

**MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting of Melksham Without
Parish Council held on Tuesday, 29 March 2022 at 7.00pm
at Bowerhill Village Hall**

Present: Councillors John Glover (Chair), John Doel, Mark Harris, Shona Holt, Rob Hoyle, David Pafford (Vice Chair), Andy Russell, Robert Shea-Simonds

Officer: Teresa Strange (Clerk)

In attendance: Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford (Melksham Without North & Shurnhold), Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder (Bowerhill), Wiltshire Councillor Jonathon Seed (Melksham Without West & Rural)

26 Members of public

In attendance via Zoom: Councillor Richard Wood and Lorraine McRandle (Parish Officer), Peter Dunford (Wiltshire Council Community Engagement Manager for Melksham), Councillor Adam Walton (Biddestone & Slaughterford Parish Council/Wiltshire Climate Alliance) and one member of public

1. Welcome, Housekeeping and Apologies

Councillor Glover welcomed everyone to the meeting and pointed out the various fire exits for those present.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Baines due to another commitment, Councillor Chivers due to another commitment, Councillor Pile who had a leave of absence until the end of March and Councillor Patacchiola due to work commitments.

Councillor Wood joined the meeting via Zoom.

2. To receive Chair's report on the work of the Council during the year.

Councillor Glover as Chair reported on the work of the Council during the last year and plans for the next. (**Appendix 1**)

3. To receive reports from the Wiltshire Councillors for the Parish

Reports from Wiltshire Councillors Phil Alford, Nick Holder and Jonathon Seed were included in the Annual Parish Booklet (**Appendix 2**) and on the parish council website.

The Chair invited the Wiltshire Councillors to speak if they wished to add anything further to their written reports.

Councillor Alford, as Chair of the Melksham Area Board, explained the area covered by the Melksham Community Area and the Board's remit, including providing grants to local community groups and encouraged those groups present to apply for grant funding.

Councillor Alford also explained the remit of the Community Area Transport Group (CATG) which reported to the Area Board and included representatives from both the Highways department and the various Melksham Community Area parish councils.

Councillor Alford highlighted that £14,000 of public open spaces grant funding was rolling forward for community groups to apply for to assist with such projects as tree and wild flower planting and nature reserves. There was also funding for Health & Wellbeing projects.

Councillor Seed explained whilst previously being a Wiltshire Councillor elsewhere, was now Wiltshire Councillor for Melksham Without West and Rural, which included Berryfield and was always available to speak to residents about any issues and offered help.

4. To receive reports from Organisations and Groups in the parish

Reports were included in **Appendix 3** of the Annual Parish Booklet.

5. To receive short presentation from guest speaker Adam Walton Chair of Biddestone & Slaughterford PC and Wiltshire Climate Alliance on "What can Parish Councils do about climate change".

Adam Walton, Chair of the Wiltshire Climate Alliance, attended the meeting via Zoom and gave an enlightening presentation on climate change, the lack of biodiversity and the impact on the world if no changes are made. He also explained what people could do as individuals as well as groups in trying to combat climate change and the lack of biodiversity and the need to lobby those in power to make changes.

6. To receive update on Neighbourhood Plan Review including Local Green Space Designation: Councillor Richard Wood, Chair of Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Pafford spoke to this item as Councillor Wood was attending remotely. He explained that Melksham's Neighbourhood Plan had been approved at Referendum in July 2021, which gave a two year grace period to review the current Neighbourhood Plan. The neighbourhood plan needs to conform to the current Core Strategy and the reviewed plan will need to conform to the emerging Local Plan which was currently being reviewed by Wiltshire Council.

Councillor Pafford explained the Steering Group were keen to get support from the public on various aspects of Neighbourhood Planning including identifying important green spaces, in order to try and get a degree of protection. The

information would be logged before being submitted to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to review.

The Clerk explained a new Neighbourhood Plan website www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org had recently been launched and included a section where people could get involved and pinpoint areas of green spaces on a map to be considered for protection. Giles Wood and BRAG's picnic area adjacent to the canal were good examples of green space that was valued by the community and had already been designated as such in Seend's Neighbourhood Plan, as these areas are within the Parish of Seend and not Melksham Without.

Councillor Wood explained he would be stepping down as Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group at the annual meeting in the next few months and was heartened to see that already the Neighbourhood Plan had managed to stop speculative housing developments in the parish.

Councillor Wood went on to thank those who had worked on the current Neighbourhood Plan for all their hard work and explained whilst he would be stepping down as Chair of the Group he would continue to be an effective voice on the Steering Group.

7. To receive a short presentation on a Tree Planting Project in the Parish at Oakley Farm, Lower Woodrow: David Turrell

David Turrell, Oakley Farm, Lower Woodrow thanked Members for the invitation to speak at the meeting and explained that after retiring six years ago, he had brought Oakley Farm to breed alpacas and wanted to do something to combat climate change and therefore decided to undertake a tree planting scheme.

The tree planting scheme will eventually cover an area of 84 acres and included neighbouring land owned by other landowners. The Woodland Trust had agreed to donate 6,500 trees and hoped to plant oaks in the future.

Mr Turrell explained the planting area would not be on land currently highlighted as a potential route for the A350 bypass, but was adjacent to it.

Lackham College students had helped plant half of the trees already donated, but help was required in finishing off the planting by the end of April and sought volunteers to assist with this and signposted people to the Lacock Alpaca website www.lacockalpaca.com for details.

Mr Turrell explained more planting would take place in the next 2 years with plans to expand the planting area which would also include more hedge planting.

8. To receive a short presentation from Shaw & Whitley Community Hub

Nathan Hall from Shaw & Whitley Community Hub gave a presentation on the success of Whitley Stores since opening in August 2021.

Mr Hall explained that following the closure of the Toast Office in Whitley, which was a valuable community facility, a group of residents had got together to try and develop a group to set up and a run shop in the village. A Community Benefit Society was formed to help with fund raising. Advice on how to set up a community shop had also been sought from the Plunkett Foundation.

Unfortunately, the group were not in a financial position to bid for the former Toast Office when it came on the market, however, the new owners offered some space in the premises to set up a community hub.

Capital was raised in offering a community share offer with a minimum donation of £10 with £35,000 being raised over 4 weeks.

