has enabled travel from Melksham to work by train viable, and there are significant numbers of commuters who now rely on the train on weekday mornings and evenings. It has made Melksham a town that business people can travel to without resorting to car use.

There still are many improvements needed to ensure the service continues and expands, such as access from the North, and better customer facilities at the station. These are part of overall package of proposed changes to provide a manned information point and a safer pedestrian environment. Already scheduled is platform extension to allow longer trains to stop at Melksham to avoid the overcrowding at some times in the day, a sign of the success of the station and train service.

The invaluable contribution from Melksham Without Parish Council has provided resources to allow the volunteer work to achieve our aims.

BOWERHILL RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP (BRAG) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO AGM 2017

The good news over the past year is that the picnic area has not flooded because the Canal Trust finally cleared out the culvert that had become blocked. The picnic area made a good recovery from all of the flooding and we were able to enter again into the Its Your Neighbourhood class of South West In Bloom. The judges were shown photographs of the flooding and they were impressed by the work that the BRAG volunteers had done to repair the damage. Marilyn and I went to Taunton for the presentation day and once again the BRAG picnic area was awarded our third consecutive Level 5 Outstanding award, a hat trick of victories. All three awards are on the table tonight.

The work there never stops and we now have a brand new noticeboard that matches the information lecterns as the Perspex on the old noticeboard had become so discoloured and cracked the notices inside were unreadable. The cost was met by a grant of E 1000 from Tesco's Bags of Help scheme and the remainder coming from a grant from Melksham Area Board. BRAG is grateful to both for their grants. The old noticeboard now contains pictures of wildlife. This Spring BRAG volunteers have trimmed both sides of the hedge down the bridle path. This has been a long and difficult task but it has been completed to the credit of all who worked on this. We are grateful to Colin Bush who brought his mobile shredder down to the path and shredded the tree cuttings. Colin took a morning away from his business at Whitehall Garden Centre to help us and we are very grateful to Colin for his help. Unfortunately we were recently subjected to more vandalism at the picnic area where two benches had their seats broken, flowers were damaged and a great deal of litter was left over the picnic area. On the same night Giles Wood was also attacked with people climbing trees, breaking branches and leaving litter. Both incidents were reported to the police. We appealed to the Bowerhill public for help asking for scaffolding boards that could be cut to size to make new seats to repair the damaged ones. A local resident, Mark Stevenson, not only supplied scaffolding boards but also donated a picnic table that he no longer required. With help from his neighbours he put the heavy bench onto his car trailer and took it straight to the picnic area and put it into position as agreed with BRAG members. Good news came from bad.

The BRAG litter pickers have continued to keep Bowerhill tidy. Unfortunately we did not win the Best Kept Large Village in West Wiltshire competition in 2016 even though we scored more points than we did the previous year when we finished first. BRAG has entered Bowerhill into this year's competition which is normally judged late June. This year I have filled in the entry form and detailed the parts of Bowerhill which are of interest to the judges but they do look all around the estate and we never know exactly when they turn up. Because BRAG was the second organisation to enter the competition in 2017 we have won bags of compost from Hilis. How much I don't know at present but they will be ready for collection soon. We also took part in the Great British Spring Clean which was a successor to the popular Clean for the Queen event last year

BRAG was finally given permission by Wiltshire Council to plant trees on Hornchurch Road open space to soak up the water. We have planted trees there on two occasions and if we get any more trees we will continue to plant here.

Our Facebook page has proved very popular and our messages are reaching over 1000 people.

BRAG also commented on the planning application to build houses on each side of Pathfinder Way which include space for a new primary school and money towards the cost. I attended the Planning Committee meeting at Chippenham along with members of the Bowerhill public and a representative of Melksham Without Parish Council. We all spoke against the plan and gave what I thought were valid planning reasons to reject the plan. Unfortunately



the possibility of getting a new school weighed heavily in the Committee's thoughts and they ignored everything we said and voted to approve the planning application. I was furious as there was no guarantee of ever getting a school there and if one is not built within a specified period the developers can apply to build more houses on the land.

BRAG is very grateful to Melksham Without Parish Council for its annual grant that goes to paying for our Public Liability Insurance without which we could not operate and towards the Village Hall charges for our meetings.

We are delighted that the Parish Council has taken over the children's play area at Kestrel Court which has been tidied up and completely modernised. We were as amazed as the Parish Council was to discover that Wiltshire Council do not own the children's play area in the Hornchurch Road open space as that is still owned by the developers although Wiltshire Council have been maintaining it ever since it opened. The Parish Council are talking to the developers now to see if they will agree to the ownership of the play area being transferred to the council.

