

# Annual Watermead Parish Meeting

Thursday 18 May 2023 at 7.00pm  
Held at the Village Hall, Watermead

Attendees: Cllr Severn (Chair), Cllr A Schwab, Cllr I Schwab, Cllr M Morgan, Cllr D Forder, Cllr M Singleton  
Noreen Shardlow (Clerk), Michelle Jackson (Assistant Clerk)  
BC Cllr Diana Blamires, PC Jake Bye  
Plus 3 members of the public – Dave Lucas, Louise Burley, Graham Howse

**1 Apologies**  
Cllr A Bond

**2 To agree the minutes of 19 May 2022**  
The Minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

**3 To discuss any matters arising from those minutes**  
No matters arising.

**4 To receive reports:**  
PC Jake Bye reported:

From 1 February 2023 to date there had been 75 reports made to police from Watermead:

48 specifically regarding the Best Western Hotel.

8 community based – 3 thefts from motor vehicles, 1 theft of a motor vehicle, 2 pedal cycle thefts

5 reports of antisocial behaviour which include drug use/activity in the piazza car park and crematorium car park.

Dave Lucas had received no follow up support since the reported incident. PC Jake Bye to chase up the contact from the Specialist Unit to get in touch with him. It was agreed to hold a meeting with Rebecca Mears - Area Commander, PC Bye the PC and Dave Lucas.

The Clerk

Cllr Blamires to check if access to relevant ANPR cameras can be given to police for the time window specific to the crime.

Cllr Blamires

It was agreed to look into a community board project with the police on making the public aware of the process for reporting a crime rather than posting on social media. The length/wait time concerns for 101 was passed to PC Bye.

Community Speed Watch was discussed. PC Bye offered police assistance and/or attendance with any Speed Watch initiative. Cllr Blamires to escalate the Clerk's email regarding repairs to MVAS, the pedestrian refuge and lamp post as these issues were still pending.

Cllr Blamires

Regular patrols and plain clothed operations were being undertaken on Watermead

Louise was concerned about the level of suspicious activity around Watermead being reported on social media. She also reported on 2 incidents of indecent exposure. It had been reported on social media that a vehicle with false registration plates had been going around Watermead acting suspiciously. PC Bye urged people to report any crime to 999. This gives the police the best opportunity to attend and gather evidence there and then and potentially arrest suspects. If it has been left too long before it is reported the less chance there is of success. He referred to the "golden hour principles" which gives the police the best opportunity of gathering evidence. Any crime should be reported to 999, 101 or online, all reports are given a reference number.

Police presence at the Best Western was discussed and PC Bye confirmed that these visits were not crime related.

**Diana Blamires** reported that the new contractor has taken over. Reports to Fix My Street should now receive a response within 10 days. If not she advised to make contact with her directly. The pot hole team were out working evenings and weekends. A review would take place in 3 months' time.

### **WATERMEAD PARISH COUNCIL – ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23 - Sue Severn**

This year has seen the end of Covid restrictions and the country returning to normal at last. The World Health Organisation declared the pandemic over recently.

The year has seen enormous changes in the country with the national celebration of the late Queen Elizabeth's platinum jubilee, followed so soon by her sad passing. Her loss was felt keenly. Most of us had never known another Monarch. The accession of King Charles III was a new experience for most and the associated ceremonies and traditions were fascinating. I write this on the day of his coronation. Despite the terrible weather the service proved to be moving and solemn; the parades were wonderful. A great national occasion with many street parties, entertainments and a volunteering day. It's always wonderful to see communities joining together.

During the year we gained approval to build the raised walkway around the large lake and to improve the paths. The grant from our Community Board and FCC Communities Foundation which meant we could go ahead. Work was completed before the bad weather, and it is generally well used and liked. While we waited for plans to be approved, costs increased hugely so the council decided to use some of its reserve funds to cover the shortfall in order to get the work done. This was the most requested improvement suggested in the neighbourhood plan survey.

The work to span the area which floods during wet spells at the crematorium end of the path is still outstanding because Environment Agency approval is still needed. As soon as this is forthcoming, we will seek grant funding to complete the works, and we hope it can be completed within the next year. It's frustrating, but we must find the right solution. The parish council is very keen to complete the project as soon as we can and extremely frustrated at the delays.

Open gardens was held a little later than usual last summer. This proved more challenging for those opening their garden to keep their plants blooming and looking fresh, but we still had a good number of visitors. It's a very enjoyable day raising money for Florence Nightingale Hospice. This year's event will be on Sunday 9 July. Our thanks to everyone who took part and to those who visited.

The front garden competition held last summer gave Cllr Irina Schwab a difficult choice in choosing a winner. Many garden designs were outstanding. The gardens help to make Watermead look its best. To make it even better, it would be very helpful if we could all keep hedges and overhanging branches clear of pavements. Overhanging trees and hedges make it difficult to walk on pavements, and when wet it's particularly unpleasant.

Outdoor film night returned in September which was much enjoyed despite the very cold evening. Watermead Events Committee worked very hard to bring this event back. Our grateful thanks go to everyone involved. We hope that another film night will take place this September.

We're looking forward to the return of Larks by the Lake this year on 28<sup>th</sup> May which this year will include a flypast, Watermead bake-off, great prize raffle, entertainment, fun dog show, crafts and more. If you can help on the day, please let Noreen Shardlow know, and she'll let the committee know. These events

require a lot of planning and work on the day by as many people as possible! Raffle prizes are also required.

