

## **BETCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL**

### **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2017**

**MINUTES** of the **BETCHWORTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** held on **MONDAY 24th April 2017**, in the Geoffrey Browne Room of the Betchworth Village War Memorial Hall at 7:45pm.

#### **1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The Chairman (Julie Hardy) welcomed everyone to the Meeting and particularly the invited guests. The total attendance amounted to 22 people which was notably fewer than previous years.

#### **2. RESPONSE BY MVDC CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Margaret Cooksey did not attend as council is in run up to elections.

#### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Sir Paul Beresford, Mole Valley District Councillor, Margaret Cooksey (MVDC Chairman), Gill Sperrin (Barley Mow Residents Association), Jane Douglass (Head, North Downs Primary School), Alison Hedges (Betchworth & Buckland Children's Nursery), Catriona Martin, (FABB), Inspector Richard Hamlin (Police Safer Neighbourhood Team), Councillor Paul Potter, Rhona Hill (The Hamilton Rooms).

#### **4. SURREY POLICE REPORT**

PCSO Jenny Juffs gave a brief report and presented crime figures. Police Safer Neighbourhood team recognise dissatisfaction from rural Parishes following reorganisation and decision not retain a named representative officer for the Parish. It was also noted by the Police that complaints had been made regarding the service from the 101 number and they are trying to improve their service.

#### **5. TALK BY BOB BARTLETT**

Bob Bartlett graduated with a history degree from Cambridge and is now a police historian. He is a retired Chief Superintendent from Surrey Police, he lives in Brockham. He is one of the founders of BERT and a trustee of BERT's new charity. Bob delivered a presentation focusing on the work of BERT (Brockham Emergency Response Team) which was formed as a result of the way the community was effected by the severe flooding in 2015. The presentation focused on the ongoing efforts of local volunteers to maintain clear water-ways and ditches, as well as capitalising on the community 'talent' and the efforts to pool resources and share community information. BERT is on the look-out for younger volunteers and anyone willing to help in an emergency. He also provided information on BERT's flood risk detectors which are linked to mobile phones to warn of any flood risk potential. Presentation available from Clerk upon request.

#### **6. MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2016**

Copies of the minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting. They were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

#### **7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

*Julie Hardy gave the following report:*

The Annual Parish Meeting gives us the opportunity to tell parishioners what the Parish Council has been doing, on their behalf, over the past year, so it is lovely to see so many of you here.

This meeting also gives me a chance to thank some of the people who work so hard for our village.

I must first mention the parish clerks, without whom we could not function. Adria Kinloch stepped neatly into the breach left by Jacquie Sims in November 2015, but sadly could only work for us for a year due to other commitments. We were very grateful for her contribution to the council and there was some muttering as to why the chairman didn't seem to be able to hang on to the clerks! To our very great delight and after a chance remark from me, we managed to persuade Marion Hallett to take on this onerous task. She has lasted six months so far and is doing a splendid job so we are all hopeful that she will stay.

Next, of course, I must thank the rest of the council; Vice Chairman Ian Wilson, Martin Higgins, Charmian Stow, Ian Docwra, Hilary Edwards and Colin Rogers. Colin was co-opted in May and together with Hilary has a special responsibility for Community resilience.

I am very grateful for the support that the other councillors give me.

We are delighted to have Bernard Hawkins as our designated Burial Ground caretaker. Bernard will be giving his own report later.

Deserving of a special mention of course is John Foreman, our footpath officer. John looks after the footpaths, repairs fences and stiles, reports fly tipping and organises the twice yearly litter picks which this year have been very successful. (Or unsuccessful depending on your point of view; why do so many people drop litter?)

I am sure that you are aware that the agenda and minutes of all our meetings are posted on the three village notice boards, as well as on the Betchworth village website along with information about events and societies. We are very near to setting up a new website which is more user-friendly, and we would welcome some recent local photos to go on it, so please send them to Hilary Edwards if you have any. We would also urge you to join the village email list for up to date news if you have not done so already. **So, what have we been doing?**

One obvious achievement was the installation of the play equipment on the Goulburn Green after a long consultation and planning period. We had a launch party in June when five local children who also attend the Betchworth and Buckland Nursery were asked to cut the ribbon. We have put up a handsome oak lectern to display information there and the swings and slide are being well used.

We had the leaky water pipe to the Burial Ground and Allotments replaced in cooperation with the Betchworth Estate who wanted to provide improved supply to the farm. The old pipe was prone to leaks so our water bills are now more reasonable.

