

# Minutes of the Theale Parish meeting held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 at 6pm in the Peter Gooch Room, The Pavilion, Theale

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Present: Michael Church, Paul Clifford, Jan Crisp, Martin Davy, Margaret Elliott, Zoe Fenwick, Nick Flint, Rob Gallop, Jo Halliday, Iain Hopcroft, Alan Macro, Paul Manley, Sally McCarthy, Phil Mead, Catherine Morley, Mel Paul, Stevie Pickstock

Chaired by: Councillor Paul Clifford (chairman of Theale Parish Council)

## 1. Apologies for absence

Richard Anderson (Dr Ellerton's Charity), Stuart Coker, Lisa Cox, Katie Gash, Alan Hawkett (Thames Valley Police), Dennis Hayden (Tilehurst Poor's Land Charity), Daniel Lond (Thames Valley Police)

## 2. Reports (see Appendix for reports)

- a. Theale Parish Council
- b. Dr Ellerton's Charity
- c. Holy Trinity Church
- d. Thames Valley Police & the Neighbourhood Action Group
- e. 1<sup>st</sup> Theale & Calcot Scouts
- f. Theale & Tilehurst Cricket Club
- g. Theale Green Secondary School
- h. Theale Primary School
- i. Theale Library
- j. Tilehurst Poor's Land Charity
- k. West Berkshire Council

## 3. Matters raised by parishioners

*Margaret Elliott:* Where is the rest of the money for the new play area and [Multi-Use Sports Area] coming from [after the £100,000 grant from West Berkshire Council]? *Paul Clifford:* The parish council has allocated reserves for the project. It has also received a grant of £8,000 from the Thames Valley Police Community Fund towards the CCTV.

*Margaret Elliot:* It's a shame no public toilets were planned for this project. *Paul Clifford:* Public toilets were not included in the plans, partly due to the difficulty of devising sewerage and water connections. However, the parish council will discuss the issue at its next meeting.

*Meeting ended 7:25pm*

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## Appendix: Reports

## Theale Parish Council

### Chairmans Report – May 22

During the last 12 months the Parish council continued to offer support to the community for the Impact of COVID-19 restrictions. This was done via the Theale help group organized by John Seto and John Lockley, thankfully their activity was much reduced as were the restrictions.

The council have placed a number of additional benches around the village including one on NSPF to remember those lost to the COVID-19 outbreak and other more personal requests from people to commemorate the lives of those no longer with us.

We have had applications from charities who support the Theale community, these have included Citizens Advice and Parenting Special Children.

In Spring 2021, the trustee of Cumber Hall asked for help to allow the Hall to continue to be a community asset. It had multiple challenges both commercial funding and volunteers to run the trust. The Parish council worked with WBC and supported the trustees to make organizational changes to the trust and provided financial support for the hall to continue to remain a community asset with a secure future.

In June 2021 we formed an Open Spaces committee with the goal of maximizing our parish communal space assets, namely the rec and NSPF. We had embarked on a consultation earlier in the year to better understand the community needs, from this it was clear that there was a need to refurbish the play area and an inclusive MUGA were a priority, the plans for these are well under way

At the same time as we started planning the MUGA and play area refurbishment WBC invited us to apply for up to £100,000 of CIL (community Infra structure levy funds) they were holding. This money comes from developers as they build houses in West Berkshire. Paul, our Clerk to the Council, put together a successful bid to convince WBC that we should get the full £100k for our project that will cost over a quarter of a million pounds.

We went into a more detailed consultation about this project and some of the groups here tonight helped us solicit information from the community. We finalized our plans and put this out to tender with contracts being awarded to Proludic in last month. We are now finalizing our planning application for submission.

After a gap of a few years our events working group were able to bring back the Christmas event for the village, this is no mean feat with many many hours of time going into the organization along with panic stricken moments when we the Christmas lights aren't up with less than 48 hours to the event. Thank you to everyone supported this event by volunteering and attending, we had an enjoyable night with a great turnout. From the event we have been able to offer a donation to a diverse range of the community - Trinity Bunnies, Theale Primary School, Theale Green School and Care bus.