Christmas was celebrated in Watermead in our usual style. The Christmas lights competition is supported by a growing number of homes. The winning displays were inventive, and enjoyed very much by residents and visitors. Someone told me that they always brought their children to see the lights at Watermead; it has become one of their family's Christmas traditions!

The Craft Fair returned last year with a good variety of stallholders offering hand-crafted and other goods. The event is always very sociable and much enjoyed. Thanks to Graham Severn for organising the event and to Dot Toler for her delicious catering.

The Carol Concert took place on a cold evening which, incredibly, coincided with the World Cup Final - who could possibly have guessed that this would happen? Attendance was lower than usual, and we hope that this year's event will be back to normal. Funds raised from the Christmas events were donated to Roman Park Trust.

The photographic competition was held online following the success of this format the year before. Once again, there were some great images. We are grateful to Eric Rose for arranging this.

Watermead Pub Lunch club is back in full swing and Mary Singleton reports that numbers continue to increase. It's a monthly event, much-loved by attendees and we are grateful to Adi and Adriana and their team for continuing to welcome the club each month.

Kelvin and Nikki Wong have now stepped back from running the Watermead Inn. During the twelve years they ran the pub it has been a welcoming and much appreciated community asset. Their charitable events, donations and initiatives, particularly during the pandemic and beyond, have been exemplary. They are always willing to help, join in, and facilitate fundraising. We will miss them; but know that we can enjoy Miya in Aylesbury with another warm welcome and great experience. Kelvin and Nikki will continue to contribute to Watermead in lots of ways, including events and charities so I'm pleased to say we aren't losing them altogether!

Adi, who has been head chef for several years, and his wife Adriana are already making lots of changes, new ideas and décor. We wish them every success.

Village View continued through the pandemic with virtual meetings. The editorial team has been producing outstanding editions this year with new contributors, wonderful photography, stories and more. Don't forget, Mary Singleton, as editor, is always happy to receive contributions and articles.

Our neighbourhood plan is moving through its stages. It's an exciting and very important project which will shape our village for future generations. The in-person consultation events have been invaluable and it's been a pleasure to meet so many neighbours and friends, and to hear their views and ideas. The draft plan is in production, and will be sent to every home and all stakeholders for consultation.

I would like to take the opportunity of thanking everyone who has contributed, particularly Mick Morgan for leading the team: Noreen Shardlow and Peter Dean have written, re-written and honed the plan, and Stuart MacKay has engaged local businesses and done much else to help. Sally Chapman's advice, as our planning consultant, has been invaluable and her patience and positive contribution is much valued.

Parish Councillors continue to work as hard as possible to deliver the parish council's services and initiatives. They each bring their own areas of interest and

skills producing events, Village View, doing legal work, marketing, interest in wildlife and the environment and neighbourhood planning.

The work of the parish is managed by our Parish Clerk, Noreen Shardlow and Deputy Clerk, Michelle Jackson. Following resignations, we welcomed Ashley Bond as a councillor. Ashley has been a staunch supporter of the parish for many years, formerly as one of our District and now Unitary Councillors. His knowledge of the parish, planning and local councils is invaluable. Dan Forder has also joined. Dan is a well-known local resident, a skilled wildlife photographer and environmental expert whose photographs are enjoyed on social media along with his knowledge and advice.

Residents and councillors are sorry about a recent rise in reported and suspected crime. Over recent months parishioners have expressed their concerns to us and we have been in touch with our neighbourhood policing team who have increased routine patrols and carried out plain-clothes patrols in order to help prevent crime. A very nasty incident recently caused great concern and we have been asked by the Police to remind everyone not to report on Facebook – if you see a crime, or fear one is taking place, do not take matters into your own hands, call 999. For other reports call or email 101 your call and message will be taken notice of and action taken. Unless there is a direct police report the police cannot increase patrols in the area, but they are trying their best to help us by proactive policing. We need to help them by reporting to them.

I would like to end by sincerely thanking Noreen Shardlow, Michelle Jackson, all the councillors, including those who have left. We also owe sincere thanks to Dave Lucas, John Hillier, Darren Adamson, Wayne Samuels, who work with us, often during emergencies, to keep Watermead safe and attractive. Their work goes beyond the usual transactional relationship for which we are grateful. Another vote of thanks is due to Diana Blamires, Ashley Bond, and Peter Cooper, our Unitary Councillor who represent Watermead at Bucks Council. Diana has been vociferous on our behalf on many issues and Ashley has been supporting us for many years, particularly with the Community Board, with Peter.

I hope that we will soon find ourselves in summer and able to enjoy our outdoor activities and wonderful environment.

**Cllr Schwab** gave thanks and expressed appreciation on behalf of the Cllrs to Cllr Severn for her knowledge and insight, leadership, direction and sheer passion for Watermead.

**Cllr Morgan** wished to thank Noreen Shardlow, Peter Dean and Stuart MacKay for their assistance with the neighbourhood plan.

## 5 **Parishioners' Views**

Graham Howse queried the possibility of leaving some of the green areas to grow wild for the benefit of bees and pollinators. It was agreed that Cllr Severn and Graham would have a walkabout to suggest some potential areas to Bucks Council for consideration. Advice to be taken from BBOWT and Cllr Forder and the issue to be added as an agenda item for discussion at the June meeting. Cllr Blamires commented that there were funds available for bulbs etc.

Cllr Severn

## 6 **Date of next Annual Parish Meeting**

16 May 2024 7.00 pm

Cllr Severn thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 8.15pm.