

**Annual Report
of the
Warlingham Parish Council
for the year
June 2006 to May 2007**

Author : Richard Mascall, Chairman

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Contents :-

1. Status of Council June 2006
2. Actions during year
3. Status of Council May 2007
4. Finance
5. Consideration of forthcoming year
6. Conclusion

Appendices

- A. Reasons for an Annual Report
- B. Comparison with nearby Councils

1. Status in June 2006

The Parish Council started the year with an expectation of making progress in several areas. It had both the ideas and, thanks to careful spending in previous years, it had the resources to back up this expectation.

2. Activities between June 2006 and May 2007

As in the previous year, the Council has pressed hard in several areas. Working towards turning progress into completion has demonstrated the need for patience but positive results appear within sight.

We continue to maintain our Common land. For the most part this consists of arranging its mowing although we have also had to take steps to remove some diseased trees and eliminate a small incursion of Japanese Knotweed.

In an effort both to support some local culture and also to help develop a sense of local identity we ran a photographic competition. All three prize-winning entries received praise and can be seen on the website.

Steps were taken to improve the appearance of the centre of the village with plants being introduced to what had been an unsightly mud-patch. We are still not happy with the maintenance of the area but this should be sorted out in the near future. We successfully requested the District Council to remove the litter of adverts on the trees on The Green, a simple measure which makes the area noticeably tidier. We have also tried to get Surrey County Council to authorise our repainting the railings near The Green but we have not yet been successful.

We have also decided to introduce clear and attractive "Warlingham" signs on entry to the area. Although we have sorted out the design of such signs, it has proved impossible to get any answer from the

County Council as to how we might best proceed, a surprising difficulty given that we are not asking for any money from them.

Another problem we have with the County Council, and one we share with all other areas apparently, is the state of our road surfaces. Although there are occasional patches applied to the most cavernous of our potholes, many smaller ones remain untouched while the fixed spots subsequently deteriorate. We are trying to formalise our recording of problem reports so as to produce more documentation of the problem's extent.

We have started to look into the state of businesses around The Green where a number of retail outlets have closed in recent months and years. Our original concerns related to the difficulty of parking but it does seem that the introduction of the Parking Wardens has improved matters here. This is an area we shall continue to investigate.

During the year it became apparent that the annual event in Warlingham to commemorate Remembrance Day was under threat. So the Council stepped in and worked with several other concerned parties to ensure that the proceedings will take place as usual this year. We are unusual here in Warlingham in having a service which takes place in the middle of the village since in most other areas the venue is a church.

The excessive, as many would see it, development going on in Warlingham is beyond the remit of the Parish Council to control, although we have passed our concerns on to the District Council. The Parish Council does, however, continue to monitor all planning applications, passing its support or its objections on to the District.

Although our plans to produce a Newsletter have still to bear fruit, we did extend our information routes by renovating the noticeboard at the north of the parish, moving it to near the Hamsey Green parade of shops.

One of the two most significant achievements of the Council was the setting up of a Trial Bus Shuttle service in the morning rush-hour and the evening to and from the station to the rest of Warlingham. This involved negotiations with several other bodies and the pilot was started in April. Should the trial be a success, the service will of course continue to be supported.

The other important achievement was the starting of a process to bring a weekly youth club facility to the village. At the start of the year rapid progress was made with agreement being reached with Surrey Clubs for Young People as to the way forward, and identification of a dozen or so volunteers to help run the club. A management committee was formed and it did seem that operation was imminent but unfortunately a change of personnel at Surrey Clubs has been followed by a delay in the facility's opening. We are hoping this delay will be soon over.

We have continued to support the production of Warlingham's Parish Plan, both financially and in other ways. This project is very nearly complete and its report should be of great assistance in both fund-raising and priority-setting.

3. Status in May 2007

Our two major initiatives of the Shuttle Bus Trial and the Youth Club introduction are both active at the time of writing. Both of these activities involve the essential participation of other bodies but they nevertheless are classic demonstration of the efforts the Council is making to improve life in Warlingham.

4. Finance

At the start of the 2006/2007 financial year our reserves stood at £36,000.

Our major income during the year consisted of our precept (£27,000) although we also received £1,700 in interest and St Christopher's Church gave us over £1,100 towards the repair of the car park on the common land. Defra gave us a grant of £1,000 towards the Parish Plan which we passed straight on to the group responsible. Together with some items each under £1,000 this made our total income almost £32,000.

Our largest expenditure during the year was a repair to the car park on the common land. This cost us over £5,400 although, as previously mentioned, St Christopher's Church contributed £1,100 towards this. We gave the All Saints Churchyard maintenance team £1,500 and paid £1,000 towards the cost of the Christmas lights on The Green. We spent £1,300 on the common land, removing diseased trees and Japanese Knotweed. Finally, we gave out almost £3,300 in grants to local voluntary groups.

At the end of the financial year our reserves stood at just over £41,000.

5. Forthcoming Year

Our specific short-term targets are familiar: to support the Shuttle Bus service, to ensure the Youth Club finally becomes available, to improve Warlingham's environment, and to become a Quality Council. Apart from these specifics, there is much we can also carry out in a business-as-usual fashion : the support of local groups via grants, the promotion of the Remembrance Day event, the funding assistance for the Christmas lights, the protection of our common land, the help for the All Saints churchyard maintenance, and so on.

6. Conclusion

With another year passing, we now have a more experienced team of councillors. Our processes also are becoming more efficient and effective. There is thus every reason to expect a succession of achievements over the forthcoming year, but this will require time and effort. The prospect of becoming a Quality Council is now within sight, which will not only open up new possibilities of funding but also symbolise an accomplishment of which the Council and Warlingham can justly feel proud.

Appendices

A. Reasons for an Annual Report

The national government does not issue an annual report; county councils do not issue an annual report; borough and district councils do not issue an annual report; so it might be thought that parish councils should not issue an annual report either. But many of them do, and I believe for good reasons.

First, a report can be a reminder to local residents of all the activities that the parish council is involved with. Secondly, it is a chance for the council itself to compare its intentions of 12 months previous with its actual achievements, and thus to note what has worked well and not so well during the year. Thirdly, it might also be considered good practice for a council to compare itself with neighboring councils every so often, and the annual report provides an opportunity to do this. Finally, it is a stimulus to consider the priorities for the year to come.

B. Comparison with other Parish Councils

- There are twenty other parish councils in Tandridge
- Their populations range from 11,550 to 350 (Warlingham's is 8,000, 3rd largest)
- Their areas range from 2,710 hectares to 217 (Warlingham 600, 17th largest)
- Eight of them have websites (as does Warlingham)
- Their Band D charges for 2006/7 range from £23.65 to £4.98 (Warlingham's is £6.96, 18th).