We successfully requested some resurfacing work to the footpath 455A, otherwise known as Chimney pots, so if you have been there recently I hope that you have noticed some improvements.

We have had the usual couple of dozen planning applications and appeals to inspect and we have commented to Mole Valley District Council where appropriate with expert advice from Martin.

Gatwick is often on our agenda, and although the immediate threat of a new runway there has gone away we will continue to be vigilant. We have been campaigning about flight paths overhead and continue to support organisations such as The Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign and Plane Wrong who campaign on our behalf.

We ran a 'Heartstart' course in September where 20 parishioners learnt CPR and other lifesaving skills and another course is planned for May. We have had two defibrillators installed with funding from The British Heart Foundation and Mole Valley. Many thanks to them. One is outside the Village Hall and the other one on Gadbrook Road at the end of the drive to Woodstock Farm. Thanks to the village hall committee and Sian and Ed Winter for supplying the electricity for these. We have been talking to the Dolphin about them installing one there too.

Sometimes it seems that we revisit the same problem every month. Highways issues have taken a lot of time and effort. Pebble Hill needs drainage work, resurfacing and traffic calming measures, and we still have no date for this to be done, although there do seem to be some new white lines on the road. Inconsiderate parking and speeding along Old Reigate Road past the Post Office is another issue. We have requested a traffic survey and been promised some new white lines and signage.

The Parish Council have been trying to get the footpath along The Street looked at for many years and we hoped that it would be included in the latest Highways initiative. After much campaigning it has been pencilled in for a future phase of the project, but lack of funding is a problem for all Highways matters.

We keep an eye on the extraction of sand from the Common Field and I am sure that you will be interested to hear that it is well ahead of schedule. They expect to finish the extraction at the end of this summer although the land filling will take another four to five years.

On a lighter note, we also managed to contribute a tree for the Alternative Christmas Tree Festival in the church. Ours was festooned with red tape and had a star made out of old planning applications.

So, a busy and quite a productive year for the Parish Council.

Please remember that you are all most welcome at our meetings on the first Monday of every month in the Hamilton Room.

Now before we hear from all the village organisations Marion will take us through a review of the past year's income / expenditure.

## **8. BETCHWORTH PARISH ACCOUNTS 2016/17**

The draft accounts were displayed. Clerk Marion Hallett gave a brief report outlining income and expenditure over the past year.

## **9. BETCHWORTH UNITED CHARITIES**

*No report was received from Betchworth United Charities, the charity was not represented at the meeting, however this summary was submitted retrospectively from Canon David Eaton:*

BUC is able to make grants to people and organisations from the ancient parish of Betchworth which now includes the village of Brockham. The charity supports needy people who are suffering hardship or distress. There are 9 trustees including the incumbents of Betchworth and Brockham.

In 2016 BUC distributed funds to local residents partly by awarding annual pensions and partly through direct grant application. We also supported: Brockham Wednesday Club, 22<sup>nd</sup> Dorking Scout Group based in Brockham; Friends of Broome Park with a grant towards a disability minibus and allocated funding to a skate park in Brockham should that come into being.

## **10. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS**

Representatives of the following local organizations gave verbal reports as follows.

### **Barley Mow Residents Association.**

*The following report provided by Gill Sperrin, Secretary of BMCRA, was read by the Clerk:*

It has now been 3 years since the entrance to the lorry yard that was shared with the Barley Mow Court entrance was closed. The residents of Barley Mow Court continue to have a good relationship with the Moores, although we are still awaiting the planting of shrubs to mask the old entrance and to create a better barrier between the close and the yard.

We are also still waiting for the sign to be removed at the old entrance, and for the postcode in the Parish magazine to be updated to the A25 entrance, as lorries still come into Barley Mow Court looking for the yard.

Unfortunately, we are still disturbed by noise on occasion, as early as 6am and at weekends, despite the working hours for the site being from 7am to 6pm weekdays and 7am to 1pm Saturdays only.

Life is much improved at Barley Mow Court compared with before the Moores!

### **Betchworth Archives**

*Karen Wilson gave the following report:*

The Archive team have been very busy this last year and we have put on two exhibitions since last year's Parish Annual Meeting. Our 2016 exhibition was 'The Goulburns at Betchworth House', which commemorated 200 years of the Goulburns in Betchworth. Lady Hamilton kindly gave us free access to the Betchworth House archives where we discovered treasures in the form of sketchbooks, diaries, photograph albums, postcard albums, maps, the original 1816 house sale particulars and documents relating to the military careers of the Goulburns. These

and our new digital photo frame considerably enhanced the written research on display and the feedback from our visitors was wonderfully positive. Parts of this exhibition will be transferring to the Surrey History Centre, Woking next month. A selection of our 2015 'Medieval Betchworth' exhibition transferred to Dorking Museum in January and will be there until the 21st of May.

