



# Wickham Bishops Parish Council

## ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

YOUR COUNCIL	AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY
Cllr Ian Wardrop, Chair	Speedwatch and Traffic Calming Planning Committee, Finance Committee Three Parishes Remembrance Day Committee
Cllr Mandy Mickelsen, Vice Chair	Finance Committee Chair Planning Committee
Cllr Henry Bass	Planning Committee Chair Land rear of 9 Church Road Working Group
Cllr Peter Bates	Parish Magazine Liaison, Publicity & Website Three Parishes Remembrance Day Committee
Cllr Pete Layley	Amenities, Public Transport
Cllr Simon Morgan (District Councillor)	District Council Liaison Three Parishes Remembrance Day Committee
Cllr Claudia Nappo	Highways
Cllr Jane Williams	Finance Committee, Biodiversity Project Chair Land rear of 9 Church Road Working Group BHSA Trustee & Public Rights of Way Three Parishes Remembrance Day Committee
Lorraine Bailey	Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

### HOW TO CONTACT YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

All correspondence should be addressed to the Parish Clerk.

**Write to :** WBPC, c/o the Village Hall, Church Road, Wickham Bishops CM8 3JZ

**Call or text :** 07542 190176

**Email :** [info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](mailto:info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org)

**Website :** [www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](http://www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org)

**Notice Board outside One Stop** for Agendas, Minutes and other useful information

**Facebook page :** Wickham Bishops Parish Council

Look out for our regular article in the monthly Parish Magazine, hand delivered to every household.



## THANKS TO PARISH MAGAZINE

The Parish Council is very grateful to all those involved with the Parish Magazine for arranging for this report to be delivered with the magazine.

### PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish Council was pleased to co-opt Claudia Nappo to fill the Councillor vacancy which had arisen at the start of the year under review. Later in the year, Richard Mundell stood down as a Councillor, due to pressure of work and family commitments. Many thanks to Richard for his time on the Council, especially his technical assistance with our remote meetings during the Covid lockdowns. Simon Morgan was co-opted to fill the vacancy. Simon is also one of our two MDC Ward Councillors and we are able to benefit from his MDC input to Council business. Welcome to both Claudia and Simon. Another vacancy has now occurred with the decision by Karl Jarvis not to stand again as a parish councillor at the recent elections due to business reasons. We are grateful for his time with us and previously as a District Councillor and, in particular, his input on the Library Strategy Working Group. Karl's report on the Group's success at keeping the Library open with improvements can be read elsewhere in this Report. After much studying, our Clerk, Lorraine Bailey, qualified for the Certificate in Local Council Administration – very well done to her. Her knowledge and expertise is much valued by the Council.

The monthly Saturday surgeries held in the Library resumed early in the year and a number of residents have taken the opportunity to talk to parish councillors and, occasionally, our district councillor, about issues of concern. The surgeries are usually held between 11.00 and 12.00 on the third Saturday of the month. Just drop in; we'd be pleased to see you.

A major concern of many residents in recent months was the decision by the owners of The Mitre (now Mrs Salisbury's Tea Room and Mulberries Aesthetics & Beauty) to close the gap between The Mitre's car park and One Stop's car park. The decision was taken because vehicles from the One Stop car park were using the gap and causing additional wear and tear to The Mitre's car park. There is a view that, as The Mitre car park used to be part of the carriageway of Gt Totham Road, there are highway rights allowing access across the car park but, as yet, no documentary evidence has been found to substantiate that proposition. The Parish Council is in touch with Essex County Council and Essex Highways and have suggested that the whole kerb frontage to One Stop should be dropped so that vehicles, including the delivery lorries, can enter and leave the car park more easily. We will keep residents informed of developments.

### PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Parish Council meets on the first Tuesday of each month, except August, at 7.30pm. The Planning Committee meets if required, on the third Friday of each month at 11.30am. Members of the public and press are welcome to attend these meetings.

Agendas are displayed on the Parish noticeboard by One Stop and on the website at [www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](http://www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org), where the minutes can also be found.

## THE PLATINUM PATH

We are pleased to say that the new footpath between Maypole Road and Great Totham Road, gifted to the Parish Council by the developers of the adjacent land, is now open for use.

## HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC CALMING

Last year's annual report referred to the attendance at the May Parish Assembly of County Councillors Lee Scott (responsible for Highways) and Mark Durham (our ECC Councillor) who addressed residents about our concerns over speeding in the village. As a result, traffic and speed surveys were undertaken in Witham Road and Maypole Road. The results were reported back to an open meeting on 28 July 2022. It was with considerable astonishment that the results showed that, over 24 hours a day for 7 days, the average speed of traffic in Witham Road was 31 mph and in Maypole Road it was 32 mph. As a consequence, from a Highways perspective, there wasn't a speeding problem that merited additional engineering works and there was no case therefore for road narrowing in either location, as had been favoured by the Parish Council. Despite there being evidence in the surveys, supported by speedwatch figures and subsequent analysis by concerned residents, that there clearly was a speeding problem at certain times of the day, Essex Highways remained of the view that the overall average speed was the figure they were obliged to use when considering engineering solutions to speeding issues. Cllr Scott undertook, however, to pursue with Essex Police increasing police enforcement in the village. Whilst there has been some additional police attendance since, it has to be said that this has been sporadic. This additional support will be available from time to time, depending on police priorities.