Once this had been achieved, volunteers were sought to help run the hub and currently there are 50 volunteers, which means the hub can be open from 9.00am-5.00pm every day and 10.00am-4.00pm on a Sunday.

On average 50 people use the hub everyday with the shop providing everyday essentials and local produce.

Mr Hall explained it had been valuable in getting the community to come together and has helped with social isolation.

9. Comment and question time: to receive suggestions and proposals concerning any matter of interest in the parish including provision of recreational, cultural and other amenities for the parish.

There were no questions or issues raised from members of the public.

10. To present Grant Aid cheques to local organisations and groups.

The Chairman & Vice Chair presented Grant Aid cheques to those groups and organisations who had been awarded a grant as they provided a service which benefitted the residents of the Parish. The Chairman invited groups and organisations to say a few words when they received their grant cheques, with representatives from many groups explaining the service that they gave and what they would be spending their grant funding on.

Meeting finished at 8.20pm

Signed
Full Council Meeting, 25 April 2022

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING March 29 2022

Councillor John Glover

This is my first Chairman's report for the Annual Parish Meeting. I welcome both councillors and parishioners. The advent of COVID 19 has changed all our lives, and will continue to do so for many years. Our thoughts go out to all of you who have been personally affected by this very serious illness, either through contracting the illness yourselves or by the loss of loved ones. As I write we are all cautiously feeling our way back to a semblance of normality. The vaccination roll-out has been very impressive and is due to be extended to 4th vaccinations starting with the 75+ and a paediatric dose for the 5 – 11-year-olds. The latter with two vaccinations 12 weeks apart.

Your Council has continued to function since early March 2020 by the use of Zoom for all Council meetings, meetings with developers, with architects and project managers (for the new Hall in Berryfield), and of course for the Neighbourhood Plan. Latterly, we have been able to resume face to face meetings. Our staff have continued to work from home as appropriate and when the lockdown measures eased, used the Bowerhill Pavilion office, while observing strict social distancing. Our own staff were heavily involved in the Community response, but once the Melksham Community Service gained momentum, they have reduced their involvement to guidance and advice. As the crisis eases and Melksham returns to normal, however gradually, the Council will continue to support the community effort.

Following the last Annual Parish Meeting, we were pleased to be able to co-opt councillors Andy Russell and Rob Hoyle (both Bowerhill) and John Doel (Beanacre, Shaw, Whitley and Blackmore) to the council

PRECEPT

The Precept set for 2022/2023 is £235,689.05, an increase of 8.1% on last year's precept. An average Band D household will contribute £84.71 for the year, an additional £2.60 on last year, a rise of 3.16%. The Band D payment has risen because of the effects of general inflation across all aspects of the Council's business. As Parish Councils continue to fill some of the gaps left by County Councils, it is inevitable that more money is needed to provide, maintain and improve facilities such as village halls, play areas and playing fields.

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 86 planning applications, including 5 large developments. Since last year's Annual meeting we have seen good progress being made on two large developments. The 150 houses in Semington Road, Berryfield, now has all of the houses sold, and the

majority of the houses are occupied, and the Pathfinder Way development, Bowerhill, where building is well advanced on the eastern part of site, and commenced on the western part. The Davey play area has yet to be formally accepted by the Parish Council as it is having yet to pass safety checks. The Semington Road development will provide Berryfield with a much-needed new village hall, the cost of which is largely provided by the developers. We have made excellent progress on this project. The plans are approved and the public art contribution will be used for a locally themed panel on two sides of the new hall by well-known artist Kerry Lemon. The first tranche of money has been received from the developers. Rigg Construction have the task and build is on target with a projected handover in the Autumn of 2022. The current village hall committee have been involved with the final fitting decisions, as have members of the community that have come forward.

As a Council we have resolved to be very proactive on new proposals. Whether we approve of them or not, it is our responsibility to get the best deal for our parishioners in term of community gains. The continuing lack of a five-year land supply from Wiltshire Council has resulted in several opportunistic proposals from developers for sites over the last few years which would not normally have been considered at this stage. One of these proposals, for 144 houses in Semington Road, was vigorously opposed but narrowly passed by Wiltshire Council. There have been other potential developments put forward in a speculative way to take advantage of the lack of a five-year land supply. Woodrow Road has seen an application for 150 houses (vigorously opposed by the Parish and Town), with access being a major consideration. An application for 240 houses and a 70-bed care home has been made for a site south of Western Way. This too is opposed by Parish and Town, on access grounds and a preference for employment use for the site. A site to the west of the A350 between Melksham and Beanacre has also been put forward, and again Town and Parish have been concerned with the sustainability of the site for major development. The fourth application, for 50 houses near Townsend Farm, was turned down by Wiltshire planners as the development was contrary to the, then, emerging neighbourhood plan. However, the developers have appealed with a bid for 50 affordable homes. The appeal is underway now, March 2022, with presentations having been made by both Wiltshire Council and the Parish against the appeal. The latter presentation by the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering committee, Richard Wood. We await the outcome.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

This spate of opportunistic planning applications only underlines the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan. Thanks to hard work from Place Consultants, and the Steering Group, our plan passed all its hurdles and was made in July 2021. The plan will offer us the support in the light of a three-year land supply for the two years since it was made, by which time Wiltshire's Local Plan review might be complete. Your council is now pressing ahead with an urgent review to ensure an updated plan is in place to extend the 3-year land supply eligibility by a further 2 years. Having a Neighbourhood Plan does not stop development outright but ensures that it goes where we want it and meets our criteria for design and facilities.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Community Emergency group in Shaw and Whitley continue their excellent work monitoring the flood risks in their area. They have regular work parties and are always on hand in times of heavy rain. They always work with enthusiasm and great community spirit, and are held as exemplars of what a local emergency group can do.

SHURNHOLD FIELDS

This joint project between Melksham Without and the Town Council made further progress this year. The Friends of Shurnhold Fields, chaired by Roy Dobson have continued to lead with the provision of facilities, wild flower meadow, tree nursery and general maintenance. The remaining major task has still to complete this year with the construction of a small car park and improvements to the entrance. This has been held up by discussions between the Environment Agency and the Land Drainage team at Wiltshire Council, as some flood prevention works are planned with the spoil for the ground works whilst the diggers are on site.