Queen wasps and calico knickers - our 2017 exhibition 'Gardens, Glasshouses and the Horticultural Society in Betchworth' was held at the beginning of April. This was very much a wider team effort and we were fortunate to have extra research and artefacts from Valerie Maud and Ian Wilson – thank you both. Our visitors were once again engrossed by our displays including three delightful children who decided that collecting queen wasps for the children's classes in the pre-1914 flower shows, was preferable to sewing a pair of calico knickers for the same shows. Part of this exhibition will be on show at the Horticultural Society's AGM in November.

Charlwood have created a room for their village archives in their new Pavilion and we were very flattered to be asked to advise them on the best way to set it up. So far they have visited our archives twice and we have been there on a site visit. We will be on hand to help them as they progress.

We continue our regular work at the Archives and this year we have been in the Hamilton Room every Tuesday in both summer and winter. We are also resurveying the churchyard in the summer months, recording the graves and memorials with written descriptions and photographs as well as beginning our research and preparation for next year's exhibition – there is always plenty to keep us busy!

### **Betchworth & Buckland Children's Nursery**

*The Clerk delivered the following report from Alison Hedges (Chair of the Nursery Management Committee):*

Topics covered in the Nursery during the past year included: traditional stories, letter sounds, food and number rhymes all of which gave scope for some wonderful displays round the Nursery. We like to take advantage of fine days and our beautiful surroundings and had several local trips including our now annual visit to Home Farm to look at the newborn calves. Our end of term outing last year was to Priory Farm Discovery Walk. Reverend Carol Coslett welcomed us to the Church at Easter and Christmas for seasonal stories and activities and we are grateful to her for the time she spares to visit us in the Nursery throughout the rest of the year. We would also like to express our appreciation for the continued support we receive from the local community and our Friends Committee whose fundraising efforts enable us to purchase additional equipment.

### **Betchworth & Buckland Society**

*No report was submitted from the Betchworth and Buckland Society:*

## **Betchworth Burial Ground**

*Bernard Hawkins gave the following report:*

I am pleased to say that it has again, in my view, been a good year for the Burial Ground. The care of the Burial Ground is not the most exciting activity in the Parish, but it is a lovely peaceful and tranquil place which affords an appropriate resting place for our loved ones.

I visit the Burial Ground most weeks and often have the pleasure of talking to relatives visiting the graves. They of course are likely to be local folk tending family graves, but a significant number are from much further afield, and they delight in our well-kept graveyard and love to talk about their memories of Betchworth, and to compare their memories with snippets about Betchworth as it is today.

There are a few minor matters for the Burial Ground which have occurred over the past year and I would now like to mention these: -

- I have now completed 18 months as your Burial Ground Caretaker and affairs have continued to proceed smoothly despite another change of Clerk. In that time. I have attended a course on Cemetery Management, where I learnt of some of the pitfalls that District Councils fall into when they have several cemeteries to administer. Fortunately, we have very good contact with our local Undertakers, and of course are usually in close touch with local families, which hopefully ensures we avoid such problems.
- I am pleased to report that I have observed that the Jubilee Pavilion has been well used and that it provides a lovely spot for relatives to sit and contemplate, and to admire the view of the Surrey Hills. One seat in the Burial Ground has been replaced this year and its neighbour will also follow shortly.
- There have been no problems with the water supply since the commissioning of the new water supply to the Burial Ground. However, we have run into a problem with the emptying of the bins, and it looks as if in future we must employ a contractor to periodically clear them for us.
- During the year, I was asked to consider changes to our arrangements for the Burial of Ashes, and produced a brief report on possible alternatives. No major changes resulted for the time being, but from this came a decision to clear the existing tarmac paths in the Burial Ground and to put gravel boards around the perimeter to make strimming of grass and nettles much more efficient.
- Income from our seven Burials in the year has met our maintenance expenditure, and the purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial by forward thinking parishioners has resulted in a sharp increase in Income this year.

I must leave you to decide if this constitutes a good year for our Burial Ground, and I look forward to assisting you in the coming year should you need our Services.