We support the Parish Council's concerns about the high level of dog fouling in the Sports Fields which is also a public open space for residents to enjoy. We accept that most dog owners are responsible people who clear up after their dogs and the problem seems to be caused by dog owners letting their dogs off the lead and the dog then fouling the fields outside the vision of the owners. Since I put a message on our Facebook page about entering the Best Kept Village contest and asking residents not to drop litter and to clear up after their dogs a number of people listed parts of the Estate where there are problems with dog fouling. MWPC have warned dog owners that if the situation does not improve they will have to consider banning dogs altogether in this area. The problem is how to enforce such a ban as there is only one dog warden for the whole of Wiltshire.

We know that the Bowerhilt Community support our work and they are very grateful to BRAG for the work we do around Bowerhill. I wish to thank all of the volunteers who give their time freely to improve the environment in Bowerhili. Most of us are "golden oldies" and the work we do help us keep fit. Long may we continue.

Mike Mills

## Berryfield and Semington Road Action Group

### (BASRAG)



*BASRAG volunteers on a litter pick*

Berryfield and Semington Road Action Group (BASRAG) organise events which are well supported by the local community. These events include an Easter Fun Day incorporating an Egg Hunt and children's crafts, a Summer Fun Day with a bouncy castle, games and the Big Red Fun Bus, an Autumn children's craft day and a visit by Santa in his sleigh just before Christmas. Volunteers turn out at least twice a year to pick up litter around the area and this March took part in the Wiltshire Council initiative "The Great British Spring Clean".

Notice boards have been erected at the allotment gardens by volunteers from the Melksham Shed project who also assisted in erecting a sign post for the village hall which had been made by a BASRAG committee member.



*Volunteers from the SHED project who made and erected the allotment notice boards and helped to install the new finger post.*

## CAWS Chair Report

20<sup>th</sup> February 2017

In 2016/17 CAWS again had a great year in supporting the community, listening to residents and bringing the residents of Shaw and Whitley together at local events.

Some projects remained on the CAWS objectives list from the previous year and explored further, others were left on hold and while new ones were added.

During the spring months CAWS entered Shaw into the Best Kept Village Competition (BKVC) and in preparation for judging ran a 'Clean for the Community' litter pick in both Shaw and Whitley in May. Being amongst other early entries, CAWS were awarded ten bags of compost. For the competition, Shaw were awarded second place and Whitley third (entered by Melksham Without Parish Council (MWOPC)), with some really good feedback and much positivity about our villages. Both Shaw and Whitley lost points on the condition of the BT phone boxes.

As part of the Queens' 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations CAWS and the Shaw Village Hall Committee (SVH) hosted a picnic (Q90) for over 100 children and saw around 500 people visit the fete on what turned out to be a sunny afternoon. Generous donations from the public and organisations that were part of that day meant over £1000 was raised to go towards improvements at the facilities at the Beeches.

With this money now in the bank and MWOPC putting aside money for a new piece of play equipment, a subcommittee was created consisting of CAWS, SVH and MWOPC members to take forward the ideas which adults and children had given at previous consultations on improving recreational facilities at the Beeches – the Joint Recreational Fund Committee. Watch this space for consultations and development of ideas in 2017/18 from this committee.

Throughout the year CAWS were discussing the speeding that occurs within the village. The idea of putting stickers on wheelie bins has been explored and a good way CAWS feel to take action on trying to help reduce the speed of motorists when passing through our village. More to come on this very soon once the stickers are printed, residents in Top Lane, Corsham Road and Shaw Hill will soon be receiving a letter and the stickers.

The BT phone boxes have been on the CAWS objectives list since the start of our second year. Everything is now starting to fall into place for their adoption. Once successfully adopted CAWS and MWOPC will be agreeing a way forward for these phone boxes to be put to community use. Our most popular idea of turning one into a book exchange and the other into a history archive of the two villages has just become even closer to a realistic goal. I really feel this would be a fantastic project and a great way for CAWS to give back to those who have been so generous at our fund raising events.

During the autumn CAWS put some of the compost won from the BKVC to good use and planted bulbs at the entrances to both villages. Look out in the spring to see if our efforts are rewarded with some colour as you enter and leave Shaw and Whitley.

CAWS existing has again allowed our community to have a voice when it comes to local matters. The committee were asked for their opinion on whether the two fields next to Dunch Lane should be adopted by MWOPC. CAWS responded positively, in the hope that residents of Shaw and Whitley would be able to benefit from them being within the parish and that this would fit with the one of our long term objective's to have a cycle/pathway which connects Shaw to Dunch Lane benefiting school children, cyclists and encouraging walking to Melksham and the train station. In addition CAWS along with MWOPC hosted an

open session for the Neighbourhood plan to be seen and commented on, as well as a flood update meeting in October to inform residents of what has been happening in the last two years to address surface water flooding in the villages.

