



The Newsletter of

# Whitchurch Town Council

Spring 2007 edition

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## The River Test Walk.

*Cllr. Hugh James, Mayor of Whitchurch, gives additional information on the closure of this important footpath*

The Town Council is aware of residents concerns over the closure of the River Test footpath between Fulling Mill and All Hallows Church. Whilst the Town Council has no jurisdiction over the footpath, it has played an active role behind the scenes to determine, and where necessary try to influence, the landowner's plans for the footpath. On an unadvertised Sunday last summer, the Council organized a census of people using the footpath. The results showed how much the path, and its views of the river, mean to local people. Our thanks to the Whitchurch Ramblers for conducting the census and to the 157 people who completed questionnaires.

Approval for work to the riverbank is given by the Environment Agency, and protection of the path is the responsibility of Hampshire County Council's Rights of Way Department. Environment Agency Plans show that the work will be undertaken in three phases. Phase I and II, covering about 300 metres of path from the Church end have started. Our understanding is that the Environment Agency has requested some alterations to the work. The path will reopen on the 8th April 2007.

Phase III will take place in Autumn/Winter 2007 along the final 200 metres at the Fulling Mill end. Under the plans the barbed wire fence will be replaced with a post and rail fence. The river bank will be reinforced with hazel faggots along its length. The footpath will be 1½ metres wide with 50cms of cut edging each side. A further metre of uncut "marginal vegetation" will then be left between the cut edging and the river. The plan notes that material for planting can come from "local strands of emergent or wetland vegetation". The final phase allows for a wheelchair/pushchair ramp to be created from the path onto the bridge.

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## News from Whitchurch Baptist Church.

The historic Grade II listed Baptist Church has recently been restored and refurbished to a high standard, whilst preserving many of its characteristic features. The Church has been redecorated throughout and has a high quality audio visual system with sophisticated projection facilities. Other improvements include under-floor heating, improved facilities for the disabled, remote controlled and dimmable lighting system, an audio loop system, and modern toilet and kitchen facilities. The Church has seating for up to 120 and the adjoining hall can be used to serve refreshments. Enquiries are welcomed from companies and organisations. Please contact Phil Gulley on 01635 297030

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## Distribution

We wish to thank our loyal band of volunteers who help us deliver the eYe to every household in Whitchurch. There are some roads which are currently not covered, so if anyone has half an hour to spare, and would be willing to help please contact Cathy Burt or Pat Cooper on 01256 892107.

**Town Hall.** The Town Council is the Trustee for the Town Hall, and maintains the building for the benefit of the people of Whitchurch. The Town Hall provides accommodation for The Citizen's Advice Bureau, Relate, the Registrar of Births and Deaths, Wessex Business Link, the Volunteer Bureau, the Whitchurch Association, the Youth Initiative Committee, and Community Police Surgeries. The Town Hall can be hired for meetings and receptions. The Council Chamber costs £7.50 per hour, and the Ground Floor Committee Room £5.00 per hour.

## Community Hall and Library

Congratulations to all those who have been involved in the long-term project which has resulted in the new Gill Nethercott Community Centre and Library. The Community Centre and Library will open shortly, the Centre in April and the Library shortly afterwards.

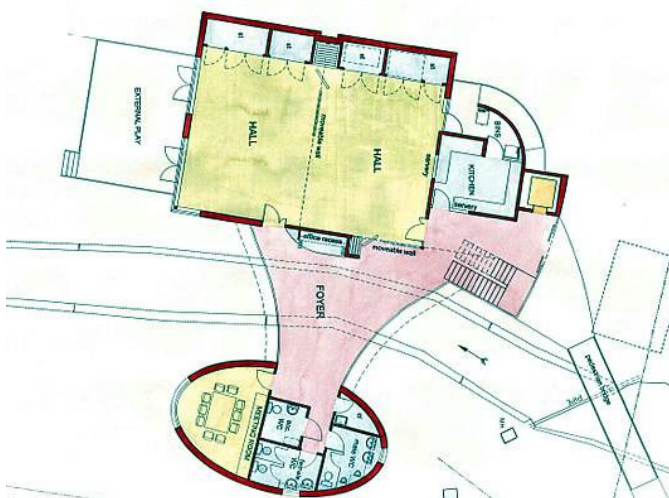
In preparation for the opening the Trustees of the Whitchurch Association, who will be managing the Community Centre on behalf of residents, have put together a Membership Pack. This explains the benefits and cost of annual membership. Individual membership will cost £2.50, family membership £5.00 and junior membership £2.00. Affiliated membership for groups and associations will cost £10.00. Copies of the Membership Pack are available from the Town Hall or by request to the Secretary, Jean Watts.