As everyone knows, Amazon have 2 warehouses in Theale, last year they approached us and said how can we get involved in the community. They helped provided some of the traffic management equipment needed for these events and have been supporting Theale in other ways. I also know they have formed relationships with other parts of the community with real community spirit – thank you Amazon for having a positive impact in Theale.

In November last year, the church approached us for help and funding to enable them to produce the parish magazine – we agreed to share some of the associated costs, effort to put this magazine together and distribution effort. You had your first issue in time for easter and the second is on the way for summer. We hope you like it!

We our events working party has been busy organizing the Jubilee fete and we look forward to welcoming you to the Jubilee fete on the Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June for an afternoon of celebration and fun.

Over the last few months we have been working with Martin Davey, members of the community John Seto and Jon Lockley, the emergency services and numerous other groups to put together an emergency plan for major events. This is currently being finalized.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who supports the council, it is great to have you all hear tonight. Thanks go to our fabulous council team who make things happen, Paul and Jan, Dee and Marina who support us with the running of the facilities, Gary Nelson (GN Maintenance) who always goes above and beyond for the village and all of the members of the council who willing volunteer their time to work as part of the council.

Paul Clifford  
Chairman of Theale Parish Council

# Dr Ellerton's Charity

*Report for 2021-2*

We have had a quieter year than usual but have still supported the community in many of our usual ways. We have handed out Sainsbury vouchers at Christmas to those in need (over £2,000) and have helped a number of local residents who have fallen on hard times. We have managed to help some of our local groups to survive during the Covid crisis as they have not been able to receive payments from their members. There have been the usual requests for assistance with carpeting and domestic appliances and we have managed to help in most of the cases.

The allotments are fully allocated and there is currently a waiting list. We continue to draw water from our own well which saves us about £1,200 per year and means the allotment holders have no restrictions on the amount of water they use or are subject to national water restrictions. The annual allotments judging took place as usual and the standard was very high.

We are expecting an increase in activity with the sudden rise in the cost of living and will do all we can to help the residents of Theale and Holybrook during these difficult times.

Could I also take this opportunity to thank the wonderful team of Trustees who give up their time to make this local charity function so well. They take on every challenge with a smile and work so hard for those less fortunate than themselves. I am very privileged to lead such a great team working on behalf of the community.

Thank you.

Richard Anderson DL  
Chairman

## Holy Trinity Theale Report: Theale Annual Parish Meeting

Well life within the family of Holy Trinity is really buzzing at the moment. We have just had our own annual meeting when we look back over the last year, and also look forward.

To look back has been a real treat. Not everything is back to what we might call 'normal', but we've been able to fully embrace lots of changes for the better. We are growing as a church and over the last year we've seen the average age of the church family dropping by decades as many more 20s and 30s have join our congregation in the last year, as well as some families with much younger children too. It's been a joy to need to run a creche with our livestream being streamed in there for any parents who need it. It's been a joy to see our ASC grow. Our Sunday Club grow and our midweeks grow too.

Sunday service continue to be a real joy – and now we have lots of technology and are almost paper-free in the service. Now we have more modern music and a real eclectic feel to the services we're seeing more and more people interested in delving into the question of life – why are we here, what's our purpose. Who is Jesus? Why do things happen in the world. All of that stuff. And we run a course called Christianity Explored and a 3 week course called Hope Explored. And we have always been full for all our courses – the last session of the current course is tonight. And anyone is welcome to find out more about that via our website in church.