## **Betchworth Decorative and Fine Arts Society**

*Ian Caldwell gave the following report:*

Over the past year we have held ten lectures on different aspects of the arts at the hall. On Monday 24th April we are having a talk entitled: 'Van Gogh and Gauguin: A Terrible Lucidity', given by Douglas Skeggs, a writer, artist and television presenter.

We held a Special Interest Day at the hall on 10th April, entitled: Catherine the Great: Empress of all the Russias, with three lectures and a lunch for 62 people. A party of about 25 of our members went on a tour of Cheshire and North Wales in May 2016. This May another group of members are going on an Art and Cultural Tour of Lisbon. We organised 7 visits by coach to different places of interest for groups of about 30 members. On 20th October 2016 a party of our members went to see the opera, Madame Butterfly, at Glyndebourne. We held a New Members Evening in the Hamilton Room and a Tour Reunion evening also in the Hamilton Room, both during last October

### **Betchworth Parish Crockery**

*Councillor Julie Hardy gave the following report:*

In the past year the village crockery and cutlery has been rehoused in the village hall, which is easier for people who need it when hiring the hall and also means I have regained some space at Ravenleigh.

However, I still charge for its use to raise a bit of money for the church.

The plates are very heavy and we may have an opportunity to acquire lighter white plates with matching cups and saucers for up to 100 people. I would then get rid of most of the blue plates but keep the blue cups and saucers for big events like the tennis tournament. Can anyone see a problem with that, and does anyone know anyone who would like 170 large and 170 medium heavy blue plates?

I will put a piece about it in the parish mag but please let me know if you have any ideas or opinions.

### **Betchworth Operatic and Dramatic Society (BODS)**

*Pam Patch gave the following report:*

Our main production last year was the musical "Silas Marner", based on the Victorian novel by George Eliot which tells the story of a village weaver and the struggles of the country people having to adapt to in the industrial revolution at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. We were given the rights to put on the first amateur performances of this work and found it a great challenge, one which we eventually mastered and were caught up in the strength of the show to such an extent that the National Operatic and Dramatic Society has presented BODS with an Award of Excellence. This is quite an achievement for any group, and is the second time we have been honoured by NODA.

Last spring our collection of one-act plays was very much enjoyed. Unfortunately we were not able to stage them here and so spread our wings to the Harlequin Theatre in Redhill and the main hall at Brockham School. This year we plan to put on a group of rehearsed play readings, here, along the lines of radio plays on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May, with a matinee on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>, all at a very reasonable price and to include refreshments.

In November we will present a traditional version of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Patience" complete with colourful costumes. Other events include after show get-togethers and Teas on the Green at Brockham in October. We also took part in the alternative Christmas tree festival at St Michael's Church in December last year. We welcome new members and there is always plenty to do both on and off stage: we look forward to meeting you at our productions whether as part of the audience

or as part of this friendly group. Music rehearsals for "Patience" begin here on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June and continue on Tuesdays, with a summer break, leading to a full year of varied entertainment.

### **Betchworth Parish Magazine**

*The Clerk gave the following report on behalf of Ros Rokison and Sian Winter:*

There has been a Parish Magazine in Betchworth since 1892! Beautifully bound copies of all these magazines can be viewed in the Hamilton Room. Parishioners and their helpers have always run the collating of articles, editing and publishing the magazine on a voluntary basis. Printing has always been done by an outside firm. The magazine's aim is to give information to and about the whole village. As well as Church matters we report on village activities such as the Parish Council, WI, North Downs Primary School and the Betchworth and Buckland Society. It also embraces any local, non political, news, events and activities that it is felt might be of interest to the readers. The magazine is delivered to every house in the village by an invaluable team of 32 people headed by Susie Redburn. We are always delighted to receive articles, including photos if relevant, which would be of interest to parishioners for possible inclusion in the magazine. Several copies have now been complemented by colour photographs.

Articles for the magazine now arrive exclusively by email to [betchworthmag@hotmail.com](mailto:betchworthmag@hotmail.com).. There is a waiting list for commercial advertisers, which is always a good thing. We also will publish appropriate small ads from parishioners at a nominal cost for a limited number of, issues, proceeds going to church funds

Our editors, Ros Rokison, Sian Winter and Joan Bird, have the task of collating, editing and sometimes retyping all the various articles. Ros Rokison, Alison Higgins and John Scotcher are now the new Desk Top Publishers and they are gradually coming to grips with various problems that occur. This has been a steep learning curve for all of them, especially as Jacquie Simms has now left us. The magazine continues to try to be very professional in its construction and production and this is thanks mainly to David Hill who spent so many years overseeing the publication.