The Community Centre has a main hall which can be split into two separate spaces by an acoustic divider. There is an open deck area outside and a kitchen with serving hatch. The Pod to the left of the main building houses the toilets and meeting room. The Pod is reached via the foyer, where there is a glass panel in the floor to view the stream beneath. Hire charges will be in the region of £10.00 - £20.00 per hour, depending on which area is required. There will also be a daily rate for hiring the whole facility. From the Community Centre lift and stairs give access to the Library.

The Trustees are looking forward to the handover of the building and already have ideas for some exciting activities at the Centre, but welcome any suggestions.

For more information please contact:

- the Secretary Jean Watts on 896969 or by email at [jean@putitright.plus.com](mailto:jean@putitright.plus.com)
- the Chairman, Harriet Titcomb on 895537 or by email at [harrietmercier@aol.co.uk](mailto:harrietmercier@aol.co.uk)



## Community Police Officer's Report

I hope you have all had a good start to 2007!

From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 to the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007 there were thirty-five crimes. There were eight thefts, four burglaries, one dwelling burglary, five assaults and seventeen instances of criminal damage. The criminal damage included three windows that were broken on New Years Eve.

There were a further twenty-one crimes in the period to the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007. There were seven thefts (including two from the Old Paper shop's entrance), eleven cases of criminal damage (including four to rear gardens), one burglary from Somerfield's store, five assaults (of which four were youth related) and five cases of damage to motor vehicles. There were two arrests in relation to the motor vehicle damage.

Please report any criminal acts which you know about. If for example you see someone causing damage to property, please call the Police on 0845 045 45 45 or the new 101 number.

I will be holding a Beat Surgery in the Town Hall once a month on a Tuesday afternoon between three and four pm. Both the Andover Advertiser and Basingstoke Gazette will advertise the dates. If there is anything you would like to discuss or report please feel free to pop in.

Dates for Beat Surgeries:

March 13 <sup>th</sup>	June 5 <sup>th</sup>
April 10 <sup>th</sup>	July 3 <sup>rd</sup>
May 8 <sup>th</sup>	

Thank you for reading, and all the best for 2007.

PC 787 Paula Osmond

**Paula can be contacted on:**

- via mobile **07768 866416**
- via Hampshire Police **0845 045 45 45**
- via e-mail:

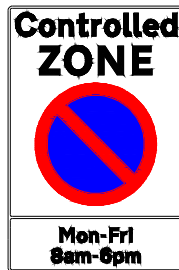
**[Basingstoke.ruralbeats@hampshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Basingstoke.ruralbeats@hampshire.pnn.police.uk)**

## Controlled Parking Zones

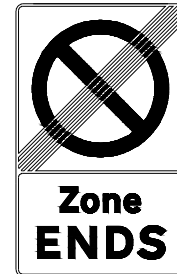
Whitchurch has recently seen a restructuring of its on-road parking and the introduction of Controlled Parking Zones. Inside the Controlled Parking Zone double yellow lines continue to mean no waiting at any time, there is no waiting on single yellow lines at the times shown, and signs adjacent to white marked parking spaces show the restrictions that apply to those spaces. The signs are shown here for your reference!

### At entry and exit points to the Controlled Parking Zone

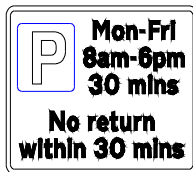
Entry signs include the blue & red no waiting symbol and the days and times on which no waiting applies. On this occasion, the days (Monday to Friday) and the times (8am to 6pm) relate to the single yellow lines within the zone. Outside of Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, motorists can wait for unlimited periods of time on the single yellow lines.



Controlled Parking Zone Ends signs. These signs are positioned on both sides of the road at all of the exit points from the zone.



### White Parking Spaces within the Controlled Parking Zone



Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm, adjacent parking places are available for motorists for up to 30 minutes with no return within 30 minutes. Outside of this period these parking places are available for unlimited periods of time.