Other highways issues covered in the meetings with Cllrs Scott and Durham included the need for gullies and drains to be cleared, the repair of the bridge at Blue Mills, improved signage in Witham Road, particularly in respect of the HGV weight limit, and a pedestrian crossing in The Street. Responses have been that some gullies have been cleared but only halfway down Wickham Hall Lane, where a blocked drain on private land has stopped further work; Blue Mills Bridge has been repaired; improved signage is with the Local Highways Panel for consideration; and a formal request for a crossing has been submitted to the Panel. The Parish Council has now asked for a site meeting with a highways engineer to discuss details over whether and where a crossing could be positioned. We will keep residents informed of progress on this.

## WICKHAM BISHOPS BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

Wickham Bishops Parish Council continues to support the Biodiversity Project having joined the Essex Wildlife Trust 'Wilder Communities' Project and continue to record our wildlife sightings through WICKIWATCH on Facebook.

The Wickham Bishops Biodiversity Project has put up around 20 bird boxes which have been cleaned and treated this year – 10 of which had been used for nesting. We have also put up bat and bug houses, working with the Edward Bear Club and through library open days and 'Love your Library' events.

We encourage residents to put up bird, bat and bug homes and to leave areas of long grass for wildflowers to grow in our gardens. Similarly, leaving verges and longer grass uncut around open spaces, allows beautiful natural flowers to flourish and grow, providing us with a more enjoyable natural environment as we walk around the village, and providing food and homes for our insect life, especially bees.

## RECYCLING SACKS & FOOD WASTE BAGS

Don't forget, if you run out of recycling sacks or food waste bags, they're available to collect from Wickham Bishops Library. Opening times are: Mondays 2pm—5.30pm, Wednesdays 2pm—5.30pm and Saturdays 9am—5pm.

## LIBRARY REPORT

No longer under threat of closure, the formal reopening of the library took place at the end of May 2022. This was a 'Love Your Library' day and celebrated the refurbishment of the library building and relaunched some of the clubs, post Covid. The Library Working Group have continued to push for capital development of the building, and the success here has been mixed. While we welcomed the installation of an accessible toilet and additional entrance, the location is not ideal, with impact on the children's reading area and PC stations. It was disappointing too that, due to budget constraints post Covid, ECC decided it would not develop the old toilet block area, which for a while had been part of their capital proposal. This is a great shame as it would have provided better layout options, better kitchen facilities and some much-needed library storage space. One day perhaps when ECC have funds available that vision will be realised, and the building can then be used to its maximum potential.

The great news is that all the clubs set up to assist the case to keep the library open have gone from strength to strength and updated information can be found on the Facebook page Friends of WB Library.

The continuation of **Code Club** run by Gerard Harvey in library time is a fantastic way to get an introduction to coding. The club contact email is [wickhambishopscodclub@gmail.com](mailto:wickhambishopscodclub@gmail.com)

**Ancestry Tracking Club** is run by Bogdan Szajkowski and a Thursday morning **Scrabble club** run by Lorrie Dixon will start once the library building works are complete.

**Warhammer Alliance Club** is run by Karl Jarvis – A second post Covid season of the club proved very much in demand and although the club has been taking a break over the colder months, it will be back soon with a '*Necrons vs Space Marines*' special event. Contact email [Jarvis7017@aol.co.uk](mailto:Jarvis7017@aol.co.uk)

**Beginner Bridge** run by David Pearl took off in November 2022, with some new tables and chairs being funded by an ECC grant. Instructors have kindly donated their time and it has been operating at capacity with the library now hosting around twenty people for bridge every Monday night. The contact email is [bridge.wbbeginners@gmail.com](mailto:bridge.wbbeginners@gmail.com)

Special thanks go to Karl Jarvis who chaired the Library Working Group until stepping down from the parish council in May 2023. He expertly steered us to where we are now, the result being a thriving village asset. Thanks also to Cllrs Henry Bass and Peter Bates, Gerard Harvey, Danielle Whittle, and David Pearl.

## COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Thanks to all the Speedwatch volunteers who have helped to keep speeds down in the village.

Are you interested in joining the volunteers? Do you have a spare hour now and again? If so, please contact [ian.wardrop@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](mailto:ian.wardrop@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org) for more information.