The parish continues its successful partnership with the Town to fund the Market Place toilets, now open again after COVID19 and continues with the deployment its own Speed Indicator Device (SID) to deter speeding on our roads.

AT THE COUNCIL

I should like to congratulate all the staff for their work over the last few years. It has not been easy working from the Pavilion and having meetings elsewhere. I should like to praise the staff who, in their own time, are studying for appropriate qualifications to assist with their tasks.

WHAT NEXT?

The Council will continue to take on play areas provided by developers. We have still to take on the Davey Play Area on the new Pathfinder Place estate (Mike Davey was very involved with the Air Cadets in Melksham for many years), and the new Whitworth play area on the Bowood View estate should be ready by the Autumn.

The Campus is finally underway and we will move in to our new offices in Autumn 2022. This will provide a much-needed central resource for our parishioners as compared with the remote facility of the pavilion. We look forward to the advent of joint meeting room and office in new surroundings.

A PERSONAL NOTE

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their support over the last 10 months. The difficulties of meeting on-line, and trying to provide a public image through Zoom, has tested our technical capabilities. We hope that we have built in the appropriate systems to enable us to function well from our new Campus home. We look forward to the future.

Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford- Annual Parish Report

The last time I provided an update was prior to the May election and the focus then was very much on the Covid response. Fortunately, we are moving on from that, but the impact still lives with us and some of what I have been doing this past year has been influenced by that however, we are looking beyond that now and are in much more positive territory shaping our vision for the County.

After the election I was asked to join the Cabinet by our newly elected leader Richard Clewer. This was both a privilege and opportunity that I was more than happy to take up and I am currently the Cabinet member for Housing, Strategic Assets and Asset Transfers. This role is enabling me to lead on key policy areas for the council and have a seat at the top table when decisions are being made. The housing aspect involves me working to support affordable housing in Wiltshire, the system around its allocation and to oversee the running of the 5300 council owned houses around the county. This in turn is enabling me to drive forward a £50M investment program in energy efficiency works on the stock as well as a 1000-unit council house build program.

As the lead member for Strategic Assets, I have been able to push forward a significant investment in Melksham House. We will be spending approximately £4.5M on the house to bring it up to a carbon zero standard and return it into use for the whole community as an improved, updated facility. It has also afforded me the opportunity to address the existing Library and Blue Pool site with ambitions to have them redeveloped to enhance the town for the benefit of us all.

Perhaps more importantly for the people of the parish, I am also preparing policies around environmental enhancements and biodiversity net gain. By the end of the year government planning policies will demand that all new developments provide a biodiversity net gain in the community affected by construction. Cynically, some developers may be looking to achieve this with the odd insect house and inappropriately located tree or shrub to minimise their costs. I am working on a county wide policy to make a much more substantial impact. It is my intention that developers will instead be required to support local projects that offer greater benefits linking ecological communities through wildlife corridors, wetlands, wildflower meadows, nutrient enhancements and woodlands. All, with a view to enhancing both our urban and rural environments.

On a more community orientated level I am bringing forward plans to support community groups who wish to run tree planting schemes on local, council owned amenity land.

In addition to the Cabinet role where I can drive these county wide initiatives, I have also been the Chairman of the Melksham Area Board. Working with other Councillors I have been able to influence £80,000 of Wiltshire Council spending at a Melksham level and we have seen significant grants for the Whitley Community Store, Friends of Shaw Church, Shurnhold Fields and numerous other local groups. There have also been significant investments in our local highway network with the Shaw Lights being improved and lots of resurfacing work taking place.

We are also able to roll forward nearly £11,000 to add to our April budget to focus on local environmental schemes. Should anyone wish to set up a tree planting project we have the funds locally to help.

'We are living in extraordinary times', a quote from Chilean Engineer and Politician Fernando Flores seemed quite apt as I considered the past ten months in this update. Last May we were edging out of a global pandemic that still shapes and blights our everyday lives. Our rapidly changing lifestyles are adjusting to new technologies and new ways of working. The global backdrop of an ecological and climate tipping point is driving many of our local and national policies. Then to add to this dizzying mix we have a conflict in Ukraine between an old nuclear power and a new European state aspiring to escape the ravages of its cold war past. But then, when was it ever easy? Perhaps my favourite end to the quote is really the one offered by New Zealand author Anthony McCarten who commented 'We're living in extraordinary times, all the time. The issues that assail us are perennial. They haven't changed since the Greeks picked up a pen'.

Councillor Nick Holder Bowerhill Division

Since the last annual report, the focus of all of us has been how we get back to “normal” as we come out of the pandemic. I have been able to respond to many queries from residents covering a variety of matters ranging from planning, highways and advocacy with Housing Associations. Most recently I have been working with the Parish Council to challenge the Street Scene Team at Wiltshire Council to work collaboratively to enhance the many open spaces across Bowerhill. I am hopeful we have now agreed a long term, sustainable solution to the hedging and ditch issues backing onto Hornchurch open space from Kittyhawk Close which we had important input from the residents on. Furthermore, we continue to explore ways of reducing the amount of standing water there is in this in and around the MUGA.

I have worked, and will continue to work, closely with the Parish Council on the large planning applications submitted in Bowerhill. Currently we are working together to unravel the issues of the lack of permanent street lighting by the roundabout leading into Pathfinder Way and the lack of proper sign off of the play area within the new development. There needs to be an acceptable solution to this, and I continue to challenge the officers at County Hall to provide one! I am also working to ensure we all understand the trigger points needed to commence the outline planning application for the Primary School in phase two of the Pathfinder Development.

I know you will be continued to be well served by your Parish Councillors supported by the excellent officer team led by the Clerk. I am sure my previous service on the Parish Council helps to make our working relationship very strong.