If anyone is interested in joining the team we would be delighted to hear from you. We would be particularly interested to hear from anyone who would like to join the team of desktop publishers. The more people involved in the production of the magazine the easier it is for everyone involved. Training will be given if anyone is interested in joining us. In fact if we had a few more volunteers, our hard working team might even be able to take the odd holiday now and then.

### **Betchworth Village War Memorial Hall**

*Linda Slater gave the following report on behalf of Jean Hurman:*

This has been another successful year although our revenue is slightly down on 2015. We are still very popular with parents for children's parties. The bookings are down slightly due to the loss of the children's dance classes for personal reasons. We have a second art class on a Wednesday afternoon and some Saturdays, called Art Events and they have already booked 2018 dates. Our very popular Pilates class continues two days a week as does our Thursday art day.



I am pleased to say we still have our delightful booking of the Mulberry Club. Our back clinic is continuing but I think it's now called a back club. We have gained some regular users who will not be seen until 2018 but firmly booked. It is very rewarding to see the hall continues to be well used and we already have a substantial number of bookings for this year and 2018.

An overhead projector was installed in the summer and those who have used it and delighted with the improvements.

The hall floor had its usual spruce up at Christmas and we replaced the wall cupboards in the kitchen as the old ones had been damaged by steam. We purchased a new table tennis table as the old one had been repaired many times and was not ideal. I understand the players are very pleased with the replacement. With a little bit of rearranging we were also able to house the village china seems to have worked out well so far.

If anyone has any suggestions as to how we can further improve the hall please feel free to tell us.

### **Brockham Green Horticultural Society**

*Karen Wilson gave the following report:*

The Horticultural Society for our three villages of Betchworth, Brockham and Buckland, continues to thrive. We are involved in two new community projects this year which is very exciting. North Downs Primary School has taken on an allotment in Brockham as part of the Healthy Schools in Surrey project. It is being managed by teacher, Mrs. Christina Papworth and Governor, Mrs. Mary Rode. We provided funds for setting up the project and Betchworth Parish Council generously matched our contribution. The aim of the project is to give the children the opportunity to grow their own fruit and vegetables and eventually cook with them. We will continue to support and advise and Mary Rode will be presenting an end-of-year report on the project at our AGM in November.

Our other project is the Fortune bulb planting project which is the result of a generous legacy left by James and Celia Fortune. Our three coordinators (Katherine Burgess in Betchworth, Tilly Mitchell in Buckland and Fay Coles in Brockham) have been busy this last winter. They have been identifying sites, coordinating with Parish Councils and other relevant bodies and making decisions regarding suitable native species before planting begins this autumn. We look forward to seeing the results next Spring.

We have a new Show Secretary, Victoria Goody, who organised a sunflower seed planting project with the younger children at North Downs Primary School last year and has already been planting seeds and bulbs with them again this year.

Our Members Only open garden was held at John and Jeannette Foreman's delightful garden. We were blessed with good weather and such super hospitality that some of us were still there at 10 o'clock! Nearly £300 was raised for John and Jeannette's chosen charity, The Motor Neurone Disease Association - thank you both for a lovely evening.

Our plant sale last year raised a record amount of nearly £350 and this year's sale will be on May 13th outside Brockham House from 10 until 1pm, but come early for

the best plants! We will be holding our Autumn show here at the Betchworth Village Memorial Hall on September 23rd.

Our programme of winter talks have been extremely well attended with three very good speakers, all of whom we would be happy to have again!

Finally, the benefits of membership are numerous and include the famous 10% discount from Knights, Buckland Nursery, Reigate Garden Centre, Heathfield Nursery and Farm Supplies in Dorking, all available when you show your membership card.

Membership is open to all people living in the RH3 postcode area and it costs just £4 a year per person, the same cost as it was 7 years ago – what unbelievable value for money!

### **Buckland & Betchworth Choral Society**

*Margaret Miller gave the following report:*

The year that has passed since the Buckland & Betchworth Choral Society last reported to you has been one of great change. Change for us and change for the Leith Hill Musical Festival of which we are proud members.

In May, after what for us was one of our less successful Festivals, we learned that our conductor, Ben Woodward, had decided to move to Germany to pursue his career with Hannover Opera. We were sad to lose him but very grateful for all he had achieved for us in the six years he was with us. His departure, however, gave our accompanist Anna Tetsuya the chance to spread her wings into conducting. And spread her wings she did. She very ably led us in our summer term and helped us prepare for two short very successful concerts at Broome Park's fete and Leith Hill Place, Vaughan Williams' boyhood home.

