

**Chairman's Report  
Annual Assembly  
of  
West Ilsley Parish Council  
2006**

Well incredibly it is more than 2 years now since Ronnie, Lynne and I got together to take back our Parish Council from West Berks and prevent some distant parish within Berkshire taking over our affairs. Since then our numbers have grown and therefore as Lynne and I leave the Council to move to Cornwall it is in the knowledge that the council will continue in very safe hands.

We haven't had a very momentous year but rather just nibbled away at some of the perennial issues having small victories along the way. It is a constant battle to try and drive motorists speeds down in the village and hopefully our leaflet drop and activities with SID (the speed indicator device) will have had some impact.

The need to put in place a new Charitable Trust to manage the village hall and recreation ground has occupied much of our discussion time at meetings. I am pleased to say that we are now at the point where an acceptable document has been arrived at which will be signed shortly. This allows for a better management of the resources whilst maintaining much of the status quo which has so successfully operated over many years.

Much work has been put in to scope and evaluate a children's playground for the village and it is to be hoped that the coming year will see this realised at last.

I think that we are fortunate to live in such a beautiful parish and to enjoy a life in the village free from many of the problems that our neighbouring less rural parishes have to deal with. Nonetheless, this should not be a reason for parishioners to stay away from Parish Council Meetings as they do and it is a big regret that during the last 2 years so few people have taken any interest in the affairs of the village as discussed at Parish Council meetings.

Well that's my one moan and I am sure we will find things much the same in Cornwall! We have thoroughly enjoyed our short stay in West Ilsley and carry away with us many friendships which will last for far longer. So thank you West Ilsley and carry on Parish Council!

**Ilsley Under Fives  
Amanda Knight  
Chair – Ilsley Under Fives**

Following the closure of the Playgroup in March 2005 all our activities have been focused on the Toddler group which meets at West Ilsley Village Hall on Wednesday mornings during term time.

Those carers and children who attend the Toddler group seem to have an enjoyable time. The basic set up is still as it has been for many years: tea and coffee for the carers; juice, toys and ride-ons for the children and song-time at the end of each session. However, numbers have dwindled over the last year or so. Whilst there are occasional bumper attendances (14 in early January), our average attendance is about seven carers and their charges. Over Winter 2005/6 there were a couple of occasions when only three or four attended. At times it seemed it might be more sensible to hold the sessions in our own homes.

More recently we have seen some new faces and the welcome return of some old friends. This may simply be a case of carers being keener to get out and about with their charges in the Spring but we hope that it may also have been in response to our efforts to attract more members. These have included trying to make it easier for new mothers attending with young babies by providing a travel cot for the babies to be put down safely. For the older toddlers we have introduced a number of activities which are led by committee members such as "music" sessions, story time and a very popular monthly craft activity. In addition, we are trialling reducing our admission fee to £1 per family per session and are trying to provide a small treat for the children at the end of each term (last term's being to hire a small bouncy castle and raid our garages to make up a soft play centre for them; this term's being a summer picnic at the cricket pitch). Also scheduled for this term is our participation in "The Big Toddle" in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital.

We feel, therefore, that the group has a lot to offer and are confident that numbers will continue to creep back up again. We have had a few more volunteers for the setting up rota this term and there are new babies in the village who we would love to see (our

youngest regular is fast approaching his first birthday). Our next challenge will be to find new volunteers for the committee as four of our six committee members have indicated that they wish to stand down in the Summer, largely because their children have reached Pre-School age and are off to pastures new.

As regards fund raising, the dip in our numbers combined with the fact that we no longer have a large outlay for Playgroup wages means that our fund raising has been more limited this year. We felt unable to "staff" The Ilsley School Christmas Bazaar or the teas at the West Ilsley Fete. However, we still plan to run a cake stall at the East Ilsley Sheep Fair and hope that we might be able to run some sort of activity for the younger attendees at the West Ilsley Fete. We are optimistic that we are over the lean times in terms of numbers and willing pairs of hands and that, provided that we can replace at least some of our outgoing committee members, the Ilsley villages' toddlers will have a fun-filled year ahead of them.

**REPORT ON BEHALF OF ALL  
SAINTS CHURCH FOR THE WEST  
ILSLEY PARISH COUNCIL  
ANNUAL ASSEMBLY Ian Fewtrell-  
Smith**

There continue to be two major elements of the church's presence in the village, one being the continuation of ministry and worship, and the second the short-term fund raising for the re-roofing.

In February 2005, the interregnum, which had begun at the end of August 2004, came to an end with the licensing of Revd. Canon Trevor Maines as House for Duty priest and the licensing and installation of Revd. John Townend as Priest in Charge. Revd. Denise Brown was also relicensed. In November 2005, Trevor's wife Olive was licensed as a Reader and she provides additional help taking services as well as playing the organ.

