

# SWALLOWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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## ANNUAL REPORT

2011

*Swallowfield Parish Council  
Parish Office, Swallowfield Street  
Swallowfield, Berks RG7 1QX*

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## **Chairman's Address**

### **APM April 19th 2011** **Introduction and Welcome**

Good evening and thank you all for attending our annual parish meeting.

Our theme this evening is "The Community" and a big thank you to all the members of our community who have agreed to speak to you this evening about what they do to make Swallowfield the place it is to live in. There's also plenty of opportunities to offer to help coming this evening so please do offer if you can.

When people know you live in Swallowfield, the first thing they always say is what a wonderful community spirit we have and long may this continue. What is more important to a community and what upsets us all more than litter? Waste management is vital to our lives.

So, at this moment, before I introduce our guest speaker I should like to take this opportunity to thank all those members of our community, friends, acquaintances, concerned parishioners and whole families who turned out to support the litter pick on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The day was a huge success with over 50 people helping and between them collecting 80 sacks of rubbish, together with several items of various sorts including tyres, odd bits of metal- and two artificial Christmas trees! Also found were 105 small whiskey bottles, a typewriter and a picture of Jesus- but not, apparently, all in the same location! Thanks especially to young Andrew who stayed all day as the organisers' right hand man and to Sarah Firth who spread the word and brought in many of the younger generation and their parents. Biggest thanks of all to Nigel and Celia Adams who masterminded the event with so much enthusiasm and to Celia who organised the much needed lunch- it was exhausting work! Perhaps even more of you can put next year's litter pick in the diary and perhaps join us in our adopt a street scheme which WBC is promoting. Let us know if you wish to find out more about these schemes- there is an article in the parish newsletter which should have been delivered to you by now, about this scheme.

Sadly the litter pickers among us in particular, have noticed how quickly rubbish, thrown mainly from cars, is collecting back again on our village lanes. If any of you have any bright ideas how to stop this, or would like to volunteer to keep an area clean of litter, Celia and Nigel would love to hear from you. Just drop into the parish office and let us know.

And now to our main speaker for the evening- Pete Baverstock, head of Wokingham Waste Management Services. Pete has been with WBC- for his sins -since 1990, which in his own words is the length of 5 prime ministers. He wants to keep our neighbourhoods green and his responsibilities cover: Waste & Recycling Collections, Waste Disposal, street cleansing, dumped rubbish, abandoned cars and graffiti removal. He has a team of 3 working for him on the Waste Services team and he is here tonight to explain how the new rubbish collection arrangements will work when they come in next year so we all need to be ready for that and make the necessary adjustments.

### **Chairman's report 2011**

I didn't expect to be reading the chairman's report this evening. About 6 months ago I was happily muddling along as side kick to Michael Goldsmith, our parish council chairman, when ill health forced Mike to resign.

Mike had worked tirelessly as a council member since 2006 and became chairman in 2009. He played an active part in all areas of council work, always highly visible, walking the parish with dog and camera, reporting on drains and ditches, photographing houses with extension plans pending, taking pictures of traffic problems, road works- anything that would help councillors at their meetings understand what was going on, through a visual representation. The parish newsletter recorded Mike as truly dedicated and indeed he was but Mike was –is- more than this: he is an old fashioned man in many ways, a true gentlemen, and a man of great integrity and honour who tried his best on behalf of every individual parishioner or problem that came his way. As chairman, Mike was characterised by an intense concern for individuals. He always made sure that Riseley was more than fully represented and so often personally visited many of those who had problems. After the great flood of 2007 Mike was a deeply sympathetic supporter of all those who had been flooded and was instrumental, along with Angela King, who was then chair, in setting up the Flood Resilience Group to try to ensure that as a parish we are more prepared should this ever happen again. Mike is still a valuable member of this group; his practical engineering skills make him by now quite an authority on our ditches and drains. Outside of the village Mike was always prepared to give his time to attend meetings at Wokingham to make sure that as a parish we were strongly represented.