CAWS again applied for funding from Scottish and Southern Electric for £1500 on behalf of the Community Emergency Group (CEG). Thank you to the great number of volunteers involved in the group who have been regularly meeting to continually work on how the community can help those in need if there was a local emergency.

In December CAWS held the CAWS Christmas Cracker at Whitley Golf Club and raised just shy of a £1000. Again this year, locally businesses, organisations and residents were fantastic with their support to enable us to hold such an enjoyable event. The evening would not of course have been the great auction that it was without Roger Hollest who again volunteered his time to host our event.

When I sit here and write about the CAWS year it is with great sadness for me that I plan not to stand for relection again. That said if no Chair steps forward, I couldn't let all the hard work and progress that CAWS have made just finish on before a third year has begun. In any case I would like to remain on the CAWS committee and lead the recreational fund committee and am able to continue the event planning for this summer if this would help support a new chair.

There are a few objectives I would recommend for CAWS to continue with which are detailed in the objectives list.

And finally, most importantly, thank you messages. CAWS would not exist without the fantastic community we live in and the support that is given to the organisation.

Richard Bean has been an excellent secretary, his organisation of meetings, support to me as Chair, and more specifically the event management plan he so diligently started to enable the committees to complete for the summer fete.

Tony Bruun our Treasurer has provided us with fantastic support over the last two years, not only as treasurer, also someone who at a drop of hat would always be there to help or take on tasks.

Maureen Hibbott this year took the role as minutes secretary which has been a very welcome role to our group.

Mike Booth and Colour Idea have again this year completed all our design work and enabled a really smooth and quick printing service and great contribution.

Brian Roberts and Tony Bruun have led the CEG into their second year and worked very hard to ensure money is well spent on equipment and the momentum of the CEG continues.

MWOPC have provided great support and guidance to us, especially Teresa Strange, again this year to enable CAWS to achieve and progress its objectives.

Shaw village Hall and CAWS have become great partners this year in event planning and hosting and the creation of the recreational fund committee which enables us to really provide a great service to our community.

Volunteers who were involved in the Q90 fete gave a fantastic amount of their time and hard work not only on the day, also the day before in preparing for what looked like a very wet weekend. The number of gazeebos which began to arrive on the day was a great site.

The CAWS Committee, a huge thank you from me and the community for all their time, hard work lovely nature to want to do so much in our community.

Thanks to all and here is to another great year at CAWS.

Michelle Tattersall

Chair.

BOWERHILL VILLAGE HALL TRUST CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AGM 2017

The new exciting addition to the Hall this year is the installation of a multimedia system which permits users to play DVDs or have interactive presentations, a facility that many users require today and without which we would lose bookings. Half of the money came from a Melksham Area Board grant to whom the Village Hall Trust is very grateful and the remaining half came from our reserves.

The other addition to the Hall is a defibrillator which was part of a roll out of defibrillators throughout the Melksham Without Parish Council area. It does not have a cabinet as it was a donation from a local company so it is installed inside the Hall and only accessible for use by Hall users and Bowerhill School so is not available 24 hours a day. There is another defibrillator installed on the outside of the Pilot Inn which is available for use 24 hours per day. The Ambulance Service provided a free training programme to demonstrate to residents how to use the system which was a great success.

Our web pages have proved to be a great success and have led to an increase in bookings. People expect a Hall of our size to have a dynamic on line system and many people have commented on the ease of use of the booking system. Thanks are due to Gavin Owen for designing the system. The Bowerhill Village Hall continues to go from strength to strength. We have lost a couple of regular bookings but have also gained a number such as Coffee on the Way who book the Hall all day on alternative Wednesdays and offer a place for residents to meet and rest and enjoy top quality coffee. Our income from Hall rentals is up 28% and even though our expenditure has also increased our operating profit is up by 27%. Our treasurer will go through all of the figures later.

The Hall is running at a profit which is important to enable us to pay for maintenance. The Hall has a maintenance diary on display on the wall next to the entrance to the main hall which assures users that equipment in the Hall is regularly and thoroughly maintained but it also serves as a reminder to the committee when maintenance is due. The Committee is very grateful to Melksham Without Parish Council for their annual grant which enables the Management Committee to keep the booking fees as low as we can. The incident book is very important to the Hall Committee as issues are recorded when they occur and it also provides an audit check to determine when problems happened. The incident book is monitored at every Management Committee meeting and the good news is that there are few problems being recorded. Because the Hall is running so well that the Management Committee now meets every two months instead of monthly as before. If the situation deteriorates, then monthly management meetings will be re-introduced.

One of the issues that need action is the flooding at the front of the Hall that happens sometimes when there is heavy rain because the soakaway drain does not work properly. A contractor examined the soakaway and stated that it needs replacing at a cost of between £3000 and £3500. The Committee considered that the cost was exorbitant and we are currently waiting for reports and estimates from other contractors. The Committee is also considering changing the supplier who provides the collection of nappy and sanitary bins as our current supplier gives an inconsistent service. This will be one of the first decisions taken by the new committee.