We often say the line we want to be your church in Theale for Theale and we mean it. And to show that we mean it, we announced last week that the church council voted to start what is officially called a Church-reordering. The church is 200 years old and you may know that in some areas it feels like it. We've made good progress with our electrics and technology, but a lot more needs to be done to ensure Holy Trinity is fit for another 200 years... toilets, running water, step free access into the building, step free access once inside the building. Some catering facilities. Dedicated creche space. Flexible spaces so the main auditorium can be used for more than just one purpose in a week – we want to ensure we can run midweek toddler groups and seniors groups and youth groups.

Because it's a grade 1 listed building it means we have lots of work to do – and some obstacles too. We can't just have any design and run with it. Historic England, The Edwardian Society and the Victorian Society, as well as the church of England's DAC, all have a say... and can stop us doing things we may want to do. Any design has to be created by a certified conservation architect and put through multiple layers of scrutiny.

But I'm pleased to say work has begun on a initial design. It's going to cost somewhere in region of a million pounds. We have zero pounds and zero pence at the moment. But the point is, there will never feel like there is a good time to start. I'm dedicated to this, like I'm dedicated to Theale – and it will take as long as it takes. But I'm bothered to see the church here for another 200 years. We're looking to seeing what it looks like in practice to apply for appropriate grants – because, let's be honest, cakes sales don't cut it for this size of a project.

So there you go, that's where we are and, as I said, there is a real buzz at the moment as we look forward to what is to come.

Martin Davy  
*Rector of Holy Trinity, Theale*

**Report from Thames Valley Police**  
**Theale's Annual Parish Meeting – 23/05/22**

At the end of 2021, the Police Neighbourhood team moved from their base at Pangbourne police station and are now stationed in Theale Community fire station along with RBFRS. With the team now stationed in Theale, they are naturally spending more time patrolling the area.

The team is made up of Inspector Alan Hawkett, Sergeant Dan Lond, PC's Rob Hubbard-Clark and Josie Williams, PCSO's Sue Nix, Will Pugh-Cook, Steve Innes, Georgia Dimes.

PCSO George Townsend who was the main PCSO contact for Theale left TVP at the start of May 2022 and we are currently carrying two PCSO vacancies which we hope to fill soon.

In the meantime, all of the team will be pleased to help and respond to any issues in Theale.

The crime figures and ASB reports to TVP for the parish of Theale over the past 12 months have remained relatively low however there have been a few high profile crimes such as the recently burglary to the Co-op in the High Street which is still actively being investigated.

Our main anti-social behaviour reports from Theale over the past 12 months are regarding the use of electric scooters, mopeds and off road bikes in the fields around hangar road. Over the coming year we will continue to carry out operations to target the inconsiderate and sometimes dangerous use of these types of vehicles.

We are also receiving reports of cannabis use in the Play Platt area and will be targeting this and working with our housing partners where cannabis use is effecting neighbouring residents.

We also plan to carry out speed enforcement in the parish and adjoining parishes.

The easiest way to contact the police neighbourhood team is via email [PangbourneNHPT@thamesvalley.police.uk](mailto:PangbourneNHPT@thamesvalley.police.uk)

## Report of Neighbourhood Action Group to Parish Council

The Neighbourhood Action Group is made up of local residents, business people, and District and Parish Councillors, who liaise with the local Community Police to discuss matters of joint interest, such as anti behaviour. In particular we review the areas susceptible to criminal damage which currently are, Holy Trinity Church Theale and Theale Recreation Ground. These are designated as Police priority areas and regularly checked by Police patrols.

We held our first meeting following the Covid lockdowns in September last year, when speeding in general and congestion around the local schools was raised as a matter of concern.

The December meeting hosted a talk by West Berkshire Council Senior Road Safety Officer Cheryl Evans, who explained the options and potential action, which could be taken to alleviate the traffic problems around ~~our~~ schools. The head teachers of both the Theale Primary and Secondary schools were in attendance, as was a representative of the Social Club. This talk has given all parties involved food for thought on the way forward.