I enjoyed working with Mike very much indeed, he was supportive to all of us and took so much on his back that he felt unable to continue when ill health struck. I am delighted to report that he is doing much better now- no doubt helped by not having to worry about council business. Thank you for all you did for the parish, Mike. We miss you very much.

There have been lots of comings and goings on the council in the past twelve months.

We welcomed Ann Ashford to the council in June 2009 but due to changes in work pressures she was unable to stay with us for many months, though she did manage to give us her expertise on HR matters before she left. Ann was instrumental in setting up an employee's appraisal scheme which we hope makes us more in line with modern working practices. Ann was replaced in May 2010, by another busy lady from Farley Hill, Joanne Watson, who took a great interest in the effects of the four major development sites in connection with Wokingham's Core Strategy (especially the Arborfield Relief Road) – more of that later- but she also found the demands of a young family and a high pressured job too much for her to continue with us for long, resigning from the Council at the beginning of this year. I should like to thank both ladies for their time with us.

In the autumn we co-opted John Anderson and last month we welcomed Peter Sampson, so we are now thankfully at our full strength of nine members. Both men bring a wealth of business expertise and a passion for village life to the council, and as you will see from my report, have already made their mark on council activities. And so far they have not resigned!

Sadly we accepted the resignation and retirement of Ted Rose, our caretaker of almost 20 years, due to ill health, at Christmas time. He joined the parish council team in 1991 from Wokingham Borough council. He became a fixture in the life of the village halls, befriending all the hall user groups to whom he was so helpful. Despite increasing age and health problems, he was always happy and cheerful. Nothing was too much trouble to him and he is sorely missed by all his friends in the community who had known him for so long. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

Ted left a huge gap that was hard to fill and we were most grateful during the difficult time of Ted's illness, to Mike Hibbitt, who worked as temporary replacement caretaker. Mike has now taken over the job as permanent caretaker and is proving to be as helpful and anxious to please as Ted was.

We are most fortunate as a parish council in our employees and we need to thank the support team of Celia, our clerk, Emma, our finance officer and Mike, our caretaker, who give us all such good service and who are always available via the parish office if we need to speak to them individually.

With Ted's illness in the autumn, Emma took on the additional duties of hall bookings, and we are now holding monthly meetings to check how we are managing these and managing the running and cleaning of our halls. We hope this will improve our service to hall users and iron out the few initial teething problems we have had as Mike and Emma have settled in to their new roles. We also know that Celia ranks as a national treasure and without her knowledge and social network nothing gets done! So thank you for putting up with us for another year, Celia!

This evening is about recognising the community and thanking those who make this parish what it is and in this report we should not forget to thank all those who are, or have been, council members. Being on the parish council in 2011 is often a very hard and seemingly thankless task, only undertaken by those who feel a responsibility towards making the community a better place to live in. It is totally voluntary, unpaid and time consuming- and the new localism bill may mean that it will take even more of our time. All of the councillors try to take their share of meetings but thanks and praise must go to Angela King for her unswerving commitment to making our voice heard, both in the past as chairman and now as vice chairman. When things go well it is delightful but so often the parish council is criticised for having to make difficult decisions or for things – like planning or speeding- over which we actually have much less sway than people believe. So I should like to thank all of those public spirited officers who do try their best- and that is all we can do isn't it?

I think this is a good opportunity to thank also those members of our community who help others to enjoy and fulfil themselves in our small community. The dedicated volunteers who run cubs, beavers, scouts and guides week in and week out and help our youngsters have fun and make friends. I should like to thank the Russell Players for the enjoyment they have given us over the years and especially those who run the youth group, giving our young people a taste of the pleasure of being on stage. Outside the village hall there is the horticultural society and their many friends who do so much to put on the Swallowfield Show and the Open Gardens, the dedicated team who annually run the church fete, the Farley Hill Society who have set themselves up to run the Victory Hall for the benefit of the community, the RSF Charitable Trust group who do good works, the History Society, the adults who spend time organising the various Wasps football teams and matches, and similarly the FH cricket club group, and the FH Bowls Club, the volunteers who run the RSF tennis club, the WI, the mother and toddler group, the pre-school helpers.....the list goes on!!! I cannot mention every group and every person here by name – and I am sorry if your group has been left out-but it is due to the effort of all the volunteers that our community life is so rich and fulfilling.