I wish to thank all of the committee members for all of their hard work managing the Hall. They are volunteers who give their time freely and without their tireless work there would be no Hall.

Mike Mills

Chairman Bowerhill Village Hall Trust

May 2017

## **A Summary of Shaw Village Hall and Playing Fields Activities to March 2017**

Under Clive Briggs Chairmanship the Hall and Playing Field has continued to operate successfully over the last year.

The keynote of this past year has been co-operation – with the local community, with those who use the facilities on a regular basis, with the Parish Council and with CAWS. Last summer the Committee joined with CAWS to put on a highly successful and enjoyable community event to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. This kind of co-operation benefits the local community, utilising the energy and organisational skills of the CAWS committee members and the wonderful facilities at The Beeches.

The Committee has also benefited greatly from the advice and experience of the Parish Council and wish to publicly thank their officers for the friendly assistance and support. Their help was particularly invaluable in resolving what appeared at one stage to be an almost insoluble problem with cars being parked illegally in the car park. Thankfully this has now been resolved and the opportunity has been taken to make clear what parking is and is not permitted. Clearly the car park is primarily for the benefit of hall and playing field users, and anything that interferes with that cannot be permitted, but the Committee is mindful of the occasional needs of local residents as well as the parking issues around Shaw School and will always look to take a reasonable view.

The Committee were happy to participate in the initiative promoted by the Parish Council to install defibrillators at various points in the parish, by agreeing to host a defibrillator at the Hall and are delighted to see it installed.

Co-operation with both CAWS and the Parish Council continues at present as we jointly look to consider what enhancements can be made to the recreational facilities on the Playing Fields.

A small group of committee members, meeting to consider what improvements might be made to the Hall in the coming years, concluded that there was very little in the way of urgent action needed. Nevertheless, we did identify three areas which we should be looking at in the future. These are;

- improving storage facilities which are currently under severe pressure,
- measures to reduce our carbon footprint and future energy costs and
- measures to improve security in and around the hall.

However, there is one blot on the landscape. It has long been the case that the income received from hiring out the football pitch is considerably less than the cost of maintaining the field and meeting that shortfall has only been made possible the generous grant aid received from Melksham Without Parish Council. The availability of new pitches in Melksham is now threatening to upset the current balance. Unless new teams can be attracted, to replace those that have gone to the new facilities in Melksham, the income from that source is likely to dwindle – possibly to nothing. This is an issue which will need to be addressed in the coming year.

Richard Bean.  
Secretary.  
Shaw Village Hall.

# **Whitley Reading Rooms**

**Charity No 305595**

## Annual Report to Melksham Without Parish Council

**2016**

Having taken over as Chairman in April 2016 I am pleased to report that the previous trustees left all aspects of the Reading Rooms in very good condition, the new trustees are endeavouring to build on the legacy left to us.

The floor has been cleaned and varnished, 17 more padded chairs have been acquired at no cost and some of the china in the kitchen is shortly to be replaced.

We continue to get more users and indeed some can not be accommodated as we have so many evening bookings on weekdays.

We now have bookings for Yoga, children's Yoga, Qigong, Pilates, Zumba Art, Sewing, personal trainers, National Trust, Women's Institute, community teas, users for dance practice, bookings for private parties and use as a polling station.

As a result of this and the slight increase in hire charges income for the reading continues to improve. We have received a grant from the Area Board to provide picnic benches also Melksham Without Parish Council have approved a grant to enable us to fit gates and therefore make the outside grassed area more useable.

I hope that we can continue to build on the Reading Room's success and would like to thank both the Melksham Without Parish Council and the Area Board for their kind support of this community facility.

Ian Uffindell

Chairman Whitley Reading Rooms

April 2017

## Berryfield Village Hall

The temporary village hall has undergone further repairs this past year which it is planned will ensure its survival until the new building can be provided.



The need for a new, permanent village hall has been ongoing for several years but uncertainty over the project to reinstate the Wilts & Berks canal through Berryfield has delayed any decisions concerning the hall. The application for the development of the canal is still before the planning committee of Wiltshire Council and it is hoped that a decision will be made this year.

Meanwhile the impending development of up to 150 dwellings on Land East of Semington Road (Planning Application 16/00497/OUT) includes provision of a village hall and play area and this will have a major impact on the demographic of the village when it

comes to fruition.

Although the present hall is limited in space and facilities it provides a focal point for the community. An art group meets weekly and the Berryfield Crafters meet twice a month in the hall which is also available for hire for meetings and parties. The hall is run by a village hall committee.