September brought with it the serious search to appoint a new conductor for the longer term. This was a difficult and time consuming process for all concerned, and while the Committee worked hard to find the right person, we welcomed Helen Smee, an up and coming young conductor and organist to help us through until the Christmas concert. This was a huge success and we thank everybody that came for enabling us, through their generous support, to give a very substantial donation to Broome Park's work

The selection and audition process was rigorous and lasted most of the Autumn term. Little did we know when we started it, that we had under our noses the very person we were looking for. Helen enjoyed working with us so much that she applied for the permanent post. And after auditioning a number of people, our choice eventually turned out to be Helen. And she has taken us through to this year's Festival (of which more very shortly).

The big change at the Festival was the very loving farewell we gave to Brian Kay after 21 years as Festival Director. Many tears were shed. But we have all embraced his successor, Jonathan Willcocks, son of David, probably the greatest choral conductor of the modern era. He is very different and he is bringing in a lot of changes, with an insistence on an even greater involvement of young people. He is also totally reorganising the competitive structure to make it more egalitarian. For BBCS, this means we will be singing with a new group of choirs next year, that will include Leatherhead, Horsley and Beare Green & Newdigate in the 'Blue'

division. Our main works will be by living composers, *Alexander L'Estrange – Songs of a Rainbow Nation* and *Will Todd – Mass in Blue*.

Back to this year. We came, in our Division, a solid third at LHMF, taking the prize for Lower Voices and maintained our tremendous record of yet again coming first and second in the Ensemble class. This summer we will start work on next year's music with a Sing Day on 6<sup>th</sup> May studying the Mass in Blue and John Rutter's Feel the Spirit. In July we are looking forward to a trip to London to take part in the Voices of London Festival, run by Helen Smee, and singing the Rutter piece to a London audience. We will also be visiting Broome Park and Leith Hill Place again, so a very busy few weeks still to come before we break up. We look forward to working hard with Helen Smee over the coming year and we also look forward to welcoming even more singers who live in Buckland & Betchworth.

### **Family Activities for Betchworth & Buckland (FABB formerly Children's Holiday Activities)**

*The Clerk read the following report on behalf of Catriona Martin:*

#### Summer 2016

Three events were held last summer, starting the holidays off with a trip to **Priory Farm** to enjoy Discovery Walk followed by a picnic and games. This was followed up by a very successful 'I Spy Walk' down Rectory Lane and a tour of the new **Victory Garden** with much needed ice creams at the end on what turned out to be the hottest day of the summer. We rounded off the summer with a tour of **Dorking Fire Station**, children (and mums) were treated to a turn on the hose and pictures of everyone sitting in the cab of a fire engine.

#### Christmas 2016

The children of Buckland and Betchworth gathered together in The Reading Room just before Christmas for our second Magical Village Christmas Party. We had a record turnout and were delighted to see lots of new faces. The Mr. Marvel entertainer provided much fun and laughter, for children and parents alike. After a magic show, tea and a 'snow disco' the evening was rounded off by a visit from a very busy Father Christmas.

#### Easter 2017

We have just organized a very successful Easter Egg Hunt around the back of Goulburn Green for a second year, followed by seasonal crafts in The Hamilton Rooms. Turnout was very similar to last year, with over 30 children turning up on the day.

#### Plans for Summer 2017

We are hoping to host a Circus Skills 'lesson' that will coincide with the annual Betchworth & Buckland Society BBQ on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July on Goulburn Green. In the summer holidays, we are in discussions about organizing some ball skills coaching to attract slightly older children and possibly another fire station visit.

Sadly, we have lost two of our busy committee members and are still struggling to find much needed help to run these events (especially crafts and the Christmas Party), but we would like to give thanks for on-going support to:

- The Betchworth Parish Council.

- The Betchworth & Buckland Society and in particular hands on help with the tea at our Christmas Party from Fiona Brindley and Debbie Jones. A big thank you also to our regular 'Father Christmas', Chas Jones.
- The Buckland Reading Room for allowing us to use the hall for our Christmas Party.

### **Goulburn Cup Tennis Tournament**

*Eiluned Slot gave the following report:*

Last year the number of tennis players was down owing to the change of date due to Wimbledon taking our usual weekend!