We would also like to recognise this evening, the continuing dedicated efforts made by Swallowfield Flood Resilience group, consisting of members of the public and members of the parish council, who are still maintaining a vigilant watch on our ditches and drains. The pc has now not only put in a substantial sum of money for a three yearly major clearance of pc owned ditches but has also voted an annual sum for regular maintenance. Phase two of the Resilience Group plans, trying to prevent Part Lane flooding at the bottom end, is nearing completion and we should like to thank the landowners involved: Mr and Mrs Pidgeon, Mr Derrick Mayes and Mr Rory Waterer for their public spirited support and use of their land. We must also thank Eddie Napper of WBC for all his support to help our village.

In our community so many of you give time and energy to make things happen but I should especially like to name and thank Linda and Bill Kirkpatrick and Annette and Geoff Stephens for their community involvement. Together they picked up the reins of the Burns night celebration and are running a street party on the royal wedding day so we can all meet up and celebrate together.

This speech needs to highlight the main achievements of the council over the past year. A paper or online summary is available either from the parish clerk- there are some at the entrance to the hall tonight- or if you want to save the rain forests it is available on our website. I will only highlight some of the important issues we have dealt with.

There are many day to activities that have to be dealt with and we try to link our decisions to our parish plan which sets out our aims.

A parish council is obliged to consider all planning applications on a regular basis. We use our village design statements as our blueprints and try to ensure that new houses or extensions in the area fit it. Every household was given a copy when they were first prepared – several years ago now. Do ask the clerk if you can have a copy of this, if you wish to extend your home or object to someone else's extension. As a parish council we can only make recommendations however, and decisions are made by Wokingham and very often we don't agree with these but can do little about this. I should like to thank Max for all the work he does on planning and to thank David for taking over as lead councillor for planning while Max is unwell. We always try to send a representative to all appeals and support all designs we think fit in with the village design brief.

Those of you who live on the main road will be interested to hear that we have recently received a communication from the agents who have been retained to manage the Meakins/Balcombe Nursery site to work with the community on the future development of the site. We have requested a public meeting on this and are waiting to hear their response.

Of major concern to us all are Wokingham's plans for building in the Borough. The document which leads Wokingham's policy on this is known as the core strategy, and this is an important issue for us because of the proposed major housing developments in Arborfield and Shinfield. Ed Handley, who has been attending the meetings about house building numbers and a proposed new by pass for Arborfield, will update you on the present situation immediately after I have finished the chairman's report.

The council also has to respond to local and government concerns: traffic, speeding in our villages- these are so often your major concerns and we meet regularly with Wokingham's Executive Member for Highways to air our concerns on your behalf, though we struggle to have the 30mph speed limit enforced. We are ever hopeful of finding some way to reduce the current 40mph to 30 mph (and enforce it) through Riseley village and we work with the NAG to try to reduce speeding. Please do keep up your personal emails and letters to the police and to WBC if you are unhappy about speed levels in your area as we have found that complaints from rate payers often carry more weight than from the parish council. If you have concerns you should write to Keith Baker as executive member of Highways at WBC and for the police, the Area Commander, Christian Blunt at Loddon Valley Police Station.

We also are trying to come to terms with what the localism bill will mean to us as a parish council. It seems that Wokingham will have to work more closely with parish councils and we will be able to have a greater say in planning and building, probably with more local involvement in the form of public meetings. We may need to form clusters with other parishes in order to get better value for services. This may well be exciting but it will also be time consuming.

You are concerned that we keep the rural identity of our parish and we are delighted that Peter Sampson has already become our lead councillor for the environment. We have been fortunate to secure a grant to plant a community orchard, under the healthy eating scheme, and we are delighted that Peter has agreed to take this on, as Peter is determined to bring back heritage trees to this area. We are looking at possible sites on our recreation grounds. If you have any knowledge of heritage

fruit trees that used to grow here, please do speak to Peter afterwards. We hope that this time next year we will be celebrating the success of this project.