## **Rachel Fowler Centre**

The Rachel Fowler Centre is a community hall which is available for use/hire by local organisations and inhabitants. The hall is currently used by a wide variety of organisations including:- music groups, choirs, dancing groups, amateur dramatics, and gardening societies. The Rachel Fowler Centre is located in the centre of Melksham and includes kitchen facilities, wi-fi, a projector screen and projector.



## *Report from Melksham Oak Community School for Melksham Without Parish Council 2017*

Both our GCSE and A Level results maintained their high standards of previous years, with students' progress being very good. At GCSE, our pass rates at grade C or better for both English and Maths were very close to the national average. This represents excellent progress as pupils on average come to us significantly below the national average at KS2. The new attainment measure of Progress8 shows that on average, our cohort performs just above the national average across contributing subjects. From the data from new tests that pupils now sit in Year 6, we see that only 33% of pupils arrive at Melksham Oak meeting the government's definition of 'secondary ready' in Maths as opposed to 51% nationally, and for reading, this figure is 38% as opposed to 49% nationally. This presents a challenge for us but one that our flexible curriculum aims to address for all pupils. At A Level, pass rates at A\*-B were our highest ever last summer at nearly 50%, and all students who applied to universities through the UCAS process gained a place at one of their chosen institutions.

Melksham Oak is TEEP Training School and regularly supports other schools to improve their teaching and learning. TEEP is a national organisation that supports schools with raising standards of teaching and learning.

Melksham Oak continues to grow and from September 2017 we will have over 1300 students on roll. We are in early discussions with Wiltshire Council about an extension.

### ***ATOM Update***

The Academy Trust of Melksham (ATOM), of which Melksham Oak is a part, has made good progress since its creation in April 2015. Forest and Sandridge joined the ATOM in December 2016, making it now a multi-academy trust of 8 schools with 2,800 students, the largest in Wiltshire. The Headteachers are focused on working together to enhance the outcomes of the young people of Melksham.

Over the last two years we have secured over £1.5 million of extra funding to improve the buildings of the schools.

Stephen Clark  
Headteacher  
April 2017

April 2017

### **Forest & Sandridge CE Primary School**

We have had another fantastic year in our new school building so far. We continually feel very blessed to be able to spend our time in such a wonderful environment... an amazing 21<sup>st</sup> century school for our children to learn and blossom!

We have experienced another big change this year in that we have now converted to an Academy with the Academy Trust of Melksham (ATOM). The transfer took place on 1 December 2016 and we are enjoying working even more closely with staff and children from other schools in the town as part of this new partnership.

#### **Our grounds**

We have continued to work on developing our school grounds this year from what was a blank canvas. Unfortunately, money does stand in our way but we were fortunate to have some funds put aside to work on this. Our PTA have also raised funds for us and we were grateful for a generous donation from the Co-op earlier this year.

We now have play houses, an extending trim trail, a Peace Garden centre, animal play sculptures, a bridge and a story circle as well as a recycled materials music, a willow tunnel and allotments all made by our children as part of their outdoor learning.

We are enjoying our school field, now that it is fully established, which gives the children a whole new area to play and learn on. Sport's Day will be great on there this year.

#### **Children**

We continue to experience rapid growth with regards to the number of children on roll. We are heavily oversubscribed for September 2018 for the 4<sup>th</sup> year running which causes problems for some local families. This is upsetting for them and us but, unfortunately, there is nothing that we can do about this. When I wrote last year we had 315 children on roll. We now have 361 and are due to have 373 in September. We hoped to be opening our final classroom this September but funding has not allowed us to do so this year.

We were delighted to open our preschool in September 2016 which is already full to capacity. It is a teacher run preschool which is open during school hours and during term time only. The feedback so far from Wiltshire Local Authority, as well as from parents, has been exceptionally positive. Numbers are looking very positive for September 2017 even when many of the children leave to start school.

We have a wide range of children with differing abilities and who come from a range of backgrounds. We are proud of the equal opportunities all these children have regardless of ability, gender, background and ethnicity. The children make good progress as they move through the school which is a result of the good teaching and learning. We were very pleased that results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 were above the national averages in 2016 despite the marked increase in expectation as a result of the revised National Curriculum.

The children have worked hard, with the help of our School Council, to raise money for various charities this year through sponsored and fund-raising events. The charities they have raised money for this year are Comic Relief, Wiltshire Air Ambulance and Children in Need.

### **Church and Community Links**

Links with the church continue to grow, and this has been helped by the commitment of our vicar, Rev Alison Sowton, who works very closely with us at school. We have enjoyed having some special services once a term at St Andrew's Church for groups of children and have also enjoyed welcoming Rev Alison to lead our whole school Christmas and Easter celebration services in school which have been very special.