Finally, if any resident needs to contact me please do so, on 07931 905520 or by email nick.holder@wiltshire.gov.uk

Councillor Nick Holder

Bowerhill Division

Wiltshire Councillor Jonathon Seed - Annual Parish Report

I was re-elected to Wiltshire Council for a much changed Council Division of Melksham Without West and Rural in May of last year. I now represent the villages of Keevil, Steeple Ashton, Great Hinton, Semington and Broughton Gifford as well as the Berryfield village within Melksham Without Parish Council and other rural areas to the west of Melksham. I had been a Wiltshire Councillor for twelve years and represented the old Division of Summerham and Seend for all of the previous twelve years. I have served on several Wiltshire Council committees including Licensing, Pension Fund, the Western Area Planning Committee where I was Vice Chairman and Melksham Area Board where I was chairman for eight of the past twelve years. As a result, I bring along a great deal of local government experience which I am pleased to be able to use on behalf of the residents of Berryfield and other areas to the west of Melksham administered by Melksham Without Parish Council. I have always had a good working relationship with this Council and I do my best to attend all the Parish Council meetings in my area every month.

I am pleased to see Berryfield village hall moving forward to completion. This is an excellent development and one which is long overdue. Melksham Without Parish Council have done a great job arranging the funding, planning and development and deserve real credit for the progress on the Hall. The Canal project rumbles on and I am aware of many local concerns at the number of houses it will take to fund the project. If this happens these houses will be deducted from the local housing plan target and are not additional simply to fund the canal. A new primary school would also be provided as part of the canal project. The canal project has not yet been submitted for planning approval and we await this development.

Many of you will be aware that my personal political circumstances are unsettled and will be the subject of more difficulty in July. However, I will not allow this to affect how I represent the residents who elected me to do a job for them and I continue to do that. I am always available to help with residents' issues so please do not hesitate to contact me and if I can help then I will.

Joanthon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk

Melksham Area Board - Activities 2021-22

Despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the move to online meetings, the Melksham Area Board over the past year has continued to host public discussions, broker debates and commission activities, including:

THEME	ACTIVITY
Health & Wellbeing	<p>Melksham COVID-19 community support Promotion of “thatmeetingspace” as a community hub Planning for a “Young Carers” event Health and Wellbeing Group discussions including; COVID vaccination rollout; review of NHS estate; support to stroke survivors; carer support; activities for older people; lunch clubs and day centres</p>
Children and Young People	<p>Skate Park mini-ramp official opening Wiltshire Youth Council elections Support for 4Youth services: after-school/ evening youth clubs; teen counselling; SEND club; young peoples’ awards; street-based youth work</p>
Older People	<p>Recruitment of Older Peoples Champion and Carers Champion Support to Age Friendly Melksham including baseline survey, action plan, recruitment of new co-ordinator</p>
Community Safety	<p>Tackling anti-social behaviour Member of CCTV Working Group New CCTV camera at skate park Street based youth work alongside Police Riverside Walk resurfacing</p>
Housing	<p>Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and referendum</p>
Environment	<p>Climate Strategy and Natural Environment Plan consultations Clackers Brook restoration plans Tree planting at Lower Woodrow Wilts and Berks Canal restoration Support for tree planting and other climate action</p>

Transport	Melksham A350 bypass route option consultations Impact of Cleveland Bridge closure in Bath Approval of major highways maintenance plan CATG capital enhancements – speed limits, drop kerbs, crossings, footpaths, bollards, signs, nameplates
Employment and Economy	Levelling Up bid to Government for town centre investment Melksham House investment and planning application to create workspace hub Christie Miller sports centre demolition COVID business support grants
Arts, Culture and Leisure	Community Campus build updates including archaeological dig and time capsule burial Support for Berryfield Village Hall public works loan Celebrating Age project to deliver arts, music and theatre to the old and isolated

Melksham Area Board – Grants 2021-2022

Over the past year the Area Board has provided funding support to projects through its Community Grants, Youth Grants, Health and Wellbeing Grants and CATG transport grants, totalling £ .

2021/22	Applicant - Project	Grant
Community	Bowerhill Scouts - “Scout and About” project to purchase a minibus	£ 7,000
Community	2385 Melksham Squadron – additional training and development and capital expenditure support	£ 5,014
Community	Melksham Station Hub - canopy in the piazza area	£ 5,000
Community	Shaw and Whitley Community Hub - set up of a community shop	£ 5,000
Community	Cllr Alford - resurfacing the Millennium Riverside Walk	£ 5,000
Community	Christ Church, Shaw - reordering and redecoration to form a community hub	£ 5,000
Community	Melksham Cricket Club - new cricket playing astro	£ 5,000
Community	Riverside Club - improvements to the existing kitchen	£ 2,895
Community	Independent Living Centre - replacement of oil tank and removal of bees nest in chimney	£ 2,300
Community	Cllr Hubbard – cycling support in Melksham	£ 2,075
Community	Melksham Station Hub - fitting weatherproof blinds to the canopy and improved signage	£ 1,500
Community	Spurgeons - Canberra Centre Community Garden Project	£ 1,000
Community	West Wilts Model Car Club – purchase of a replacement computer to run club racing events	£ 995
Community	Cllr Sankey - CCTV camera in the Melksham Skate Park area	£ 990

Community	Friends of Shurnhold Fields - replanting of 200 saplings in WW1 Wood	£ 750
Community	Cllr Hubbard - defibrillator to be sited at the cricket pavilion at King George V Playing Fields	£ 495
Community	Keovil Parish Council - paved area at Banfield recreation ground	£ 379
Community	Melksham Town Council - new cabinet for the defibrillator at the Pavilion in King George V Park	£ 345
Community	Public Open Spaces Fund 2022 – carry forward all unspent funds to encourage community environmental action	£ 10,000
Youth	4Youth - “TeenTalk” Young Peoples Counselling	£ 5,000
Youth	4Youth - expansion and delivery of Thursday youth club for young people aged 13-19 years	£ 4,855
Youth	Melksham Amateur Swimming Club - Vital Swim Teacher Training	£ 750
Health & Wellbeing	Young Carers event – allocate additional funds for a young carers event in Autumn 2022	£ 2,750
Health & Wellbeing	Melksham Free Dining - “Coming Together to Dine With Us” project to support the costs of free lunches and after-meal social activities for the elderly and vulnerable	£ 2,500
Health & Wellbeing	Celebrating Age Wiltshire - match funding for Yr 2 of the project	£ 1,500
Health & Wellbeing	Alzheimers Support - “Movement for the Mind” project for local people with dementia	£ 782
Health & Wellbeing	Melksham Talking Newspaper – running costs	£ 500
Health & Wellbeing	Spurgeons - Canberra Centre Parent Support Project	£ 500
CATG	Broughton Gifford Traffic Management Measures	£12,500
CATG	Melksham Old Broughton Road – drop kerbs	£ 2,750

