

Minutes of the Theale Parish meeting held remotely on Monday 26th April 2021 at 7:30pm

Present: Paul Clifford, Lisa Cox, Jan Crisp, Martin Davy (Holy Trinity Church), Zoe Fenwick, Rob Gallop, Katie Gash, Joanna Halliday (Theale Green Secondary School), Alan Hawkett (Thames Valley Police), Iain Hopcroft, Jon Lockley (Theale Help), Alan Macro (West Berkshire Council), Paul Manley (clerk), Sally McCarthy (1st Theale & Calcot Scout Group), Phil Mead (Theale & Tilehurst Cricket Club), Catherine Morley (Theale Primary School) Mel Paul, Jan Richardson (chair), John Seto (Theale Help) & Craig Stevens.

1. Reports

a. Alan Hawkett (Thames Valley Police)

Crime figures since beginning of January – Relatively low figures, other than anti-social behaviour. RE recent incidents of church vandalism: the Pangbourne team has identified and arrested two juvenile offenders who have been referred to youth offending team. More general increase in ASB. Theale is a priority location for patrols: when Pangbourne cannot attend, Hungerford, Newbury and Thatcham teams will spend high visibility patrols in and around Theale. Aim is to divert people from committing crimes in the first place. This priority status will continue until levels drop.

Really important for community to report crimes to police. On 25th April, average wait time on 101 calls was under 10 minutes. If a crime is in progress, call 999; already committed or less urgent, call 101. Can also report via website if you do not wish to wait on the phone. Everyone should feel comfortable contacting the police; only by reporting the crime can it be logged.

Alternatively, email pangbouneNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Unauthorised encampments – Theale has suffered historically. Sometimes the police has not dealt with these as it should have. Last 12 months Theale has had 6 UEs – 3 of those police have used section 61 to remove encampment. 6 is high, but Arlington Business Park is included in this number. Alan has commissioned analytical work to find out more about this and how to prevent these in the future in WB.

October this year, Pangbourne team will move into the new tri-station in Wigmore Lane.

Question from Rob Gallop: What are the hours of patrol visibility? Alan: 8am until midnight or 2am, depending on day of the week.

Alan has asked for more impromptu police visits to High Street and businesses. Feel free to stop and chat to police officers.

2. Apologies for absence

None received

Reports (continued)

b. Jan Richardson (Theale Parish Council)

[ad verbum]

Welcome and thank you to everyone for attending.

This past year has not been easy for any of us and our heartfelt thoughts go out to anyone who has lost a loved one during the pandemic and to those who have worked so hard during this extraordinary year. The parish council has had to learn new ways of doing things, but we have carried on, albeit remotely and tried our best.

We took advantage of both the Peter Gooch Room and the John Cumber Hall being unavailable to do some maintenance and refurbishment. I hope when you are eventually allowed to use them again that you will be pleased with our efforts.

The parish council has also supported Theale Help during the pandemic and I'd like to personally thank them for their continued effort in helping the people of Theale, especially those that needed it the most. We have a new Parish notice board in the High Street which has replaced the old one and, along with our website, we also have a new social media page on Facebook which is full of information. We have also been busy ordering new benches, which will hopefully be in place soon, also we have the particularly lovely commemorative

bench on the corner of Englefield road and Church street which has been recently installed. As well as having discussions on what projects should come next, hence the survey that was delivered throughout the village which we will be delivered in the May meeting. We are hoping to be able to hold a community litter pick at some point this year incorporating a bring-your-own picnic and hopefully getting to meet new people and we look forward to seeing you there.

c. Iain Hopcroft (Dr Ellerton's Charity)

The aim of the charity today is to relieve need, hardship and distress of the inhabitants of the civil parishes of Theale & Holybrook. The charity has provided financial support to local groups in the past year, including Theale Help and Holy Trinity Church.

More generally, the charity can provide grants for individuals to purchase essential household goods. And it has supported the brownies and girl guides, Kennet Valley School, Holy Trinity Church (to help live-stream services), Theale Green School, the allotment association. It also maintains the village's defibrillators.

The charity welcomes any grant requests in the future.

d. Martin Davy (Holy Trinity Church)

Martin and family moved to Theale in the summer of 2019. The 6 months before the lockdown were crucial to get to know people! During the pandemic, the church discovered some things not so important—stuff & tradition—but looking after one another and communicating online were more important.

The church became a foodbank drop-off just before the first lockdown, so very timely. People have stepped up to help. Holy Trinity's drop-off is one of the largest contributors in all of West Berkshire! Need sustained giving. The church now has a dedicated fund to help people in need.

Has been vandalism, but much good besides. Live streaming services has enabled those with injury or sickness to join. Holy Trinity needs to future-proof its aging building. Martin is looking forward to working with the new tri-station and Arlington Business Park.

A note on the building work in the Rectory garden – this is work on new offices for the bishop, arch-deacon and staff. For now, the church is using the old school for Sunday Club.

e. Sally McCarthy (1st Theale & Calcot Scout Group)

Sally has been in position since September. Very different scouting in past year as have not met face-to-face. All meetings on Zoom, etc. Getting ready to return to physical meetings from this week.

f. Joanna Halliday (Theale Green Secondary School)

Reflection on year – Despite circumstances, everyone has risen to the challenge. The school remains committed to being part of the Activate Learning Education Trust. This September, school expects 150 new year 7s – double that of 3 years ago! Feel privileged and supported by the trust.

Jo summarised the recent event under three heading: being *connected*, keeping children *engaged* and, more recently, *reconnecting* with children.