The meeting in March was poorly attended and there was no representative from the Police due to roster problems. This provided an opportunity to discuss the NAG's future. It was agreed that NAG meant very little to the community generally and usually needed explaining when dealing with the public. It was decided ~~the~~ to rename the group PACT, that is Police and Community Together, which we feel better represents what we are trying to achieve. Sadly we missed the dead line for announcing this change in the new Church and Parish Magazine.

For the future we hope to get more public involvement by advertising forthcoming meetings before the event. The aim is to encourage members of the community to attend in order to discuss their concerns directly with the police.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Theale & Calcot Scout Group

*Report for Theale's annual parish meeting on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022*

- 160 children aged 6–18 years supported in the past year – half from Theale, half Calcot.
- Importance of links with community and church.
- Numbers are now back to pre-pandemic levels with long waiting lists of children.
- Looking for an additional hall to hire.
- Activities have included litter picking, a visit to the new fire station, camping.

Sally McCarthy

*Group leader*

# Theale & Tilehurst Cricket Club

*Report for 2021-2*

Overall the pandemic has assisted on increasing participation in cricket.

## Senior Cricket

- Expanded to 4 teams on a Saturday from 3 pre-pandemic. 1st XI promoted to highest division they have ever played in.
- 2 teams on a Sunday
- 1st and 2nd teams now playing at Douai Abbey where we invested in improving the wicket, adding a scoreboard and sightscreens.

## Youth Cricket

- U15s very successful but not able to run U13 & U11 due to lack of volunteers.
- AllStars and Dynamos being run on Sunday mornings for 5 to 10 years olds with about 50 attending. Expect these to feed into future U11 and U13 teams

## Finances

- Higher operating costs (e.g. cutting) and umpires.
- Improved income due to sponsorship from local businesses

Phil Mead

*Chairman of Theale & Tilehurst Cricket Club*

## Report for Parish Council

May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022

Theale Green School - reflection on the year:

This time last year we had not long come out of the winter lockdown and were once again reconnecting with our students. So much has happened since then. Last week we said goodbye to our Year 13s at their final assembly, and I reminded them of the pivotal role they played last summer in reenergising staff and students during both House Challenge and Sports' Day; they brought the House system back to life, and our Sports' Day last summer was one I will not forget. The House colour smoke flares, the then Year 12 dressed up as the House mascots, the students face painted and dressed in House colours, the sun shining and the whole school singing along to Sweet Caroline was a moment to reflect everything that we want our school to be.

Once again school staff rose to the complex challenge and the moving goalposts of Teacher Assessed Grades for Year 11 and Year 13, which took us into the summer holiday of results and an incredible summer school for the whole of Year 7. Over 80% of the year group attended the week long summer school and they experienced sailing, cooking, laser shooting and bushcraft to name a few activities. We even managed to bring in an Olympian at the end of week celebration assembly.

We launched our Respectful Behaviour Manifesto in September, which has become a model across West Berkshire in terms of really setting out our stall of what is expected in our community in relation to tolerance and respect. We were very grateful to Corinna Bartle who led on this over last summer and came back to launch it in September. The autumn term marched forward and despite many positives, felt like a constant battle against covid, in terms of the illness itself, but also rising above it and keeping the school moving forward.

Term 3 after Christmas was a long term in many senses; late January / early February was when covid hit staff properly for the first time throughout the whole pandemic leading to a few days where some year groups had to work at home. A high spot of late winter however, was winning the Outstanding Secondary School Award at the Youth Sport Trust Annual Conference. To know that our approach to setting the culture for staff and students in terms of their well being was recognised at this level, was very heartening. In Term 3 we also welcomed Kate Coombs, our new Head of Music, who has already had a very significant impact on the daily life of the department. We have refurbished the department entirely, and Amazon has been very supportive in that process; helping find us second hand instruments and new furniture amongst many other items. Kate and two of the Leadership Team spent an inspirational morning at the Primary School witnessing the strength of Music in their curriculum, and Kate has very big ideas and plans to take forward.