CATG	Melksham Bath Road / Union St bollards	£ 750
CATG	Steeple Ashton Ground Sockets for SID	£ 500
CATG	Melksham Sandridge / Maple Footway CAT survey	£ 450
CATG	Semington Littlemarsh Road Markings	£ 250
CATG	Melksham Heather Avenue Bollard	£ 250

TOTALS 2021-2022:

Community	£ 50,738
Youth	£ 10,605
Health and Wellbeing	£ 8, 532
CATG Transport	£ 17, 450

GRAND TOTAL £ 87, 325

PLUS CARRY FORWARD

Open Spaces Fund 22/23	£ 18, 459
------------------------	-----------

**Report by Peter Dunford, Community Engagement Manager, Wiltshire Council
March 2022**

Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG)

2021/22 Report

Unfortunately, the work of BRAG has again been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic resulting in meetings having to be held virtually over Zoom.

The BRAG Committee has gone through some changes with a new Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer taking over the management of the group and installing a new project orientated approach which allows meetings to be more streamlined but most of all, more effective.

The BRAG picnic area working party volunteers continue to meet at the picnic area on Tuesday mornings during the spring, summer and autumn months (weather permitting) and have done an amazing job maintaining and improving both the picnic site and the footpath/bridleway leading to the canal. Maintenance has been performed on the noticeboard, that was starting to show signs of rot due to water ingress, and benches have been repaired once again after more vandalism.

In conjunction with MWPC a number of benches around the Bowerhill area have been replaced and some new reclaimed plastic ones installed. Also, a new picnic table and bin was installed at the Hornchurch Road Public Open Space in the summer giving teenagers somewhere to meet away from the toddlers play area. In various areas of the village some new litter bins have been installed and some moved to offer a better coverage.

The litter-picking normally carried out by BRAG members/volunteers has had to be put on hold but will hopefully be resurrected soon. The group has continued to loan out litter picking equipment to the local Beavers, Cubs and Scouts for use in the village.

A new project to re-wild part of the green space at one end of Brabazon Way is now in planning. With support from MWPC and utilising a grant from Wessex Water BRAG intend to create a wildlife friendly area with wild flowers and grasses. If this is successful then the group plans to expand the scheme to the land at the opposite end of Brabazon Way.

We continue to closely with MWPC, local residents and Taylor Wimpey to make sure that the new development either side of Pathfinder way delivered all that had been promised. Several public meetings were held and the developers worked to address the concerns of those residents directly impacted by the development.

We continue to work with MWPC to address the issue of dog fouling around the estate and we are able to access the County's Dog Warden to assist with this problem.

We have previously provided input into the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and the Seend Parish Plan and are pleased to see that the BRAG picnic area and Giles Wood are noted as 'green no-development land'. The group looks forward to being consulted by, and working with, the Parish Councils on their planned update to these plans.

Of course, the big issue currently on residents' minds is the proposed Melksham A350 bypass. The group has committed to an against the bypass stance and continues to work with and support the Stop The Melksham Bypass group.

Plans for the future

- Working with our local councillors and MWPC to ensure local residents are kept fully apprised of any future housing developments and the impact that any future Melksham bypass may have on them, the surrounding green areas and wildlife. Where appropriate gain support and campaign for change.
- Continue to work with our local councillors and MWPC to ensure that the housing development at Pathfinder Way delivers all that was promised, in particular the new infant school and that it is positioned so that it benefits the whole village.
- Working with our local councillors and MWPC, local residents and interested youth groups to identify whether a youth shelter is appropriate and if so where it is best located on the estate.
- Arrange regular litter picks and continue to involve residents - in particular the younger generation.
- Look to obtain funding to support the addition of further benches and picnic tables around the estate.
- Continue with the work at the Picnic area and the promotion of its use - in particular to local schools and nurseries.
- Continue to develop any green areas or any unused areas within the village with planting of trees, bulbs and plants.
- Listen to residents' concerns and act appropriately to address issues that arise.
- Find new members, elect a new committee and appoint new Executive Officers in an effort to inject new life into the group and carry its business forward into the future.

Thank you to all Bowerhill residents for your continued support and a big thank you to the outgoing committee and Executive Officers for your tireless work in making Bowerhill a better place to live and work.

Mark Blackham,
Chair
Bowerhill Residents Action Group
March 2022.

CAWS (Community Action: Whitley & Shaw) Annual Review for MWPC

CAWS has had a very busy year with a range of new initiatives and projects as well as discharging some of its more traditional activities.

CAWS is grateful for the continuing support of MWPC and in particular representation on our committee, financial support such as the recent grant approval for our upcoming Jubilee Fair, and continuing advice and information to support our various activities, especially during those periods of tighter Covid controls in the last 12 months.

In terms of governance, we have launched a new constitution during the year that aims to increase community engagement and extend the reach of some of our community-based projects. These new arrangements are bedding in well and as a consequence we have seen new committee members joining, had a deeper engagement with residents than in the past on topics such as planning, and we are starting to implement new initiatives some of which are mentioned below. Despite the fact that our 2021 AGM was on-line, we had excellent attendance, great Q&A and some really useful updates on topics such as the Community Shop and the proposed development at Middle Farm.

The Community Emergency Response Group continue to provide an excellent service to the community applying the necessary skill, expertise and action to avoid repeated damage to homes and other community facilities that we have seen in prior years. We are lucky to have them and thank them sincerely for their continued focus on keeping our risk areas in focus and managed, as well as giving of their own time to respond in emergency situations at short notice.

Our Speedwatch team have also done some sterling work in the year although this has been hampered a little recently due to some health issues. We are incredibly grateful for all their work nevertheless and in particular the investment in training. We are very concerned however about the volume of speeding vehicles in Shaw Hill and Corsham Road which we believe has increased in the year due in part, we believe, to the restrictions on Cleveland Bridge in Bath.