We now have a good email list of interested participants so we asked them to choose a preferred date. Fortunately there was one date which suited the majority. So hopefully there will be more players this year. We are also using email as well as the Parish Magazine to remind people to enter..

Big thanks to the Hardys and Winters for hosting the BBQ and the ploughman's lunch, Also to the court owners who lend their courts and help to make a fun sociable day.

2016 will be remembered by some as The Tournament of the Vanishing Tennis Balls ! So many disappeared!!!

### **Mulberry Bush Music**

*Councillor Julie Hardy gave the following report:*

Incredibly, Sarah Pearson and I have been running Mulberry Bush Music for 6 years!

We meet on Tuesday mornings in the Geoffrey Browne room of the village hall where we have an increasing number of toddlers and their carers come to sing and play instruments.

We have carefully chosen themes such as 'Moving', 'Time and Weather' and 'Colours and Numbers' and the songs and rhymes fit the themes.

A busy and noisy hour seems to be enjoyed by all!

### **North Downs School**

*The Clerk read out the following report on behalf of Jane Douglass:*

I cannot quite believe that I am now halfway through my second year as Headteacher at North Downs School. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time so far - this is clearly a very special community. It is also a community which has given great strength to each other in those unexpected and challenging times for the school.

Last year's report shared with you our whole school values, agreed upon by pupils, parents and staff; 'Care, Respect Honesty, Freedom and Resilience and Trust'.

Since then we have worked together to ensure we all share the same vision for our school and young people – which is to 'Be the best you can be, every day'.

I appreciate that the school is in a much more settled position following the reorganisation of classes at the Betchworth, Brockham and Leigh sites.

Numbers on roll continue to increase and there are waiting lists for virtually every year group in the school – with 429 pupils on roll and with a capacity for 436. Early information indicates that our two Reception classes will also be full for this coming September. There remain the challenges presented by being on three sites, but we continue to take opportunities for the children at Betchworth to spend some time on the Brockham site, for year group curriculum days, as well as the Brockham children visiting Betchworth. We also have events coming up next term where the whole school will be on one site – I am particularly looking forward to all the children Maypole Dancing on Brockham Green in May and am hoping for the glorious sunshine we enjoyed at last year's event. In addition, the Reception children from Betchworth will visit the site at Leigh during the summer term, in preparation for their transfer in September. We are also providing opportunities for the parents from Betchworth to visit the Leigh site too.

At North Downs we believe it is important for our children to gain an appreciation of the lives of children who are not so fortunate. The members of our school community have been very already been very active in their fundraising this school year and, so far, have raised a total of £380 for the Children's Society and £1,155 for Save the Children, who had a particular focus on supporting families at Christmas time. Our school Council are also very proactive and have organised many events for the school this year, from a 'Spotacular Day' for Children in Need to the Great North Downs Bake-Off! We are now looking forward to our summer term activities: sports days, residential trips and educational visits, all of which help to make school such a memorable and enjoyable time for our children.

### **Pebblecoombe Women's Institute.**

*Margaret Miller gave the following report:*

2016 for Pebblecombe WI was an unusual, and at times very sad year. We were still coming to terms with the untimely death of Gordon Hill, when we met in January, to hear the news that the husband and father of June and Pauline Spong had also passed away, after a short illness. George had also been a great friend of our WI, as well as being a regular speaker. This was followed a month later with the death of a Founder Member, Mary Street, and we lost in June, Barbara Hawkins and in September Peter Clark, husband of our President, both very active and loyal supporters.

However meetings continued with a range of varied speakers, from a behind the scenes view of the Old Bailey, to ribbon weaving, a discussion of the Resolutions presented at the Annual meeting, and a talk from a local solicitor on the importance of a Power of Attorney. Food regularly features in WI meetings, with an Annual Dinner in a local hostelry, fish and chip supper, a barbecue and our regular Teas on the Green (or in the Hamilton Room) when wet or windy.

As well as having our monthly meetings, we have continued with our Craft afternoons, with as much natter as crafting being achieved. However some projects have been completed, which contributed to our very successful entry in the Alternative Christmas Tree Festival. We didn't win a prize but enjoyed the participation, and highlighted the on-going presence of a WI in Betchworth for 100 years. Betchworth WI formed in December 1916, continuing for 90 years, while Pebblecombe, starting as a Young Mum's evening WI in 1970, is still going strong. Now to the publicity: Pebblecombe WI is holding Teas on the Green on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June, from 2 to 5pm. The usual home-made cakes, sausage rolls and cream teas will be on offer, so please come and join us. Thank you.