We are thrilled to be able to let our school facilities out to groups and members of our community. Rugby Tots, Slimming World, Pilates classes and Zumba are some of the groups that currently use our school facilities. The 2 junior sized football pitches, 2 hard pitches and changing rooms will also be available from summer 2017. Information about letting these facilities is available from our School Business Manager, Alli Moon.

### **Ofsted and SIAMS**

We continue to be very proud of our GOOD Ofsted Status (November 2014) and our OUTSTANDING SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) status (October 2014). Please see our school website if you would like to read our full reports.

***We continue to be incredibly proud of our school and of all that we are achieving for our children here. It is a very happy place to learn and work. We would love to show you around if you would like to visit us – just give us a call to make an appointment.***

***Anna Willcox  
Headteacher  
11 April 2017***

## **Report for Melksham Without Parish Council May 17**

Perhaps the biggest change for Shaw School this year has been the retirement of our Deputy Headteacher Carol Sampey after many years of service to the school. Carol is now working part time for the Primary Science Teaching Trust, supporting schools all over Wiltshire to make Science teaching as engaging and effective as possible. We are delighted that she still comes in to Shaw School in this role.

Our new Deputy is Kathryn Clark, who has been teaching at the school for many years and is a real asset to the Leadership Team.

The school is at capacity in terms of pupil numbers and the Local Authority have no plans to increase this capacity. The Governors and I support this decision for several reasons. Shaw School is highly effective as a seven single-age class set up. The costs of increasing the size of the school on a flood plain would be high, as new buildings would need to be raised above 100 year (10year?) flood levels and development of our site could easily make matters even worse downstream. Also, the safety aspects of having even more traffic around the school site are not issues to be taken lightly.

On the subject of traffic, we have been highly pro-active this year and have set up a Governors, staff, parents and pupils group to review and update our Travel Plan. All parents were surveyed as part of this and we are currently working through the suggested ideas. Ultimately, we could really do with a dedicated drop-off zone to stop the need for parents to park and to keep the traffic moving more freely. However, this would require land and capital investment. Several smaller measures are being taken over the next few months, so do keep an eye on the newsletter section of our website to keep yourself up to date with these.

Despite a real crisis in revenue funding for schools, which is meaning some severe belt-tightening in day to day running costs for Shaw School, there seems to remain money for capital projects. As an Academy, we are able to bid directly to the Government for funding to improve the condition of our school buildings. We were fortunate last year to gain funding to carry out internal fire safety works and some upgrading of accommodation. I was delighted to hear recently that we have been successful once again this year and that we have been funded to replace defective windows, doors, gutters and downpipes and defective roofing across the school, cure some nasty damp problems in the old building and upgrade some of our office space. This work will happen over the Summer break. This funding is only possible because we are an Academy school.

However, everything above is only worthwhile if it has a positive impact on the children of Shaw School. I am delighted to report that a recent survey of parents showed extremely high levels of happiness in the children and satisfaction from the parents. We believe that Shaw School is a very special place and have worked hard this year to capture what we are all about in an easy to understand way. If you are interested, please do take time to look at our website [www.shawprimary.com](http://www.shawprimary.com) and click on the "about us" and "Mission Shaw" tabs. We'd love to hear what you think! [feedback@shaw.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:feedback@shaw.wilts.sch.uk).

Simon White  
HEADTEACHER

## 2385 (Melksham) Squadron

### The Aims of the Air Training Corps are:

- Promote and encourage a practical interest in aviation and the Royal Air Force among young people.
- Provide training which will be useful in the Services and civilian life.
- Encourage the spirit of adventure and develop qualities of leadership and good citizenship.

The last 12 months at 2385 (Melksham) Squadron has seen much development of our activities and curriculum.

Cadet numbers have doubled to 31 and the number of staff is also up. The Squadron offers the opportunity for young people aged 12 - 20 the opportunity to take part in aviation related activities in addition to adventurous activities and military skills.

This year has seen the introduction of fieldcraft training at the Squadron and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. We have also had cadets attend several camps both in the UK and Europe.

At the annual inter-squadron competition Melksham Squadron achieved 5th out of 32 a 5 year high. With the aim to make the top 3 this year.

The Squadron meets every Wednesday and Friday (except Christmas for 2 weeks) between 1900 and 2130. We can be found on the Bowerhill Industrial Estate alongside the Wiltshire School of Gymnastics.

The Commanding Officer can be contacted on his email [oc.2385@aircadets.org](mailto:oc.2385@aircadets.org) with any questions or enrolment queries.



BROUGHTON GIFFORD & HOLT SCOUT GROUP  
REPORT FOR MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
MAY 2017

We currently have a membership of 100 youngsters on our register. The members (boys and girls) vary from 6 years – 16 years of age.

We have 4 sections – Beavers 6-8 yrs. Cubs 8 – 11 yrs. Scouts 11 – 14yrs and Explores 14 – 16 yrs.