You may have noticed that there are very few wild flowers in Swallowfield meadow nowadays and as part of our commitment to biodiversity, a small area of the meadow will be dug up and reseeded with wild flowers as soon as we have had some rain. We do ask you to support this scheme by not walking on the seeded area.

We continue to build on our links with local farmers, started so successfully by Angela King, when she was chair, and numbers continue to increase at our annual farmers' meetings. We have been able to support both the police and farmers through these meetings and we were delighted that this year the police, Wokingham Borough Council and Swallowfield Parish council ran a successful Wokingham Borough farmers' conference based on the success of our local meetings.

We hope now to be in a position to develop our links with local business and to support each others' needs where possible. To this end we are holding a meeting on June 7<sup>th</sup> to which all local businesses will be invited and where we can exchange views and consult with them about the proposed new business meeting room with its up to date technology, which we are creating, through internal changes to the changing room area in Swallowfield Parish Hall. We hope this facility will be of benefit to them as well as the rest of the community.

We were delighted that a new preschool committee finally made the decision this year to remain in Swallowfield village hall and we are working with them to upgrade the premises so that we comply with government regulations. Problems in this area were one of the reasons why they were considering the move to Farley hill.

Young people are of vital importance to our village and we are delighted by the use and success of our new play equipment. We are now running a programme of regular replacement of old and worn out play equipment and will be purchasing- with the advice of preschool- some newer items that can be used for role play activities. We continue to have annual maintenance checks on all our properties, equipment, trees, fields- the list is endless but this is a necessary and important part of our role.

We are committed to keep a village shop and post office and we do urge you to use this facility to help us keep it open.

The parish newsletter continues to be an excellent means of communication and we thank Gordon and Lorna Collender for all their sterling work in maintaining the standard and for putting monthly parish council updates in *Reach*. We have tried a new method of distribution this month and we do hope you received your copy of the magazine safely- any comments or queries to Gordon please.

There has been much discussion over the past two years about the cost and use of our two village halls. We could reduce costs, of course, by running the halls through an unpaid management committee and we have met with parishioners and broached this idea- but quite understandably no-one wants to take regular responsibility for the bookings for two halls, for cleaning the lavatories, for polishing the floors. Therefore we have accepted, that to give the level of service we all require, a bookings clerk, a caretaker, a cleaner are all necessary. After lots of meetings the pc has come to the difficult decision that we will upgrade the halls and modify some internal rooms in order to provide more community facilities that we can hire out. Our aims are not only to create more income but also to increase usage, particularly in areas that are underused and bring no income in.

We have already had the floors resanded and polished at both halls and Riseley hall has had a painting face lift. To finance these internal changes we are using profit made from the sale of no 4 Russell Cottages. We have been delighted by public praise for our new loos which are the first part of our upgrade – the Dyson rates very highly! - and we hope you will like the new curtains when they arrive after the next Russell Players production. Many thanks to Linda Kirkpatrick for working as our design guru!

If we are to succeed financially we need to find new hall users who will bring support for the hall through new ventures. Belly dancing on Tuesday morning is highly successful and we do hope that the Zumba classes on Friday afternoons and Wednesday nights will prove equally popular. We need to fill Friday nights in the main hall and some community ventures that bring us together would be so appreciated and would raise money to support the hall's continuation. If there are those who would care to form an entertainments committee to run any Friday night activities we would be most grateful. Angela and I would be happy to work with them- or leave them alone if they prefer! If anyone is interested please do speak to me afterwards.

We have been reminded more than once that we need to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and develop an electronic interface with parishioners. So we are investigating a web site upgrade and we hope that soon you will be able to make all your hall bookings on line. Many thanks to Richard Sellings for all he has done to create and maintain our web site over the years.