CAWS has been more active in planning issues that might have an impact on our communities. We were pleased to see the Neighborhood Plan published (with some of our comments considered) and that this is now setting the tone for development in our area. We were pleased to have been able to represent the views of the community in consultation regarding the proposed bypass, development in First Lane in Whitley, and the Local Plan.

Our Phone Box Library on Top Lane has proved very popular especially during periods on Covid restrictions in the year and we have continued to review options for the Phone Box on Corsham Road opposite the school.

Over the last few months, we have been particularly active planning for our 2022 Jubilee Fair and implementing a new project on upgrading Broadband.

Coming up we have the next Community Litter Pick on 3 April 2022, the Jubilee Fair on 4 June 2022, our AGM on 21 June 2022, and, hopefully, some tree planting around the villages in the Autumn.

Shaw Playing Fields and Village Hall Trust Report - March 2022

The Shaw Playing Fields and Village Hall have successfully come through the restrictions and economic impact of COVID and starting a new year with a full diary of hall bookings and continued use of the playing fields. The restrictions on meetings over the last two years has now led to the standard use of MS Teams for all meetings which helps some of our team who cannot always make a face-to-face meeting.

During 2021 it was also good to see the successful completion of the joint village hall committee, Melksham Without Parish Council, and Community Action: Whitley & Shaw (CAWS) project; to enhance the facilities at Shaw Play area and Playing Field. The new equipment has proved to be very popular and a fitting upgrade to the recreational facilities.

At the November 2021 AGM, Mike Booth was re-elected as chair and Richard Bean, a long-term stalwart of the trust, decided to handover his responsibilities as trustee and secretary - We thank him for his sterling service over the years. The committee has been refreshed with some new faces including a new secretary and trustee - Patrick Hunt.

During the latter part of 2021, damage to the north gable end wall was discovered which was caused by a structural defect in the building's design and construction, sadly this is not covered by insurance and the hall is faced with repairs at significant cost. The focus for the remainder of 2022 is to celebrate the jubilee and raise funds with a fete on the extended bank holiday in June, with tree planting planned for the Autumn.

As ever, the committee is keen to welcome new members, especially those with a few hours a month to spare...

Mike Booth
Chair

Whitley Reading Rooms

Charity No 305595

Annual Report to Melksham Without Parish Council

2022

Being able to at last reopen the Reading Rooms to all users, we have now found that some of our users will not be returning. Therefore, we are actively looking for any groups that would like to use this facility.

We continue with our policy of improvement and maintenance of the Reading Rooms and thank Melksham Without Parish Council for their continued support this.

Ian Uffindell
Chairman Whitley Reading Rooms
March 2022

Bowerhill Village Hall 2021-22 Annual Parish Report

Despite being closed or running at reduced capacity from March 2020 to October 2021 the hall has managed to come through the pandemic in very good shape. With support from Government grants (via Wiltshire Council) the hall has managed to weather the Covid storm remarkably well.

We are now back to 20 regular users plus numerous individual bookings, mainly party bookings at weekends. In September 2021 the hall welcomed Melksham Free Dining, a much needed service providing a free meal and a place for those venturing out again after months of shielding or isolating to meet others socially in a safe environment.

The hall roof has been de-mossed and will be chemically treated when the weather gets warmer to prevent the moss growing back. We took the opportunity to have the large glass skylight cleaned at the same time. Other maintenance work is ongoing.

With the aid of a grant from Melksham Without Parish Council work has progressed on a plan to alleviate the flooding in the car park that occurs during periods of sustained heavy rainfall. The gully in the car park has been cleaned out (twice) and the pipe connecting the gully to the soakaway jetted. A drain survey and percolation tests have been carried out and a professional drainage consultant engaged. All the available information has been passed to him so that he can advise us on the way forward.

We finally managed to hold our AGM in person in August 2021 where we said farewell to our outgoing Chair and Treasurer. The committee would like to record their thanks to Gavin Owen and Chris Sealy for steering us through some difficult times and we wish them both well for the future.

A new Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer were duly elected and we welcome Mark Harris (previous Vice-Chair), Andy Russell and Julie Cole respectively to their new roles. We also welcomed Mr Terry Broom to the committee. Terry is our 'behind-the-scenes' man who carries out an awful lot of the day-to-day repairs and maintenance at the hall and is an invaluable member of the team.

The committee comprises 11 volunteers (who are also Trustees of the hall) representing various user-groups including Bowerhill Primary School, 1st Bowerhill Scout Group and Melksham Without Parish Council. The committee have continued to meet in person since August with some members joining via Zoom.

The 1st of December 2021 saw our new online booking system go live along with our new website www.bowerhillvillagehall.org.uk As a result our bookings continue to increase month on month, so much so that there is little room to accommodate new regular user-groups. Since July 2021 bookings have more than doubled and the number of hours the hall is in use has risen from just under 90 to over 150 per month.

We also have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/bowerhillvillagehall>

We look forward to seeing the hall go from strength to strength and continue to provide a service to the local community.

Mark Harris, Chairman, Bowerhill Village Hall Trust, 20th March 2022

AFC Melksham Ability Counts Football

Thank you MWPC for your continued support to disabled people by being with us from day one some 14 years ago. We continue to give free weekly coaching sessions to local disabled people to show that Sports for all, our FA qualified coaches continue to give their time for free and both parents and carers enjoy the “team spirit together “making friendships on the sidelines as the players do on the pitch.

As spring and summer approaches we look forward to playing outside the offices at Bowerhill each Wednesday
MWPC working alongside the local community

Mike Rogers



Carer Support Wiltshire

Carer Support Wiltshire gives support to those who are caring for someone who couldn't otherwise manage without their help. That may be a child, parent, partner or friend who has a physical or learning disability, long term health condition, mental health issue or a problem with substance misuse.

The charity has a helpline, carries out wellbeing and carers assessments to determine what help is available for individuals, and runs a number of carer cafes and groups across Wiltshire. There is also a telephone befriending service available.

Thanks to funding from the Melksham Area Board and Jack Lane Trust, four creative writing workshops take place in March, April and May in Melksham. These two-hour sessions are free for unpaid carers and are a chance to learn some new techniques for writing, connect with others and take some time out.

Further information can be found at www.carersupportwiltshire.co.uk

Melksham Community Money Advice

We are here to help

Each year thousands of people from all walks of life, often through no fault of their own, fall into debt.