Parking place for disabled badge holders only.

**It's just not fair!**



**No it's not and we can do something about it!**

Because the Citizens Advice Bureau is so firmly rooted in the Community our advice work gives us a real insight into the problems and injustices suffered by so many of our clients. These may be caused by all manner of organisations and situations.

We record these issues anonymously and then send them to our Central Office (CO). Issues are collated and amalgamated so that CO get a clear picture of the overall situation and can let Government and other Agencies know how their rules and regulations are affecting peoples lives. By doing this we are able to exercise a responsible influence on the development of SOCIAL POLICY both locally and nationally

Andover bureau has been chosen to be a pilot for a scheme known as THE CLIENT VOICE PROJECT. This is a pilot project to test the effectiveness of empowering clients to undertake social policy work for themselves by making representations to policy makers. These actions might not provide any redress for the client concerned but would draw the attention of policy makers to an issue and help to prevent similar cases occurring in the future.

If you visit us throughout March April and May you will see posters displaying the issues we are hoping that clients will take forward on their own. There will be packs for clients to take away which will include draft letters to send to the relevant agency and other helpful information. We will keep in contact with the clients to see what the outcome is.

## Where do you go to report something that needs fixing?

Whitchurch has a population of around five thousand and a range of facilities. These facilities are backed with a complex network of ownership and responsibility. When there are problems or queries it is sometimes difficult to know who to contact. Whilst we hope to give guidance in this section, if all else fails please contact the Town Council. The Town Council is well connected, so can be a good place to start!

Contact details for the Clerk, Cathy Burt, or her Assistant, Pat Cooper, are shown on the front of the eYe. Of course, you can also call into the Town Hall on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9.30am to 11.30am. You can also speak to any of your local councillors. If we cannot help, we can usually point you in the direction of someone who can. Both Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (**01256 844 844**), and Hampshire County Council (**01962 870500**) have websites which describe the services that they provide.

## So, who does what in Whitchurch?

The Alliston Way and Kingsley Park Recreation Grounds belong to and are maintained by the Town Council, which employs the Borough Council to carry out weekly safety inspections on all the play equipment. Grass cutting, ground maintenance, equipment repair and replacement are also paid for locally. The Daniel Road Open Space and Skate Board Park, the Blosswood Lane Open Space and Witan Court Play Area belong to, and are maintained by, the Borough Council.

Explaining responsibility for other “green” areas is more complicated. Generally all grassed areas between properties are owned by the Borough Council. They organise and pay for the grass to be cut. They also cut the grass on most highway verges in the built up part of the Town on behalf of the County Council. Some of the grassed areas within Housing Association developments are the responsibility of the relevant Housing Association and they should be notified of problems. Their staff will pass on the information if another authority is responsible.

The Andover Road Cemetery belongs to and is maintained by the Town Council. The Borough Council carries out the ground maintenance of the closed churchyard around All Hallows.

The Allotments at Winchester Road are owned and managed by the Town Council. There are two other privately owned sites in Test Road and Blosswood Lane.

Roads, footpaths and pavements are the responsibility of Hampshire County Council, however the Town Council also has a part-time employee who cuts back overgrowth, nettles and brambles from the rural footpaths. Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council is ultimately responsible for street cleaning, but they pay the Town Council an annual grant towards the salary of a local part-time litter collector.

Street lamps fall into two categories. Highway lamps belong to the County Council, however just under one hundred street lights, mostly on pathways and smaller residential roads, belong to the Town. All the lamps are maintained by Hampshire County Council, but the Town Council pays the cost of its own lights. The contract with Hampshire County Council will cease in the next year and the County Council's own lighting will be administered by Private Finance Initiative. Town and Parish Councils have currently been excluded from participating and we are currently investigating alternative arrangements for maintaining our lamps.

**The FREE PHONE number for reporting street lighting faults is 0800 50 60 60. You will be asked for column number and the postcode of the area in which the lamp is sited.**



## Your Town Council

The Town Council comprises twelve Members, including the Chairman and Mayor, Councillor Hugh James, and the Deputy Chairman and Deputy Mayor, Councillor Steve Robbins. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are ex-officio members of all Committees. All Councillors are Trustees of the Town Hall.