Whilst retaining our individual identity, our church in West Ilsley has links with the three other churches within the benefice, and with John Townend as priest-in-charge, we have the benefit of links with the benefice of Brightwalton and Chaddleworth.

Worship ranges from the traditional formality of the 8am BCP Holy Communion to the informality of the monthly Children's Church After School service, the latter continuing to maintain

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a very good attendance. We continue to hold three Sunday services each month, of which the All Age worship is the most popular.

Children's Church had a varied year, which included the introduction of Godly Play, a Travelling Crib during Advent and a monthly benefice Mums' and Tots' coffee morning, in the Rectory at Peasmore. It is now important to develop provision for the 8+ age range which is now outgrowing the format.

Some of the year's most memorable services were the Easter Sunday celebration of Holy Communion, Harvest Festival and, at Christmas, the Crib and Carol Services.

Last year, there was one wedding in the village, six babies were baptized and there was one funeral.

The churchyard continues to be a place of peace and beauty enjoyed by all. We are especially grateful to Norman Carlisle and Richard Gore, whose hard work ensures that it is kept neat and tidy. In June, there was an intensive 'clean-up' morning, both inside and outside, which was very well supported and has made a huge difference to the ambience. We are always well supported by various people in the village who clean and provide flower arrangements on a regular basis.

Regarding "Raising the Roof", several fundraising events were organised in the village, including a Wine Tasting, Lambing, Coffee Morning, a Walk, Christmas Craft Fair, Christmas Greetings and a village Christmas Party. All were extremely successful and appealed to a wide variety of tastes within the village.

We have received a number of individual donations, as well as several from Vodafone. Also, we were given £450 from the West Ilsley Show Committee and £200 from the Parish Council. Grants have also been received from the Gerald Palmer Eling Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust. The fundraising has been a huge task for which there are too many people within the village, as well as the specific committee chaired by Will Axtell, to thank by name. We are jumping through the final administrative hoops at the moment for a change in the specification of the roof tile and when that happens, we will be in a position to carry out the whole of the work this year. In September of last year, the church was broken into: nothing was taken, as there is nothing left out now to steal. The Morland window was damaged in the

process and restoration work is now underway by a firm in Reading. As well as the broken window, the safe lock was damaged but that was easily repaired. The thief, Daniel Hawkins, was caught later and charged, the police having taken DNA from a drop of blood on the window Gill and a chewed match left in front of the safe, and is now serving 21 months in Oxford prison.

The finances of the church continue to be a struggle with a small congregation. As well as the day-to-day running, the contribution to the Oxford Diocese (the parish share) last year was £7,320. This figure was met, but it is not easy and our outgoings continue to exceed our income. All Saints church continues to provide a centre for worship within the village, as well as being a place of quiet where people are welcome at any time.

### **The Ilsleys Primary School**

Introduction - Again it's been a very busy and successful year for all involved with the Ilsleys Primary School. The school is moving forward at a great pace and I would like to thank the extended community for their continued support. The following is a summary of the main achievements of the past year.

Themed Weeks - One of our biggest successes over the year has been the introduction of our termly themed weeks. This is when we combine a number of subjects and study a theme for a whole week. Over the year so far we have had highly successful weeks on Australia and the 1960's. The cross curricular approach has been very positive in bringing these topics to life. We have held Aussie rules football, learned to jive as in the 60's and have had various visitors to develop the themes. During the weeks the school has been full of laughter and fun and most of all there has been a real feeling of the love of learning.

Assessment and Achievement Week - Another highly successful initiative has been the introduction of assessment and achievement weeks. This is a time where the children take time out to take on line assessments, look at what they have done well and see how they can reach the next stage in their learning. The children have really taken to this process and enjoy being involved in their target setting and future learning. The week always

end with an assembly so the children can share their successes and celebrate with their parents and peers. Information from these weeks help the school fine areas for development, so can become even better in the future.

Sport - Sport continues to an important part of school life. We have continued to invest in sports resources and there seems a genuine enthusiasm throughout the school for sport. This has reflected in the take up of all our after school sports clubs and the children's eagerness for competitive football and netball matches. Alongside the sterling work of our sports co-ordinator we have also employed a football coach to take some sessions during the week.

Music and Drama - The school was very proud of the school choir who sang their hearts out at the Anvil in Basingstoke as part of a West Berkshire concert. The choir also performed at the Christmas concert, the Berkshire show and later this term we have a musical concert at St Mary's. In the future we would like to sing at a venue in West - if you have any ideas please contact me. The Christmas concert was a great success as we sang Christmas songs from around the world and during the summer term we will be performing 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' as a whole school.