“We are all vulnerable. It is easy to put bills, letters, final demands into a drawer and hope the problem will go away!

Despite numerous difficulties over the past year, we were able to help locally those needing debt advice and support. A group of trained willing volunteers continue to help.

The advice is free of charge and confidential. An advisor contacts the creditor on behalf of the client. Doing this helps lift a burden that may have affected clients emotionally, causing depression and despair.

The centre is sponsored by the Melksham Family of Churches and receive financial support from various bodies and individuals including Melksham Without.

MCMA meet weekly at the Baptist church in Old Broughton Road. Clients can be seen by appointment on Thursdays or at other suitable times.

The workload is increasing, and we are always looking for people to help with the work. This could mean training to be advisors or other support. For more details contact us at the address below.

Contact Us – Melksham Community Money Advice
 melkshamcma.org
 07710 893 168
 infomelkshamcma@gmail.com

Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN 946055

Proud Melksham

Proud Melksham has gone from strength to strength since its launch in June 2021. As a registered charity we have been actively engaging with the community, to raise awareness of LGBT+ rights and issues, and to provide support to the local LGBT+ community. Our monthly coffee meets up provides a safe space for people to just be themselves, to meet others in the community, and provides a support network for often confused, isolated and struggling individuals. Our year has been working towards our goal to bring Pride to Melksham for the first time, and in June 2022 we will be hosting Melksham Pride Festival, a celebration of what makes each of us unique. It's been amazing to see the difference Proud Melksham is making to people's lives, and we hope to continue this change for the better across the coming years.

Ryan Clarke

Proud Melksham

Melksham Food and River Festival

We are very grateful to Melksham Without Parish Council for their grant contribution, which has helped us to fund the essential specialist professional electrical, insurance, medical, security, toilets and waste disposal service providers needed to support the event. The FREE-to-attend Festival was our best yet. A 'guesstimated' 18,000 people, drawn from the entire Melksham Parish and Town Council areas - and increasingly from a wider catchment area - enjoyed the programme of field and river-based activities; family musical entertainment; a fun fair and other activities for children and people of all ages.

The festival weekend enabled community, educational, fund raising and social opportunities to promote the activities of local Melksham artisans, communities and charities; as well as being a shop window for a range of hot food and other stalls to promote the food and products for many local small suppliers.

Work is now underway to prepare for the 2022 Festival. We have already received a record number of stall bookings; identified activity, entertainment and professional service providers, and are well advanced in completing the Event Management Plan another essential documentation.

Wiltshire Mind – Mental Health Support for our community

Thank you to the Parish Council for your support again this year. It is very much appreciated.

The need for mental health support, provided through counselling and Support Groups grows year on year. The effects of the pandemic, the resulting isolation, anxiety, and loneliness continues to affect so many of us. This includes our younger community too. Our waiting lists for our services has grown across the County, and we do our best to provide mental health support to as many people as possible at our local level. Financial support from the Parish Council helps pay for some of those costs – so a big thank you.

In Melksham, we provide a daytime Support Group on a Wednesday. This provides a friendly space for anyone experiencing mental health problems. It brings together people with shared experiences to support each other and provide a place where you can feel accepted and understood. Facilitated by skilled members of our team, everyone's experiences are treated as equally important. The group can enable those attending to develop coping skills and feel accepted and understood, improving self-esteem. Supporting others can also improve self-confidence. The sessions are held to give each other support and share coping mechanisms. We periodically offer relevant talks and activities.

Please check our website at www.wiltshiremind.co.uk for the latest information on our Support Groups and counselling services. We are hoping to do some fundraisers through the year, so please do stay in touch with Wiltshire Mind. We are an independent charity, providing support to anyone in our community.

HELP Counselling Services report for the Annual Parish meeting

Wiltshire has been an explosion in those need mental health support. We are seeing record numbers using the service and this drove our waiting list to unprecedented levels. Because of the support we received from Melksham Without Parish Council, we were able to increase the number of volunteer counsellors with our service and were able to provide 3500 sessions our communities. Thank you for your continued support, it helped us to continue our valuable work to change and save lives.

Shaw and Whitley Garden Club

In a covid time

Shaw and Whitley Garden Club are a group which holds meetings in the Whitley Methodist Chapel on Top Lane on the second Wednesday of the month from 7:30pm until 9pm. We are very friendly, and members like to arrive early so that they can have time to have a hot drink and chat to each other before the meeting starts. Unfortunately, with Covid, we had to stop the drinks but we hope to get back to it soon. We invite speakers to come to talk to us on a range of topics and we also have a visit to an interesting local garden attraction in the summer. We met in February and have a March meeting to look forward to. This year we plan to have topics to cover: - Flowers and Vegetables in the garden, extraordinary bulbs, a Whiff of the Exotic, Heritage Vegetables as well as a visit to the American Museum Gardens. Throughout the year we have a Photo Challenge, and the results are shown in the November Meeting. In May we have a plant sale, usually at the Methodist Church when they have a book swap morning. In June we will have a plant stall at the Jubilee Fete in Shaw. These raise funds to help cover the costs of our speakers.

Melksham Gardeners' Society Annual Parish report

Despite having to cancel and postpone many meetings during 2020/21 because of the pandemic, Melksham Gardeners' Society started regular monthly meetings in August 2021 and have been meeting ever since. We even managed to include a coach trip in October to RHS Wisley, along with fascinating monthly speakers from a talk on Natural Remedies from the Hedgerow to Attracting Wildlife to your Garden. We try and keep our costs low, and membership for the year 2022/23 is still £10.00 pp.

A full programme and visits are planned for 2022/23; and fingers crossed, we will be able to hold our annual Flower & Produce Show in September which has had to be cancelled for the past two years. Despite the pandemic we have increased our membership to 85 members and we go from strength to strength.

We meet on the last Tuesday evening of the month at the Rachel Fowler Centre and have members from Melksham Town and Without Parishes.



March 22

Thank you to the grant awarded by Melksham Without Parish we have been able to continue supporting blind and partially sighted people living within Melksham Without Parish. Despite 2021 being a difficult year for everyone it's been a really good year for us with an expansion of our services across the region including the opening our new resource hub and first charity shop in Salisbury.