Finally we come to our greatest success this year- who would have thought when we were first asked to provide allotments that this could have been achieved -and within a year! What a success this has been. It was not all plain sailing however and there were many dark days and weeks when we thought we could never achieve this but the breakthrough came when The Calico Trust agreed to let us use a field they owned in Part Lane, which would be just right for the job. Many thanks to the Calico Trust, and especially Marina Goldsmith , for being so amenable to renting their field to us and many thanks also to John Anderson who masterminded this through all the weighty and time consuming legal details . That was truly a labour of love! But I think the biggest thanks of all must go to the committee of the Swallowfield Parish Allotment Association- SPAA from now on- whose energy and enthusiasm have been extraordinary. I am an allotmenteer myself and can tell you that little has exceeded the pleasure this year of sitting on my canvas chair with my flask of coffee, watching a buzzard circling overhead, while I think about turning the next sod. Already I have made loads of new acquaintances whom I hope will become gardening friends. What an achievement- but you are going to hear more about this later on in the evening.

I hope this has given you a flavour of what we have been doing all year and now I'm going to turn to Ed Handley who is going to update you on the proposed major developments in Arborfield and Shinfield and the legal challenge put forward by the Southern Parishes Planning Group.

### **Introduction to Community Responders**

As this evening's Annual Parish Meeting is centred on the community, we thought that you would like to hear more about the valuable work of our local medical responders to whom you may well owe your life in the future.

### **Halls update**

As mentioned earlier, the village halls have been the focus of discussion for the last two years. They are losing money and not as well used as we would like. Furnishings are old and in need of an upgrade. Even though the fees we charge are not economic, many present hall users find it difficult pay them as they rise with inflation and so we need to seek out new and different users to add to our revenue.

After much discussion and many meetings, we have decided to go ahead with a programme of refurbishment to provide at reasonable cost, an enhanced and improved facility which will bring in new users and will upgrade the facilities for many of the present users. Most of this will be funded by the profits from last year's sale of no.4 Russell Cottages. This refurbishment programme is being managed by a small working party, led by Angela King, with myself and David Entwistle. Angela is not here tonight, so David and I will be speaking to you about this.

The Parish Council's vision of the future of Swallowfield parish is of a place that encourages families and children to be an active part of the community and we wish to develop the hall in Swallowfield as the centre of this community. As preschool have elected to stay at the hall we are driven by strict government imposed rules and we will need to provide security and improved facilities for the preschool group who are major contributors to the venue and community. We wish

to create a permanent meeting room with up to date IT facilities, available to hire, which may also house local history archives and which we hope will attract business. In a later phase we hope to provide a community café area for community use and hall users. Within all this we hope to relocate but keep storage and required amenities for other hall users, though we accept that there will need to be some compromise here.

In the planning stage we consulted widely with all major hall users through a large open meeting with all key hall users, many informal meetings, and attendance at group committee meetings and by writing an article in the parish newsletter. We have contacted all regular Hall Users and asked for their comments on the proposed plans and we have tried as far as possible to take all their views into consideration.