And then of course, OFSTED. It was in 2010 that Theale Green School plunged into a series of Special Measures / Requires Improvements reports, which have remained for over a decade. After writing to OFSTED last summer asking them to visit, we had truly come to the conclusion that it may never happen, so to receive the call on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May was both a shock and exciting in one! The most important part of the experience for me, was the total sense of calm and positivity across the school for those two days. Many staff at Theale Green School had lived through the previous experiences, and they felt this more than anyone. I am frustrated not to be able to share the report with you, which is now going through final moderation before publication, but suffice to say it will reflect the huge sense of community that makes Theale Green School what it is. There is, and always will be, work to do on a daily basis, and in the longer term, but the publication of the report is also a moment to pause, and for us all to be very proud of what we have achieved as a collective community. We are exceptionally grateful for the support that you give us, and in a time when we must attract the best staff into education for our children, this support is more important than ever;

we will be inviting the community in for afternoon tea to celebrate with us, towards the end of the summer term and we very much hope you will join us.

Right now, we are in the middle of public examinations once again. Year 11 are already a week into their GCSEs, and have not faltered at any point. They are a total credit and role model to the rest of the school. Year 13 begin their examinations this week; they so deserve to have a good experience after finishing Year 11 in lockdown, and then spending part of Year 12 in lockdown again. We wish them every success and we look forward to keeping in very good touch with every single one of them as they move on to begin their adult lives. In the meantime, a very successful ski trip took place once again over the Easter holiday, Year 8 have just visited the Science Centre and Planetarium in Winchester, Year 7 are off to the Natural History Museum in London after half term, a group of children are back sailing on Tuesdays at the Andrew Simpson lakes, Year 9 have just completed choosing their GCSE Options for September, and Year 10 have been drilled by the Army, amongst other careers' experiences. So back to normal! A busy term ahead, with much to celebrate, and much to do!



Theale Green School



## Theale Library

*Report for Theale's annual parish meeting on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022*

- Liz Husbands retired last year. I am new to the library.
- Everything is back and functioning as before Covid.
- Games had to be locked away. These are now back out and you can borrow jigsaws.
- Regular activities/clubs are running again, helping make the library a social hub for the community. These include: Duplo session, Rhymetime, Quickcraft, Bridge Club and the Craft & Chat group which is open to all.
- New free activities include crochet lessons (now finished).
- Other activities include: seated exercise classes run by Get Berkshire Active – again, free; creative arts classes for the over 55s; EduCafé, a social network including craft and English lessons for immigrants to the UK.
- Had evening talks, eg talk on swifts. Library has nesting boxes.
- Visitor number have returned to normal.
- The library relies completely on volunteers, so please let us know if you can help!

Stevie Pickstock  
*Theale Library*

## TPLC Report to TPC May-2022

The **Tilehurst Poor's Land Charity** (TPLC) annual accounts and report has yet to be finalised so I cannot report on any overall numbers this year except to say we had three requests for assistance from Theale that are in several stages of progress. However, there has been reportable progress in other areas.

TPLC, also known as the **Tilehurst People's Local Charity**, owes its existence to an 1811 act which transferred local common land into a trust to provide fuel for the poor. As society has changed, the charity has adapted to meet a whole range of more modern-day needs, providing grants for essentials like cookers, washing machines, furniture and school uniforms, as well as funding course fees and school trips for students who would not otherwise be able to afford them. It does something which the Local Authority cannot do – helping people who have fallen through the safety net of the welfare state – people who are unable to meet their needs using the available state benefits.

For families who are struggling to make ends meet, a relatively small amount of support can be a real lifeline. It can open the door to a warm home in the winter, or nourishing food for the children, or a piece of carpet so that the baby doesn't have to crawl on a concrete floor. As one recent recipient of a grant put it, *"life has been a bit uphill for us, with a good dash of fear thrown in, but your help has made the world of difference ... God bless you for being there for me and for so many others"*.

