

## Winnersh Parish Council Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12 May 2009

This year WPC has built on the previous year's work to provide a greater degree of community leadership in several ways:

- by organising community events
- by improving communications within the community
- by defining some longer term objectives
- and by working more closely with local groups to encourage community involvement

A highlight of the year was the Winnersh Village Fete, the first for over 35 years. The glorious weather certainly helped – but the success was due primarily to the work of the 40+ local groups and businesses who ran stalls and performed in the arena, and to the 1200+ people, mostly from the local community, who attended the fete. Thanks go especially to Judith Wilkins and Bill Clark who led the organisation of the fete and to all the others who made it happen on the day.

At Christmas we held the second "Lighting Up" event, which the Mayor kindly attended, presented awards and pulled the "virtual switch". Malcolm Armstrong launched the fireworks afterwards and thanks go to him, his team, and the choirs from Bearwood and Winnersh Primary Schools for an excellent event; also to the Rainbow Centre and Sainsbury's for the refreshments.

We also ran two "litter picks", the first in October with the Winnersh NAG as a direct result of local concerns about litter, and the second last month in conjunction with the Big Tidy-Up Campaign organised throughout the Borough.

The parish magazine, *Winnersh Matters*, was only published once during the year, but had an extra insert giving a colour montage of the fete day.

A new Winnersh Parish Website was launched in March, giving information about the parish, the Council and local organisations and events, and has been well received. So far there have been over 500 visits and I would encourage you all to have a look, promote it to your neighbours and maybe even contribute!

In March we also agreed a Strategic Aims document to guide our longer term work and this will be regularly reviewed to keep us focused on practical and pragmatic measures to improve life in the parish.

We have been pleased to support other organisations that are taking the initiative to organise local activities, in particular the Winnersh NAG, the Rainbow Centre and the fledgling Winnersh Community Partnership.

The R&A Committee has continued to work of the refurbishment of the Community Hall which is now complete, the last phase covering the toilet and corridor areas.

With a grant of nearly £50k from the Big Lottery Fund, the Committee has been able to extend the equipment on the Bearwood Recreation Ground to provide activities accessible to children of all abilities, provide more 'challenging experiences' for them and make it one of the best such facilities in the borough, with children and parents coming from a wide area to make use of it.

Thanks to Jill Plant and the other members of the Committee for these projects as well as for the ongoing management of the other Council facilities, including the allotments which have again seen marked improvement in both their cultivation and tidiness. The third year of the allotment competition was again very successful with an even higher standard reported by our judge, Les Moody.

The Community Hall continues to be used for a wide variety of activities and is heavily booked through the week. Winnersh Rangers Football Club also continues its success with relays of teams using the pitches here very fully at the weekends as well as for training on weekdays throughout the football season.

The Planning Committee has had a relatively quiet year with a very marked reduction in planning applications of all kinds, but especially the larger, more contentious ones and there has been a successful handover of the chairmanship of the Committee from David Jupp to John Grimson. We have again seen flooding severely disrupting road travel to the surrounding area and this will continue to be a primary concern for the Committee. The largest development in the area is that of the Winnersh Triangle business park which is progressing to schedule.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee has played its very essential role of preparing the annual budgets and monitoring income and expenditure through the year. The Committee also administers the Council's donations to organisations with clear local involvement including Readibus, Keep Mobile, Wokingham Citizen's Advice Bureau, Wokingham Job Support Centre, the local churches, Bearwood Primary School and several others.

We lost one Councillor during the year. Neil Sefton resigned because he has moved to Pembrokeshire and I would like to especially thank him for all his work for the Council, especially as chairman of the Planning Committee. We still have one vacancy for a Councillor.

Our relatively new Clerk, Clive Hudson, and Finance & Administration Officer, Sylvie de Groote, have both made great progress in mastering the intricacies of the day-to-day management of the Council. My thanks to both of them for all their hard work in keeping the Council running smoothly and to all the Parish Councillors for their work and support throughout the year.

**John Southgate**  
**Chairman, Winnersh Parish Council**