As you can imagine each section has their own level of activities. These range from Hikes, Cooking, Shooting, Community Based activities, Personal Challenges and Group Challenges. The sections also take on District Challenges and within the last year Beaver & Scout Sections have been winners on a few occasions. The Scouts won the recent Go Karting Competition and the District Camping competition. They are always well placed in Shooting, Cooking and Archery Competitions. Cubs have taken part in Outdoor pursuits at the local PGL at Swindon recently. All sections have good programmes to follow thanks to our dedicated Leaders.

Our Tents have recently been replaced due to wear and tear and to help with the growing numbers who attend our Group Camp each year as a result of our very successful Centenary Camp of 2014 which we held on The Common. The Cubs, Scouts & Explorers also use them on a regular basis. We were grateful for the monies we received through local grants and donations to achieve this. All our sections also use our Scout Hut for Sleepovers so we need to work towards the upkeep of our hut and it is now being used on occasions by other groups from the village. We are hoping to do more refurbishing shortly, especially the outside of the hut and the Kitchen is in need of an update.

Our Executive committee undertake fundraising where possible. All this helps towards the upkeep of our Scout Hut, which we are lucky to have and gives a stable base to all our members. All this take planning and without the dedication of our Team of Leaders we couldn't maintain this standard of Scouting in the Villages. We are always on the lookout for new members to join our Leader Team, so we are able to continue to provide our local youngsters with an experience for life.

Anne Cranham (Chairman)



## News From 1<sup>st</sup> Broughton and Holt Scout Group

Our youngest section which caters for children aged 6-8 have been very busy completing hikes and making the most of the lovely area we live, it's always fantastic to see these young people with little legs walking several miles without an electronic toy in sight. During May the Beavers will spend the night at Oxenwood completing activities such as archery and map reading, for many this will be the first night away from home but Chil's hot chocolate and lots of fresh air will make it a fantastic adventure.

The Cub section which is for young people from the age of 8 to 10 1/2 years recently visited the outdoor adventure centre at PGL in Liddington near Swindon for a weekend this was part of a district event attended with 8 other packs from the West Wilts area. We were the largest group with 23 of our cubs attending out of 113 in the whole group. The cubs tried a variety of activities including quad biking, zip wire, a crate challenge (building the highest tower of milk crates) various games and archery. It was a fantastic weekend with lots of fun although I think the cubs must have all slept well on the Sunday night — the leaders and the parent helper certainly did!

The Scout section which is for young people aged 10 1/2 to 14 years recently swept up at the recent district competition with "Chariot on Fire" winning the overall timed trials (also setting a new course record - not bad for a set of recycled pram wheels) and "The Coffin Dodgers" the constructors' championship. Well done Scouts.

The Explorers who are the oldest section aged from 14-18 years have been busy with trips to the cinema to watch Beauty and the Beast as well as a challenging evening at a climbing wall in Bristol.

I'm sure you've been seeing/hearing the news recently that Scouts are looking for leaders. That's certainly true at Broughton Gifford Scouts. If you can spare some time to encourage young folks to get away from their screens, get outside, learn new life skills and how to work as a team, we'd love to hear from you at [exec@hscouts.com](mailto:exec@hscouts.com)

Or why not come along and find out about what we have been doing this year at our Annual General Meeting on the 10th May at 6,30pm at our scout hut at the common you would be very welcome.

## **Melksham Phab**

Meeting fortnightly, we try to vary our activities as much as we can with craft, consisting of card making and painting, to games evenings, bingo, quizzes, beetle drives, we also had a lady come to us with her equipment and books for a sing-a-long, enjoyed by all. Our members had a meet at Weatherspoons in the summer and a Christmas meal at the Somerset Arms. During December our annual summer trip was to Weymouth and we were able to have an extra day out with a steam train ride to Minehead.

Last year it was Melksham's turn to host the social of the Phab groups in Wiltshire, it was held at the Forest Community Centre, we arranged food and entertainment for around 90 people, a great evening was had by all.

## **Happy Circle Day Centre**

The Happy Circle Day Centre aims to reduce loneliness and social isolation for older people living independently in Melksham by providing a friendship, social and lunch club. The members can participate in a variety of activities including sing-a-longs, games, quizzes and word challenges, arts and crafts, themed activities such as Chinese New Year and Old Time Music Hall. The grant helps us to be able to ensure that the community bus is available to bring the members along. It was also used to transport them for an enjoyable outing to the Wadsworth Brewery in Devizes for a tour and lunch out, last summer. The members frequently tell us that the Day Centre is a lifeline for them to be able to spend time in the company of others.