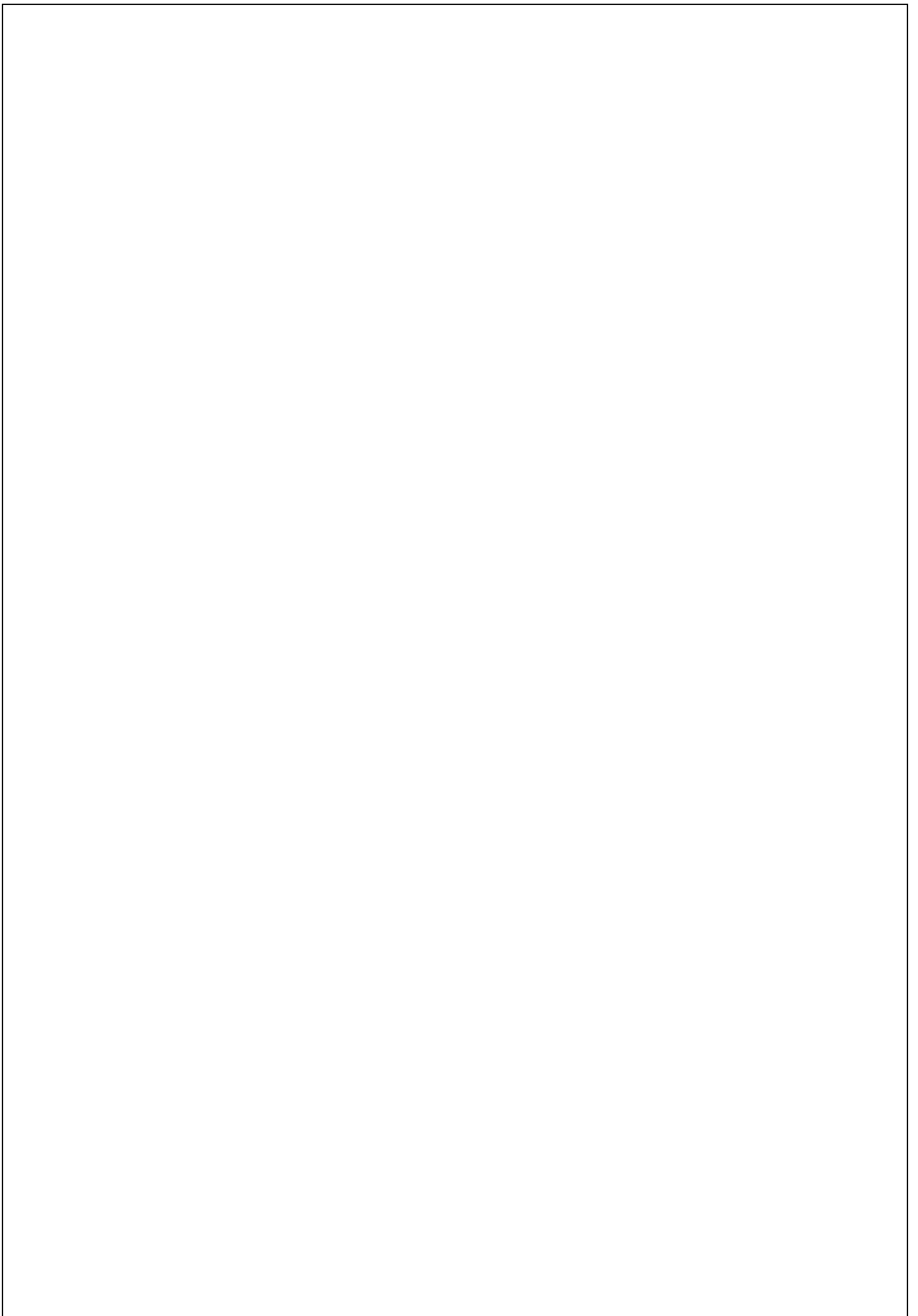
We now propose to make some alterations that will keep preschool within the government rules and perhaps erase some of the problems that exist at present with multiple use hall sharing. We will provide an exclusive entrance through the storage cage area, so the school is separate and secure. The present storage area will be given to the preschool and toddlers group with arrangements made to keep or provide other storage areas for present hall users. Preschool will be allowed to make this space their own with pictures but with the proviso that it has to be shared if other Users need access or use of the space. The Davies room kitchen area will be upgraded to include a new fridge and cooker to allow for some cooking and provide pupil lunches, as the aim is for preschool to stay open for longer hours in the future. Two new toilets will be built off the hall, one for the disabled and one for little children. Preschool will fund raise for an outside shed for storage to replace their existing storage and will fund raise to support new facilities. The time scale for this is very tight as we hope to achieve the new separate enhance and kitchen upgrade during the summer holidays.

At the same time we wish to ensure that the Davies room does not lose its kitchen facility by providing a kitchen between the Davies room and the new Smart room created out of the changing room space, with hatches to each room, so each room will become self sufficient.

We will adapt the present changing rooms into one Smart room with large windows overlooking the playground and provide a new toilet and store room for scouts leading off the main corridor. Access to the stage will remain as before but the loft entrance to the Russell Player storage area will be moved and two velux windows provided in the loft space. The Smart Room will have 21<sup>st</sup> century WI fi and screening facilities, carpets, a table which will form into a large meeting table and we hope there will be space to store the History Society archives in their special shelving.

When this is complete we hope to move to a second phase of development in the kitchen and atrium area to provide a community cafe, though we are aware we need to sort out the heating in the atrium first and we will need to screen the car park and the sewage pumping station from view! We are investigating the possibility of the hire of a café manager for mornings to run the coffee shop as a commercial venture in the future.