The Community Sight Loss Advisor for Melksham Without Parish has been offering practical and emotional support that people could use and access without leaving their homes including individual coaching and teaching on using technology and providing telephone support alongside providing face to face support when restrictions have allowed.

Our team have continued to identify any additional support needs and referred people to our new volunteer befriending service if they were feeling lonely and isolated. We were able to match clients living in Melksham Without Parish to befrienders for regular support.

Throughout the periods of lockdown, many events – including regular social clubs to support the most vulnerable and isolated older people – were moved online or suspended. However, as soon as we have been able to in between lockdown and with safety measures in place, we have been seeing people face-to-face in our offices and at our local community hub in Melksham. We have shown people how to maximise their remaining sight, by using magnifiers effectively and trying out a variety of lights.

With the support of the grant awarded to us by Melksham Without Parish we have been able to provide individual support to blind and partially sighted people living in Melksham Without Parish over 150 times this year and continue to be there for anyone that needs our services.

We are extremely grateful for the continued support of Melksham Without Parish Council.

Karen Monk
Fundraiser

Wiltshire Sight is a registered charity in England and Wales 1119462
St Lucy's Sight Centre, The Beeches, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 2AT
Tel 01380 723682 Email info@wiltshiresight.org

Friends of Shurnhold Fields

The Friends of Shurnhold Fields (FOSF) annual report is as follows.

During March we planted 25 x 2-year-old trees around the 13.5-acre field, these consisted of Rowan, Hornbeam, Lime, Beech and Oak kindly donated by Knorr-Bremse at Bowerhill.

During May we received a donation of 12 x 2-year-old trees from a Melksham resident who wanted to `leave something behind for the children`. We planted them around the picnic area.

During June we cleared the area of Ragwort and Balsalm from along the now opened up South Brook.

During December we planted 16 assorted fruit trees in the orchard bringing the total to 41. These too were kindly donated by Knorr-Bremse at Bowerhill.

In February we planted 2 Scots Pines to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth`s 70 years on the throne along with Prince Philip.

Over the last 3 years the Volunteers have planted over 500 trees, 1,000 daffodils, 1,000 Crocus and 50 Foxglove all donated by the people Melksham, Woodland Trust and Knorr-Bremse.

Many thanks to you all.

If you would like to volunteer, please ring Paul Carter on 01225 703 223.

Melksham Amateur Swimming Club

The last 12 months have seen a slow return to near normal operation for our club, with steadily more and more swimmers involved in regular training and a small amount of competitive swimming against other clubs. However, after much reorganisation, we are most proud of relaunching our Teach To Swim program. Our core of qualified teachers are once again welcoming younger swimmers who have little or no experience of the water and taking them through the stages to a point where they can take part in regular training. We are open to anyone who would either like to learn to swim or who would like to take part in club activity at a more advanced level. For an idea of what we do, and how to join, please visit:

www.melkshamswordfish.org.uk

or alternatively, email:

membershipsecretary@melkshamswordfish.org.uk

Supporting Volunteers with Additional Needs at Melksham Hub Café

Jade joined us in October as part of the Wiltshire Council Employment and Community Skills Team - Special Educational Needs and Disability Service.



Jade is a great asset to our team. Feedback from her Community Coordinator – “I just wanted to let you know about Saturday and J’s first shift with Gemma, which went fantastically well.

J got stuck in straight away and the café suits her perfectly which is wonderful to see. I cannot praise Gemma enough for her support and patience with J, and being a generally fantastic mentor to have for J! Thank you, Gemma, and thank you Sophie for this opportunity!”



Ben, Shannon and Lotti joined us in January. They are thriving in the café and we are thrilled to have them as part of our team 😊



Wiltshire Citizens Advice

We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. At Wiltshire Citizens Advice, we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice. We offer free, confidential advice online, over the phone and in person. People rely on us because we're independent and totally impartial. When we say we're for everyone, we mean it.

Whether dealing with a single issue or a complex set of problems that requires more specialist support, last year we provided one-to-one advice and support to almost **18,000 people** - that's the equivalent of **1 in every 11 households in Wiltshire**. Thousands more viewed our online advice pages.

- **8 in 10 people** said their problem was resolved following our advice.
- **9 in 10 people** said we helped them find a way forward.
- **6 in 10 people** said they felt less stressed, depressed or anxious as a result of the help they received from us.

In total, we helped people find a way forward with more than **45,000 new issues**. Problems to do with **Welfare Benefits, Employment, Housing and Money** accounted for nearly three quarters (74%) of all the issues we helped people with.

Wiltshire Citizens Advice is an independent charity. Without the support of our funders and donors, and the extraordinary efforts of our staff and volunteers we could not help the many thousands of people who seek our help and advice each year. On their behalf... **a very big thank you!**

In Wiltshire:

- For every **£1 spent** on our service, we **benefit our clients by £10.90**
- We **save the government and public services £6.25million** - that's more than £4 for every £1 invested in our service.
- We estimate our total social and economic value to society to be **£42 million**.

No one else sees so many people with so many different kinds of problems, and that's why we're here: to give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to find their way forward—whoever they are, and whatever their problem.

citizensadvicewiltshire.org.uk

Freephone 0800 144 8848

Lines are open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Melksham Cricket Club

Melksham Cricket Club have finally after 5 years of planning, relocated their single lane training nets from KGV playing field to Melksham House. The nets system originally funded by councils & sports England was removed from KGV and placed into storage, whilst the club set about securing funding and planning.

We are pleased to say work has started this week with the contractors S&C Slatter on a new Double Lane Training Net. They will be reusing key elements of the original system and extending it to two lanes to reflect the growth of the club.

The work was originally planned for earlier in the year with an Astro replacement on the field. Unfortunately, due to the Melksham House demolition contractor, north car park works, campus contractor and pond works, this delayed site access and the work start date was delayed.

Unfortunately, this also meant we had to delay the install of the Astro surface, due to the change of date, season start and the damage it would do to the grounds/wicket area.

The club currently has two mixed adult teams and a growing youth section.

We will be picking the Astro project back up in September.

We thank you for your support which benefits the whole of Melksham Community.

Many thanks

Gary Burns

Club Chairman

Photo - Day 7 of the installation.

