



The WaRbler

Notes from Whiteshill and Ruscombe

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A Christmas Message



I am sure some of you have had happy events during 2007 but I suspect most people will be glad to see the back of it. We have taken some knocks as a community, but we have also bounced back. The playground which was wrecked is now back in action, the school has had its dilapidated temporary classrooms replaced and despite an act of mindless criminal arson, the shop is still going strong. There continues to be a wide range of activities at the Village Hall, and the Village Green restoration is well under way. We have started this community news sheet, which when you think about is not bad for a trying year. Hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

A46

Hopefully by the time you read this the piling work will have finished and a capping beam will have been cast over the tops of the piles. This beam will have to cure for 28 days before it is strong enough to take the forces imposed by reinstating the road. Once that has

happened the carriageway will be rebuilt and the road opened in February. It would be nice to think that they would go on and repair Lower Street while the concrete is curing but I guess that is too much to hope for!

Reclaiming the village

There is a real risk that once the A46 is open, drivers will continue to use Whiteshill as a short cut. It is down to us to discourage this. The Highways Department and the Police's main concern is to keep the traffic flowing safely and not to worry about our quality of life. The one thing that we know will discourage drivers from driving through the village is congestion. Many of you have responded to the Police's request not to park on the main road to aid traffic flow during the A46 closure. It is important that once the A46 is open we re-introduce responsible parking on the Main Road and The Plain to help slow down the flow. It will be an inconvenience for a week or two but it should help get the traffic flow reduced. Cars should, of course, be parked responsibly and not obstruct junctions, the school (*continues on page 2*)

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zone, or the turn out from private drives. Parking some cars back on the Main Road will also help ease the parking situation in Victory Road, which is of considerable concern to some residents. It would also be possible to organise some sort of street party at the Village Green to publicise the opening of the A46.

Please contact the Parish Council if you are interested in organising this.

Survey Results

We received 52 replies to the questionnaire that was included with the Autumn edition of The WaRbler. These have not yet been fully discussed by the council so I will include a detailed review in the next WaRbler. There are a couple of clear points that people may like to respond to:

Street Lights

There is strong support for the Parish Council's proposal of switching off most of the street lights after midnight. The exceptions are likely to be those near the speed bumps, some on the bends in the main road, lights near road junctions and those near any residents that specifically ask for the lights to be left on. The replies were:

- 28 in favour of switching most off
- 13 in favour of switching 1/3 off
- 7 for keeping all lights on.

It will be assumed that those people who filled in the questionnaire saying that they would like the lights left on and gave their address would like their nearest light left on. If you have not done so and you would like a specific light left on after midnight please contact me or the Parish Clerk (see back page).



Considerate Driver Network

We have got **61 drivers** signed up to this scheme so far. I really need a few more to make this work.

Just to recap: the idea is that if we get over 10% of our drivers to agree to drive according to the Highway Code in all 'Considerate Driver Neighbourhoods', we then declare ourselves to be "a Considerate Driver Neighbourhood" and approach other areas to see if they would like to do the same. Hopefully we will get a network of neighbourhoods where non-resident drivers will drive as if they lived there. If you have not signed the questionnaire, just drop me a signed note saying that "I promise to drive according to the Highway Code in all considerate driver neighbourhoods". **If you want to contact me on either of these issues, please write to John Rogers, Highland Terrace, Star Green, Whiteshill GL6 6AD.**

Shared Space Workshop -

We spent a fruitful couple of hours back in November looking at photos of the village and coming up with some ideas for making the village look less like a traffic corridor. I would like to emphasise this was an **Ideas Workshop**; its purpose was to come up with ideas, not to make decisions on what to do. We had the following observations: The **Whiteshill sign** at the Stroud end of the village was indistinct and the area could be improved. The **entrance to Barrowfield** could be included as part of the plan to make the route look less like a traffic corridor. A simple solution is to put grass areas inside the sweeping tarmac entrances, with planters and seats. This would require the support of the Barrowfield residents and Stroud Town Council since it is not