Stunning ways families have worked during lockdown. Reconnection process underway now, whilst also supporting resilient and committed staff. This summer term, the school is managing the complexities and politics of exam grading process. School's job is to do our best for young people. Jo is proud of how pupils are responding.

Highlights of past year – featured on Sky Sports, PE department won award from Get Berkshire Active, and team of support staff ran a testing centre! Young people showed resilience and maturity on return. There is growth in 6th form, especially numbers of disadvantaged children. Stability in staff and value in school's community.

Next week the school will take 10 disadvantaged children to local sailing club. Other opportunities coming up. Programme for year 10s on personal development and resilience. Student Council talking about important issues: culture, how they want school to develop. Parents have been engaging in workshops on learning.

Jo mentioned the Duke of Edinburgh programme and support of local community, eg donation of 89 laptops during pandemic, involvement with foodbank at Holy Trinity.

Jo said thank you to whole community for support and commitment. If anyone has anything they feel they can offer, please get in touch.

Lisa Cox: As parent, thanks to Mrs Halliday and team for support.

g. Catherine Morley (Theale Primary School)

Moved into new building last summer and ready by September! Children were delighted to return in September, despite various COVID-19 related challenges.

Continued with usual school events in autumn – Remembrance poppy and poems on walls. Xmas services posted on website. School supported other groups such as Children in Need and Daisy's Dream (bereavement charity). Made lanterns for light and lantern parade in Newbury. Cinema night at end of term – also art event that evening. Xmas dinner in bubbles! The staff helped children catch up with lost learning. Had no need to close bubbles. Refined remote learning plans.

Recent lockdown – massive increase in demand for places, more than 100 attending every day. Families did amazing job supporting children. Fortunate in support from local community, eg donation of IT devices, hot meals. School provided food parcels for families and internet data. General supporting each other.

Welcomed children back in March with joy! New initiative this term: school puppy! 'Luna'. Arrived with all children coming back!

Thanks to Martin for remote worship. Looking forward to residential school trips, etc. and welcoming members of community to show new building.

Question from Katie Gash: Thank you to Catherine and staff for managing transition 'like they'd never been away'.

h. John Seto (Theale Help)

Organisation set up in few days before first lockdown. John Seto and Jon Lockley set up IT, mobile phone, Facebook group, leaflets, and registered with WBC Community Hub to help with signposting, and set up bank account in under 10 minutes! Received donations from Theale Parish Council, Dr Ellerton's Charity, and West Berkshire Council.

Spent money on mobile phone, shopping for residents (hard times or isolated).

Over 200 referrals in first lockdown. Majority to collect prescriptions/medication (c 65%). Thanks to Jon for queuing! Calls from relatives to help people nearby. Volunteers helped to deliver food parcels on behalf of Spotlight UK. Offered further money from Dr Ellerton's Charity and Theale Parish Council more recently but have yet had no need to draw on these.

Thank you to Theale Parish Council and former chair Becky – within 24 hours of first contacting her, Theale Help received confirmation of grant. Thank you to Dr Ellerton's Charity for help, people who donated, and Jon Lockley for queuing.

i. Phil Mead (Theale & Tilehurst Cricket Club)

Last year – half as much cricket as usual. Associate impact on membership and income. Youth played no games, just 6 practice sessions.

Looking forward – started cricket season already. Looking to expand: 25% membership expansion so extra Saturday team. Active in recruiting new members. Twice as many youth games expected: All Stars for 5–8 year olds, and Dynamos for 8–11 year olds (new this year).

Developing second ground at Douai Abbey. Fundraising for this.

Various sport statistics . . .

j. Alan Macro (West Berkshire Council)

Thank you to John Seto and Jon Lockley for Theale Help work.

Lakeside development between The Green and the bypass – planning permission for 325 houses. Land has just been purchased so something may happen imminently. Other side of Green is site for 104 houses.

West Berkshire's new Local Plan to 2037 in development. Proposing new housing sites: 100 homes on Whitehart Meadow, 72 on site of old sewage works. Both were rejected last time by Environmental Agency. The corner by junction 12 and Hoad Way is designated for 20,000sqm of offices as shortfall identified. But perhaps no shortfall for office space post-pandemic?

Railway station – new footbridge with lifts by end of next year and improvements to accessibility – new car park to increase capacity by 33%.

Response to pandemic: as part of the government's active travel fund, Alan has proposed closure of Deadman's Lane to motor vehicles. Consultation just ended. West Berkshire Council also set up the Community Hub to support communities.

Financially, West Berkshire Council fared relatively well during the pandemic.

Speeding on Crown Lane & Meadow Way. Raised petitions for 20mph limit.

Major planning applications over past few years – Theale Motors site was refused; 19/19a High Street, proposal for 15 flats multi-storey block – appeal won and given permission by Planning Inspectorate.

Theale Primary School. Slight traffic issue, but 'just one of those things'.

Will be news about old school site to come. Education use probable.

Unauthorised encampments – WBC did work to help protect sites. Police and Crime Bill going through parliament at the moment will make it illegal for an unauthorised encampment to continue if landowner asks them to move.

Question from Sally McCarthy: Her understanding that scouts lost their hut in 1970s to build bypass. Any commitment from WBC to help find land for new hut within Theale? *Alan's answer:* please email him details.

Question from Craig Stevens: Any development around access to Andrews Close? It's a health and safety issue. *Alan's answer:* This was being looked at.

3. Matters raised by parishioners

Paul Clifford: Amazing achievements over past 12 months. The parish council is here to help groups – would like to hear from you on ideas in which it can help in the future. Otherwise thank you.

Meeting ended 8:42pm