Awards and House Points - The awards and house systems go from strength to strength. We have now developed them further and have held a number of inter house sports matches. These systems have been very popular with staff, parents and pupils alike.

Health- Last year we introduced healthy snacks and a fruit and veg scheme within the school, and we have continued to promote healthy living by introducing drinking water bottles in Glasson! We hope over the next year to be accredited with a healthy school.

Also, as part of our aim to continually improve our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum we will be visited by a Life Education Centre mobile classroom, and their specially trained staff, on April 27<sup>th</sup>. The centres are part of a national charity who work in partnership with schools and their communities to help child/en make healthy choices. Their programmes are constantly being updated and developed to take into account the latest ideas in health education and the school is excited by this new initiative to bring this difficult curriculum area to life.

New Play Area - In the autumn term we

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were lucky enough to be able to build a new adventure playground for the children. The wooden construction is a very exciting piece of kit with bridges, fireman's pole, bars and platforms. The children love to play on it and have fun investing games to play on it. I would like to thank friends for their kind donation - without it, it would not have happened.

**Clubs** - We have offered a wide range of after school clubs throughout the year for the children. Junior children can participate in an activity four nights a week. We have offered over the year - football, netball, summer sports, tennis, choir, art, recorders, country dancing and cycling proficiency clubs. All have been very popular with the children and they have gained a lot from them. I thank all the staff of the school for running these clubs in their own time.

**Off site Activities** - We have tried to get the children involved in offsite activities as much as we can. Year five children visited Trinity School to take part in an African drum workshop. The whole school enjoy a seasonal trip to the Pantomime in Newbury. Year three and four visited the Corn exchange to see a music session as part of the towns Spring festival. Year one and two visited St Mary's church as part of their RE topic and some year five and six are gearing themselves up for a week in Sealyham in Wales for some outdoor education. The children will abseil, rock climb and many other exciting activities.

**Oxford Brooks Training** - We continue to work with Oxford Brooks University, by offering placements for trainee teachers. Again this year we had a very positive experience with a range of talented students who have added a great deal to the school and have been a real hit with children and staff alike. As a small school it is important that we give the children a range of teaching experiences and this has certainly been the case in these instances.

**Learning Network** - We continue to work alongside other small schools in introducing videoconferencing as a way of developing speaking and listening skills further. We are currently looking into hardware and developing ideas so the schools get the most out of the initiative.

**Visitors to the school** - We have encouraged a range of visitors to the school. And recently have added West Ilsley Rev Main to the fold. If anyone in the village would like to come to an

assembly to talk to the children don't hesitate to phone. The children have enjoyed seeing new faces in the school and it has given them insight into many people's lives.

**Friends** - The friends have done sterling work in supporting the school not only in a monetary sense but by also organising social events and ensuring there is tea and coffee at end of term assemblies. They organised a wonderful Christmas Bazaar, a magnificent Easter Eggstravaganza, ran a number of school discos and planned the fruit and vegetable scheme. They also organised food at a West Ilsley clay pigeon shoot and planned and ran the West Ilsley Pre-show dance which kept them very busy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work.

**The Future** - As you can hear the school is an exciting place to be and I am proud of all the achievements we have achieved by working together as a united team. Over the next year we will be doing a lot more of the same plus we will be strengthening our curriculum further with introduction of a more themed approach. I know the school has so much potential

### **The Downland Volunteer Group**

It has been another busy year for 'The Group', made even busier by the closure of the Battle Hospital thereby increasing the need for more trips to the Royal Berks Hospital.

In the year 2005/2006 our drivers have covered some 17,000 miles and invested 1,254 hours of their time to fulfill 900 plus requests for trips to local doctor's appointments, hospital appointments in Newbury, Reading and Oxford. Various dental and chiropody appointments and the occasional shopping trip or to visit friends and relatives in nursing homes etc. We look forward to another busy year ahead and are appreciative of the help and support that we receive from local groups and Parish Councils.

As always, we are constantly looking for new volunteers, either to work in the office or to become a Volunteer driver or Handybus driver, even if only for a few hours a month.

Anyone who would like more information should telephone The Downland Volunteer Group on 578394 between 10.00 and 12.00 Monday to Friday.

### **Report on The Ilsley Evergreens 2006**

Our present membership is 56, of which 24 are West Ilsley residents.