part of Whiteshill. **The chicane** is an opportunity for a vertical "non-highways gateway". The **wall in front of the Village Hall** could be demolished to break up the corridor effect of the long run of stone walls on The Plain. The area **by the church bus stop** needs tidying up. This could include replacement or decorated salt bin, repainting the telecom junction box, fixing mosaic panels or other flat sculpture to the side of the gas building and adding planters. The **War Memorial** and Field Road junction lacks character. The pavement **below the entrance to playing-field** could have a planter or bench (by bus stop). We could have a **better sign for the Village Shop and Playing Field**. Possible **mini round-about** on the main road for Lower Street and playing field traffic. Put **window boxes** on the School side of the school railing along main road. This would help break up the corridor effect. The **Victory Road gateway** is visually important as it is visible across the road from traffic coming down the hill. It could be tidied up with new salt bins and planters. The grass on the **Village Green** is a good start and we could put planters on the pavement opposite the Green to extend the visual impact. The sign-post could be replaced with a "village style" one. There is a disconnected area at the **Top of the village** that needs a pavement or footway link. May be able to use wear surfaces to put a green walk-way along existing verges, plant bulbs in existing verges and perhaps also site some seats on verges. The use of the 'standard highway' signs on the **Top gateway** means that



drivers tend to dismiss them as part of the highway. They are also too far from the start of housing to indicate that the village has really started.

The following general points were also raised: Any planters / additional grass areas would have to be maintained. If they are allowed to get run down it will convey a message that nobody cares about the village and in turn drivers won't respect it by driving below the speeding conviction speed. All the **salt bins** need refurbishing, decorating or replacing. If we can make a feature of these it would give a repeated theme which says 'village, community, safety, pedestrians and watch out for icy roads.' What we don't want is standard yellow road bins as they just say 'highways'! All the road junctions could do with some carriageway change to break up them up and to warn of the junction. A full surface change may be costly but how about changing the colour of the tarmac throughout the junction areas. Ruscombe could also benefit from green pavements, verge planting and some more benches to enjoy the views from. The next step is to look at the practicality of these ideas and get some comments from the various stakeholders, particularly the people living close to any proposed changes, then see how we could do some of them. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part; many of the ideas came from people who are not on the Parish Council which shows the benefit of this kind of activity.

Boxing Day Family Walk Leaving the Playing Field 10.30am

A leisurely footpath walk of 3 miles, and is open to anyone who does not mind a bit of mud. Dogs can bring their owners providing they are kept on a lead!

Village Green — We finally have some grass on the Village Green and some new benches to sit on—a vast improvement. I would like to see the replacement of the signpost with a wooden one, a planter on the opposite pavement and possibly some sculpture or mosaics in the grass or on the walls. The railings and telegraph pole could also do with re-staining. If anyone would like to get involved in continuing the transformation of the Green into a feature we can be proud of please contact: **John Rogers** john.rogers@whiteshillandruscombe.org.uk or **Julie Shirley, 60 Hawk Close, Abbeydale, Gloucester, GL4 4WE Telephone 01452 424245, email clerk@whiteshillandruscombe.org.uk**

Festive Message from the Snow Warden

Well, the world may be warming up at an alarming rate, but we are still seeing snow in the parish every winter. In February this year we had quite a few inches of the white stuff, enabling the local children to be given a day off school. This meant the playing field became toboggan heaven for a few hours as parents and children alike came together and had fun, fostering a real community spirit! Although we weren't cut off, many parishioners chose to stay at home and there were far fewer cars than normal on the main road. The Christmas before last was particularly magical. Quite a few of us were starting off our Christmas Day lunch in true Whiteshill fashion, with a celebratory drink at The Star Inn. Suddenly, Peter and Jenny Hood's grand-daughter Emily



pointed to the window and said 'Is that snow?' And sure enough, it was! On Christmas Day! For about an hour it was like a mini blizzard. We crunched our way back home through a winter wonderland, hardly believing our good fortune! Although it didn't 'officially' qualify as a white Christmas, the snow not having fallen in a certain part of central London, nevertheless, for the residents of our parish, it was a Christmas not to be forgotten! **Gerri Kimber**

Village Hall Activities

MONDAY—Line Dancing 15:00 to 16:00,

Yoga 18:00 to 19:00 **New Keep Fit** 19:30 to 21:00

TUESDAY—Tai Chi 14:30 to 15:30 **Lindy Hop dancing** 19:00 to 21:00

WEDNESDAY—Playgroup 10:00 to 12:00

Art Class 14:00 to 16:00 **Pilates** (please ring number below)

THURSDAY—Playgroup 10:00 to 12:00

Wives Group First Thursday in month 19:00 to 21:00 **Parish Council** Second Thursday in month 19:30 to 22:00

FRIDAY—Ballet 16:00 to 18:00

Please check the Village Hall notice board for confirmation of times.

For more details and booking enquiries please ring

Mrs Bremerkamp on 759023

Ruscombe and Whiteshill Village Shop

The Management Committee would like to thank everyone for their help with the clear up following the shop fire in November. We would also like to thank the Parish Council for their support and to let everyone to know that we have stayed open for 'business as usual'. Please come and visit for your Christmas presents or phone **766277** for any information.