Cllr. Andy Alferovs	Leisure and Environment Committee.
Cllr. Vince Bradbury	Development Committee.
Cllr. Irene Clark	Development Committee.
Cllr. John Clark	Development Committee and Resources and Policy Committee
Cllr. Ken Clark	Development Committee and Resources and Policy Committee
Cllr. John Markham	Development Committee.
Cllr. Dave Titcomb	Development Committee.
Cllr. Penny Turner	Resources and Policy Committee.
Cllr. Peter Williams	Leisure and Environment Committee
Cllr. Barry Jackman	Leisure and Environment Committee, Resources and Policy Committee, and Chairman of the Trustees of the Town Hall.

Councillors are elected for a term of four years. In May 2007 there will be Parish Elections. Existing Members who wish to continue must re-apply and other people may apply for the first time.

If you interested in becoming a Councillor, or knowing more about this interesting voluntary contribution to your community. The contact details for the Clerk, Cathy Burt, are shown on the front of the eYe, or you can call into the Town Hall Office.

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## Town Centre Improvement.

Ideas to improve the town centre will soon be circulated to local residents as part of a public consultation. Basingstoke Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and Whitchurch Town Council are considering improvements to the appearance of the centre. This follows the Whitchurch Town Association's recent Town Healthcheck and action plan to promote the economy of the town. Extensive public consultation revealed that making the town more attractive for residents and visitors featured highly on the list of local people's priorities. A shortlist of possible works has, therefore, been drawn up by representatives of the local councils and the local community. This includes street improvements in the centre, removing street clutter, grants to improve buildings and tidying up of the Bell Street car park and Great Lane.

To help pay for this, the Whitchurch Town Association is leading a bid for a grant from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) If successful, this will also help fund a town improvement manager whose task will be to help carry out these and other schemes to improve the local economy.



# Town Council News Bites.....



## Alliston Way Recreation Ground

We are hoping to solve the problem of the worn football goal mouth. In the past, the posts have been relocated or the dip filled and reseeded, but these remedies been short-lived. It is difficult to solve the problem completely but, following professional advice, we will install "Safagrass", a webbing base which meshes into the soil and allows grass to grow through.



Following arboricultural advice, the last tree in the row of Limes at the Recreation Ground is to be felled, and some remedial treatment carried out on its neighbour. We also plan to pollard the remaining Limes.

## Keep Whitchurch Clean!

In December, the Borough Council reported that it was planning a pilot scheme to give additional help to rural areas in the fight against increasing litter, dog mess and fly tipping. We do not know what form this help will take, but in the meantime, we urge dog owners to pick up after their pets, and everyone to take their litter home. This small effort helps keep Whitchurch a pleasant and attractive place to live.

## Faulty Light

We regret the temporary loss of Street Lamp "No 1" in the Knowlings. Several attempts were made to repair it, but when these failed, a new bracket lamp had to be ordered. We await the delivery and installation. Please report any street lighting faults as soon as you notice them. This will help us to get them attended to as quickly as possible.

## New Developments....

Subject to final planning approval, work will shortly start on the new housing development at Park View. The Town Council has negotiated access and parking improvements, and new entrance gates for the Cemetery Extension, using section 106 Developer's Contributions. We are also hopeful that the remaining carved oak panels will be installed in the Golden Jubilee Memorial.

We are currently discussing utilising other Developers' Contributions, arising from new houses built in Micheldever Road, to provide a community cycle facility including BMX track on Borough land in Whitchurch. We are in early negotiations with Borough Officers, but hope to be able to report further in the coming months.

## Whitchurch Budget

The Town Council has carefully considered its budget for the coming financial year. As a result, the local precept to be levied from each Band D household will be £35.91, an increase of £2.66 on the current year.

This portion of the total Council Tax bill covers services and facilities specific to Whitchurch. It includes administration, maintenance of the Town Hall, the Local Information Point, providing accommodation for other services, maintenance and development of the Cemetery and Recreation Grounds, street lighting, street furniture, grants to support local facilities and organisations.



## Cemetery Improvements

If you visit the Cemetery in the next few weeks, you will see Landscape Contractors preparing the ground and re-instating and planting hedges. This work is part of our general programme of cemetery improvements. Like any work, there will be some disruption, and we apologise for any resultant inconvenience.