The funds for this vital work still come from the charity's land-holdings, either in the form of rental income, or interest on the capital from previous land sales. However, in many years the level of applications exceeds the money coming in, and the Charity doesn't have the funds to consider many of the requests it receives. In the face of ever-increasing need the Trustees have long wanted to scale up their activities, but cannot do so unless the charity's finances can be placed on a more sustainable footing. The situation becomes more pressing each year, but has a new urgency in the wake of a pandemic which has put many people's jobs at risk, and with fuel price rises set to push increasing numbers into poverty.

Thanks to Reading Borough Council's local plan, which earmarked areas of the charity's land for residential development, the Trustees are now a step closer to freeing up the funds needed to ramp up TPLC's poverty-beating work. Unused land at Kentwood Hill and Armour Hill is now on the market, with the proceeds of the sale set to be invested to provide a solid income – money which will be used to help many more local people for many years to come. None of the adjacent land that is now used as allotment gardens is up for sale, and TPLC has no plans to sell this land in the foreseeable future.

Dennis Hayden  
TPLC Trustee

# Theale Annual Parish Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

## District Council Report

### Year dominated by planning and development

- Lakeside
  - Purchased by Ridgpoint Homes
    - Trees around site felled
    - Detailed plans submitted for:
      - 291 homes on main site
      - 7 or 9 homes at the end of St Ives Close
- 19/19a High Street demolished
  - Revised plans for 15 flats and 2 retail units submitted
  - Complaints from neighbours re noise and working out of hours
- Warehouse application on field between Hoad Way and M4
  - Refused over landscape impact and drainage
- Theale Motor
  - Revised plan for 6 flats and retail unit submitted
- 104-home site north of The Green
  - Site investigation and survey work has started on this site given outline planning permission
- Rail depots
  - Planning application for a new siding on the old Wigmore's builder's yard submitted
- Local Plan Review
  - Proposed allocating Whitehart Meadow for 100 homes and old sewage works for 72
  - Proposed allocation for 20,000 sq m. offices on field between Hoad Way and M4
  - Council considering responses from first consultation, including allocations in Theale
  - Aiming for second consultation over summer, but running late

### Roads and transport

- The contract for the installation of a new footbridge with lifts at Theale station has been awarded. It is expected to be in use by next summer
- The plan to install a deck to provide extra parking at the station has hit a snag. An alternative way to provide extra parking may be necessary
- My proposal for the closure of Deadmans Lane to traffic as an Active Travel Scheme project was accepted
  - Experimental traffic order to be issued in next couple of months
- I have submitted a 210 signature petition for a pedestrian crossing at the eastern end of Theale High Street to the Council
- I have successfully requested a no right turn restriction at the entrance to the new Primary School kiss-and-drop entrance to prevent queuing traffic from blocking Englefield Road
  - Traffic order expected soon
- My petitions for 20MPH speed limits in Crown Lane/Blossom Lane, Meadow Way Area and 20MPH request for The Green have been approved by a Council task group and await formal public consultation.

### **Bids to West Berks Council for parish project funding**

- “Theale Green Spaces” wildlife habitat partially successful
- Towards the new play area
- Submitted a bid towards providing a surfaced footpath connecting the path through the churchyard with the path through recreation ground.

### **Open spaces**

West Berks Council changed the mowing regime on the large open space between Woodfield Way and Blossom Lane without consultation,

- To provide a wildlife habitat
- Many complaints from local residents

The contract for mowing West Berks open spaces and verges is up for renewal next year. This may explain their current state, about which I have complained.

### **Waste and Recycling**

- Waste and recycling centres
  - Automatic Number Plate Recognition has replaced paper permits
  - Booking requirement introduced during the pandemic has been retained
- Kerbside weekly food waste collection to be introduced later this year at a cost of £900,000

### **Old Primary School**

The Council is going to refurbish this for use as a 48-pupil school for children with special emotional and mental health needs. It will be run by the Castle School in Newbury.

### **Alan Macro**

**23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022**