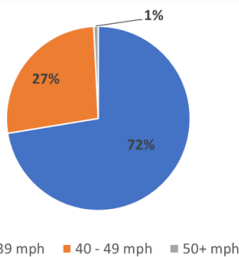


## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY—12th NOVEMBER 2023

The Remembrance Day Event Committee consisting of members of Wickham Bishops, Little Braxted and Great Braxted Parish Councils need volunteers to act as marshalls for the road closures around the war memorial. If you'd like to help, please contact the Clerk by either calling 07542 190176 or emailing [info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](mailto:info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org)

### SPEEDWATCH

The speedwatch team continued to be very active. As in past years, we have concentrated on the busiest sites of Maypole Road, Witham Road, Beacon Hill and, to a lesser extent, Kelvedon Road. We have also covered a site in Little Braxted near The Green Man; the Little Braxted team stopped operating some time ago when their team members dropped out for various reasons. A lot of traffic here is going into or coming from Wickham Bishops and checks here, especially when recording vehicles travelling towards the War Memorial, are helping to persuade drivers not to speed in our village. In total, 1392 vehicles were recorded in 102 sessions during the year. The chart shows the breakdown by speeds recorded. The total recorded is down on previous years and this trend seems to be continuing in the first few months of the current reporting year. Nevertheless, it is of concern that 28% of those recorded are at speeds of 40 mph or higher and, despite the views of Essex Highways as reported in the Highways section, it is clear that there continues to be a speeding problem in the village.

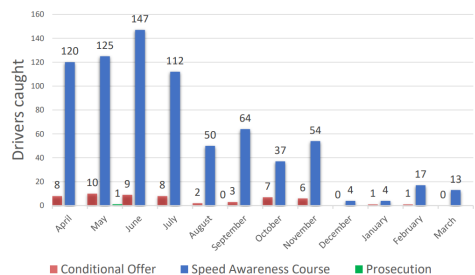


Total numbers caught 1392      Sessions 102  
Average per session 13.65

The Parish Council increased its employment of MDC's Community Engagement Team to carry out speed enforcement using the police TruCam system. The CET is now operating in the village for 4.5 hours per month, up from 3 hours per month. In the reporting year under review, the CET caught 969 speeding vehicles and these were reported to police for normal police action against the drivers. The chart below shows how those reports were dealt with. Conditional offer applies to drivers who are offered either a fine and points or a speed awareness course. Prosecution applies to those who have already attended a speed awareness course or whose speed was very fast.

The discrepancy between the totals of 803 on the chart and our records of 969 arise from those reported by TruCam which could not be processed, e.g. because the vehicle was stolen or registered keeper could not be traced or TruCam failed to capture the registration number clearly. Even allowing for the additional hours and difference in totals, the number recorded is a significant increase over last year, when 332 were reported. In keeping with the trend on speedwatch, the past few months have seen lower numbers reported. Let's hope that this continues. The TruCam is used in Maypole Road, Witham Road and Kelvedon Road.

### TruCam Speeding Results 2022/23



We have been promised some additional police presence to enforce the speed limit and officers have occasionally been seen on enforcement duty at Witham Road and Maypole Road. It is hoped that this support will continue in the future.



## HIGHWAYS REPORTING TOOL

For maintenance issues such as road or pavement surfaces, traffic lights, road signs, flooding, drainage, manholes, overgrown vegetation or obstructions, you can report these online at [essexhighways.org/tell-us](http://essexhighways.org/tell-us). If there's a risk to public safety, please ring 0345 603 7631.

## PLANNING

The major issue affecting planning matters arose towards the end of the year under review when a planning application for 50 houses on land behind 9 Church Road was received. Residents will recall that a similar application was made in 2015. This was eventually refused by Maldon District Council and the Planning Inspectorate subsequently dismissed the appeal in 2017. Over 50 residents attended the Parish Council meeting on 7 March 2023 when the latest application was considered. Several residents spoke to voice their strong objections to the application. The Parish Council resolved to recommend to MDC that the application be refused. Priti Patel MP was aware of the views held by residents and has conveyed her view that the application should be refused. At the time of preparing this report, MDC had still not decided on the application. The Parish Council has set up a Working Group, comprising parish councillors and residents, to consider what action might need to be taken in the event that the application is refused by MDC and the applicants lodge an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. The Parish Council is grateful for the strong support given by residents at the meeting and in their letters of objection and will keep residents informed of developments.

During the year, the Parish Council, either at full Council or at its Planning Committee, considered 54 various planning applications and 8 tree protection order matters. MDC confirmed our recommendations in all but 13 instances. The Parish Council remains committed to resisting new development beyond the defined settlement boundary.

## FINANCE

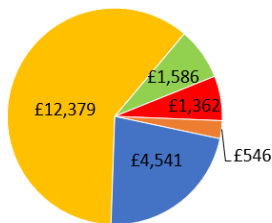
### Accounting Statement 2021-22

Opening Balance	£15,605
Precept	£20,276
Other Receipts	£1,124
Total Expenditure	<u>-£20,796</u>
Closing Balance	<u>£16,209</u>

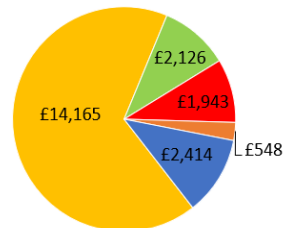
### Accounting Statement 2022-23

Opening Balance	£16,209
Precept	£21,545
Other Receipts	£2,898
Total Expenditure	<u>-£21,197</u>
Closing Balance	<u>£19,455</u>

### Expenditure 2021-22



### Expenditure 2022-23



- Subscriptions, Printing & Administration
- Street Furniture & Grass Cutting
- Trucam & Speedwatch
- Audit & Insurance
- Parish Projects