We started the year with our AGM in March at West Ilsley Village Hall, when 30 members were present. The programme of events for the year was drawn up, and officers and committee appointed. During last year we had outings to Winchester, Evesham Country Park, Weston-Super-Mare, The Cotswolds, Bath, Coventry and Worcester for Christmas shopping. We held our usual cake stall at West Ilsley Show and had a very successful stall at East Ilsley Sheep Fair. We will have another stall at the Sheep Fair this year, and lots of cakes will be baked for West Ilsley Show! Our annual Bazaar was held at West Ilsley Village Hall in November 3Qd raised a respectable £458.06. We could still do with more people at the Bazaar however, and hope we can attract more this year. At Christmas we again took the members for lunch at the Windmill Carvery, and money raised at the Sheep Fair helped towards the cost of the coach. We were grateful to receive a donation of £150 from West Ilsley Show and £200 from East Ilsley Sheep Fair. All our outings are subsidised to a great extent, and we provide a Christmas Lunch for only £5.00/per member. Our membership has risen this year from 50 to 56 members, and our activities are, as always, greatly appreciated by our members, and friends who help to fill the coaches.

### **West Ilsley News and Website - Andrea Cook**

#### **West Ilsley News**

Our sources of free copying ran out last Autumn, so we had to either find funding or an alternative way of distributing the WIN.

Thanks to the hard work of Lynne and Paul Smith, who walked the village at least three times doing leaflet drops, we are now distributing 3/4 of the copies by email, and the rest are kindly printed off for those people without email access by friends and neighbours who do have it.

This means that there are no central distribution costs for the WIN, and a few villagers have taken on the small cost of producing one or two extra copies - many thanks to all who have done so.

Lynne, my current joint editor has now left the village, but is continuing in the role until a new editor is ready to take

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over - which I hope will be within the next couple of weeks.

**Website:** Martin B-W has redeveloped the site format which now looks much more modern and we have plans to add more to it when time permits, meanwhile thanks to Martin for his support.

### **Tennis Court – John Clemenger**

Good news and bad for the Tennis Court last year. However, the good news greatly outweighed the bad. The court surface (which is the most sensitive and expensive part of the court) is in excellent shape. I emphasise excellent as underneath the mix of winter drop of tree debris and needles the surface is sound, unbroken and the linin paint in excellent order. I put this down to the rather strict discipline we ask for on the wearing of correct shoes for tennis. The surround fencing is in generally good condition apart from a break in a top restraining wire at the back and a hole, 'small boy' size in the side fencing. This has been repaired several times but keeps coming back . I doubt whether any wildlife has the intelligence or skill to unravel coils of wire, so I put this down to human activity. On the negative side, there seems to have been an increase in litter around the court, mostly outside the perimeter fencing. At the back, under the trees is a new venture where a 'den' has been made by children – here was found numerous empty coke and lager tins, chocolate wrappings and a copy of a magazine called 'NUTS'. More seriously, a broken bottle and glass were found on the court nearby. I'm not pointing the finger but I suspect it is the children of visiting cricket teams (not our own) who are the culprits. I would appreciate it if the cricket club would keep an eye open. We may have to put an 'out of bounds' notice in the tree area. The court has again had a good year for playing adults and children. We get many reports of how people enjoy the privacy and shelter of the big trees. Our fee income was £288.15 and our expenses £175.00 which included £50 to the cricket club for grass cutting, £25 for the booking clerk's honorium and £100 for a new wooden bench. Our balance in National Savings is £1,409.69 we are looking at the possible purchase of a petrol driven blower/vacuum this year – which would make life easier for us to keep the court clear of debris. Whilst we failed to ask for a donation from the village fete last year, we would hope they might consider this a suitable project for

2006.

Court fees remain the same for this year at £2 for adults and £1 for children. Block bookings are considered but need advance warning and the committee to ratify. The committee of myself, John Verney, Denis Gilmore and Elaine, together with Jackie Atkins and myself as Guarantors to the court are still looking to retire and we would welcome interested parties to come forward. Summing up, the court is in good, basic sound stage and opened on 1<sup>st</sup> May for all to enjoy.

### **West Ilsley Village Hall Committee Report**

The Village Hall continues to be well supported and used by many villagers for a variety of activities. Some of our regular hirers are The Toddler group, The Dance classes, Table tennis and The Youth Club plus for several children's parties and committee meetings. The Hall is managed by a committee which consists of representatives from all users groups. We are continually trying to keep the hall both inside and out in good order and most of this work is carried out by our committee to which we are very grateful.

Recently the Hall has been completely repainted and the floor has been resealed. Last year we also put in a new heating system which works well. We also continue our fund raising with our regular twice a year Bingo nights, the Easter Bingo being the best attended and the annual Bonfire night where we organise the fireworks and the BBQ afterwards. At the fete we run the very successful Bottle stall.

In the summer we organise the very popular Village Camp Out when we run games for all Village children from Saturday afternoon and then the tents are put up and the camp sleep over commences. A great village event.

Our funds are healthy and we shall continue to maintain and manage the hall in the best interests of the residents and on behalf of the Parish Council.

For hire please call Audrey Tizzard on 281646.

**Verbal reports were also received from the Cricket Club and the Fete Committee**