## **Wiltshire Mind**

Wiltshire Mind is a local mental health charity working across Wiltshire to support local people suffering from mental health issues. We provide life-changing support to those with wide ranging diagnoses relating to mental health issues. We currently provide 9 support groups (including 6 main peer support groups, an evening group and 2 Groups for Carers of those with Mental Health issues), One to one Counselling, Polish Counselling, Telephone support and Mental Health Awareness Training for businesses.

Whilst Wiltshire Mind is affiliated to National Mind it does not receive any funding from National Mind. We are not commissioned to provide services by the statutory authorities. We have to raise 100% of our own funds to continue our much needed work for the communities around Wiltshire. Currently we are providing approximately 200 counselling sessions monthly and reach out to around 110+ people each week through our 9 support groups across Wiltshire. The need is growing at a fast rate and Wiltshire Mind needs to expand our services to meet the demand. As a totally unfunded charity we need to gain increased income in order to meet demand.



## READ EASY MELKSHAM

Read Easy Melksham affiliated to Read Easy UK was formed in January 2015. A Committee with a voluntary Coordinator was formed by enthusiastic members who have investigated the demands for improving adult literacy in the area.

Read Easy provides with no charge, two half hour sessions once a week set in a public but secluded area using specialised books and literacy equipment. The voluntary Coaches are fully trained by Read Easy UK and abide by their constitution.

It has been a gradual process and as a result by advertising at all local events and in the Melksham News we now have 10 Coaches with other interested enquiries. All local referral agencies have been contacted and offered useful information with referrals. We have to date two Readers who have completed the course and was presented with a certificate in Melksham Library. There are a further six Readers making very successful progress working at their own pace.

Grants are essential for Read Easy's growth to provide specialised books and equipment, training and travelling costs. Only by a dedicated Committee and Grants can we continue to build Read Easy Melksham and the Committee thank the Parish Council Without for the grant.

Christine Thomson,

Fund Raiser Read Easy-Melksham

12 APR 2017

### **Shaw and Whitley Garden Club**

Shaw and Whitley Garden Club are group which holds meeting on the second Wednesday of the month. We invite speakers to come to talk to us on a range of topics and have a visit to a place of interest in the summer. This year topics have covered the propagation of seeds, butterflies and moths, seasonal planting and a meadow in my garden. Speakers can be costly and we are grateful for the grant so that we can book speakers for next year with confidence.

### **Melksham Gardeners' Society**

Melksham Gardeners' Society was formed 9 years ago after a general meeting held at Melksham House by an enthusiastic band who wanted to promote gardening and associated activities within Melksham. Since that time we have grown in strength and currently number 75 members drawn from the Town and Melksham Without Parishes. Through the medium of meetings, demonstrations., lectures and visits to gardens and showgrounds, we aim to further garden knowledge and plant cultivation in a social environment. Most of our members state "to make new friends" as one of their primary reasons for joining our Society. We have a full programme of events and one coach trip a year to a National Garden such as RHS Wisely, and this year we are going to Kew. We also put on an annual Flower and Produce Show during September at the Melksham Assembly Hall which is open to all members of the public to participate in and enjoy. If anyone is interested in joining, please visit our website - [www.melkshamgardenerssociety.co.uk](http://www.melkshamgardenerssociety.co.uk)

Appendix 27

### **Whitley Art Group**

Our group meets on a Thursday morning in Whitley Reading Rooms between 9.30 - 12.30am (during term time). Our group is made up of about 12 ladies and gents from Whitley, Atworth, Melksham and Corsham. We meet to develop our own artistic skills using watercolours, pastels, acrylics etc. We have no formal tuition but lots of support and advice from other members. In July 2016 we held our first exhibition of our work. This was well attended and our work was well received. We also have a good chat, a laugh, plus refreshments at all our meetings. For further information phone Margaret on 01225 899302.

Appendix 28

### **The Melksham Food and River Festival**

The Melksham Food and River Festival continues to go from strength to strength. Last year we had over 80 stalls on the Sunday with at 20 of those being free stalls for local community groups. The River is a very important waterway through the centre of Melksham and is a hub for leisure activity for all the residents of the area. Residents can enjoy a free day in the park watching local groups and enjoying the eclectic smells of the Food Festival. The support from Melksham Without Parish council is greatly appreciated as it helps to cover the overall cost of the event which is around 8 thousand pounds.

Appendix 29

### **Melksham Choral Society Report**

Melksham Choral Society is a mixed, amateur choir that has been around for nearly 70 years. The choir welcomes members of all ages and ability who like singing choral music, and there is no voice test to join! Currently about 60 members from Melksham and surrounding areas get together on Thursday nights to rehearse choral works ready to perform at our two main concerts. The choir aims to bring quality music to their audiences and frequently uses professional singers and soloists which make their concerts a good night out. At the end of the summer term, they let their hair down with music on the lighter side and perform a free evening of entertainment. The choir appreciates the grants that Melksham Without Parish Council has awarded to it.