## **Poland House**

*No report received.*

## **St Michael's Church/PCC**

*The following report was given by Linda Slater, Church Warden.*

For a small village church with an aging congregation I am always surprised at how much we are able to achieve, but this is because we are so well supported by the people of the village who clearly value the church.

Last year we completed both the glass screen above the new vestry and the toilet. I think the excitement about having a toilet in the church may have outweighed the admiration for a beautiful new piece of art. We also removed 3 pews from the rear of the church to create a corner for children and this has been extremely well received both during services and when the church is open during the day.

Our thank you tea for volunteers was a great occasion and it was lovely to meet many people who give their time to the church. The alternative Christmas Tree Festival was extremely popular and represented so many groups in the village including the nursery, the Parish Council Broome Park and The Dolphin. We continue to hold organ concerts in the church and are able to engage a high calibre of organist which attracts audiences from beyond the village. Last year Margaret Phillips and Andrew Cantrill featured.

Our monthly drop in teas continue to be very popular and we are delighted that it has become a fixture in the diary for Broome Park residents. Being an unusually large building for a village church we find that we often conduct as many weddings and funerals as many larger churches. Last year we had 14 baptisms, 8 weddings and 11 funerals.

A church as old as ours constantly needs attention and every five years a major inspection of the fabric of the church is undertaken. The key area identified in the last year's report is work which will need to be undertaken on a valley gutter so further fundraising will be required for this. A healthy step in the right direction was the wonderfully organised Safari Supper which yielded £900. We are extremely grateful to Bex Pearson for her enthusiasm in making this such a success.

Finally, without the village the church would not exist. So much of the work that happens without people seeing or appreciating it. A bit like the Parish Council.

## **The Hamilton Room**

*Lady Corinna Hamilton gave the following report on behalf of David Hill, Treasurer*

This small hall in Church Street which was built as the shed for the "night soil cart" and subsequently was used as a garage, is now in its 27<sup>th</sup> year and is part of the Goulburn Estate It is provided for the use of the local community and Church.

In the Hamilton Room there is the Meg Ryan Room which houses many archives detailing local history. Our archivists meet once a week and continue to do a sterling job, sorting and filing our good collection of Church and village history. The annual exhibition held at the Hall in 2016 was about the Goulburns as 200 years previously Henry Goulburn had bought the Betchworth Estate. The exhibition on Medieval Betchworth which was held in 2015 is now located in Dorking Museum.

Earlier this month there was an exhibition on Gardens and Glasshouses in Betchworth.

The hall is hired out to various users every week groups like Beading and Yoga, seem to be every popular and form part of the regular income for the room. One of the most popular events continues to be the “Drop in Teas” on Wednesday afternoons! St Michael’s enjoys the use of the room for PCC meetings and fund raising and charitable events. It has been used on some Sundays and festival days for Children’s church activity sessions, particularly on Good Friday for Holy Week Crafts. The room is particularly useful for its facilities (even though the church now has its own) when the church is hosting a concert, festival or indeed one of the numerous weddings.

We are fortunate that we have regular users of the hall and as a result there is little space for other hirers. Those people who book the Room are highly thought of by us, for the way they respect the room, leave it clean and tidy, adhere to one or two regulations we have. and most importantly enjoy using the room. Our Bookings last year maintained a good level, and our income provides the funds for the continuing archive work, maintenance and running costs of the hall. The Hamilton Room is managed by a small dedicated band of volunteers and is a valuable asset to the community and church offering an easily accessible meeting Room in the centre of Betchworth. Thank you to the hard-working volunteers who run the room.

#### **11. ADDRESS BY SURREY COUNTY COUNCILLOR HELYN CLACK**

Councillor Helyn Clack delivered a brief verbal report highlighting the challenges MVDC and consequently Betchworth Parish Council will face in 2017 as a result of extreme budget cuts to local councils, which she anticipates will mainly affect rural roadside maintenance and highways maintenance.

Councillor Clack acknowledged local police and crime reporting remains a challenge and that local police facilities are stretched.

Councillor Clack also highlighted the ongoing legal battle concerning side-drilling at Brockham Oil Well and that this was yet to be resolved.

#### **12. ADDRESS BY MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR PAUL POTTER** *Councillor Potter was unable to attend the meeting and sent his apologies.*

#### **13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A question was asked by a member of public to identify a device/sensor located between Dorking and the Betchworth Roundabout. The general consensus was that it was a traffic sensor.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:47pm.