We appreciate that some existing groups may have to compromise on their use of storage but we genuinely believe this is an exciting new venture that will bring more income and life to our hall in the long run and we do hope that you will support this venture.



## **Financial Report for Year 2010 to 2011**

As I am sure most of you will know, the Parish Council financial accounts are available to view on request by contacting the Parish Clerk. However, I give below a summary of the overall picture for the financial year ending 5 April 2011 for this report. There may, of course, be some adjustments to the information presented today as some figures are not yet available at the time of writing.

At the year end we are showing a positive amount of £13,500 income over expenditure. The main contributors to this result are:

- higher than expected income from dividends and bank interest
- lower than budgeted costs for hall rates and gas supply
- the amount carried forward from the previous year

The Parish Council's investment portfolio on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 was £2,272,902, of which the value of the share portfolio was £2,212,407. This is a significant increase of £478,706 over the investment portfolio on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010, due to the additional investment arising from the proceeds of the sale of 4 Russell Cottages and to the general market recovery in that period.

During the year we have been drawing up plans to refurbish the Swallowfield Parish Hall and to date have spent £14,000 for new toilets. Plans to continue with this refurbishment have been finalized and specifications issued for tender purposes. This approach will give us greatly improved facilities, which will help with increasing the income streams and put the Hall on a more sound financial footing. In addition, we are pleased that the Pre-School will remain at the Parish Hall, which will obviously help the financial picture.

Looking ahead, the Parish Council has agreed a balanced budget of £130,500. Within that, we have managed to reduce the precept by £500 to £13,000. Those of you who have had an opportunity to read the latest Spring issue of our newsletter will have seen that I mention that Swallowfield Parish residents continue to pay less community charge than anywhere else in the Borough.

Gordon Collender  
14<sup>th</sup> April 2011

## **Planning Report for Year 2010 to 2011**

Whilst Wokingham Borough Council's core strategy was accepted last year, there has been relatively little movement as to what exactly will be built in the area up to 2026, and specifically no movement as to what additional houses this parish will be expected to accommodate.

Six parishes in the southern area of Wokingham Borough, including Swallowfield parish, have challenged Wokingham Borough over their consultation procedures relating to the development locations South of the M4 motorway; the Arborfield Garrison site and the South of Wokingham site together with the infrastructure supplementary planning document. At the time of writing this report the problems have yet to be resolved, and effectively all the sites are in a "hold" situation until this impasse has been negotiated or decided by the courts.

At long last, the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area mitigation measures have been agreed, which means that new houses can be built within the village envelopes. This will have no major effect on the parish, but will of course allow housing to be built when it is finally decided how many houses will be built within the parish. Hopefully this will be known within the current year, and will probably be a maximum of 25 houses in Swallowfield and Riseley - or possibly in just one of the two settlements.

Residents in Farley Hill can breathe a sigh of relief as it would appear that there will be no pre-school at Farley Hill School, and consequently the increase in traffic congestion is unlikely to occur.

Planning applications within the parish have all been of a relatively minor nature with the exception of an application to provide gypsy caravan pitches at 'Fairlands' in Farley Hill. This was refused planning permission, but at this stage it is not known whether the applicant will appeal.

Additional caravans seem to have been the flavour of the year, as it is anticipated that an additional fixed caravan will be added to the site in School Lane Riseley. The Parish Council is actively pursuing the complicated issues relating to caravan sites where licenses are issued by WBC's environmental health department, but sites nevertheless still need planning permission which is controlled by the planning department.

Max Bowker  
14 April 2011

CALICO TRUST REPORT TO 2011 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

*Not available in electronic version*

**CALICO TRUST ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**  
**1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009**

*Not available in electronic version*

***PARISH PLAN***

*for*

**SWALLOWFIELD PARISH**  
*(Swallowfield, Riseley and Farley Hill)*

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Produced by Swallowfield Parish Council  
April 2011

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## Introduction and background

### Swallowfield Parish Council - Parish Plan

The Parish Plan is designed to articulate our aims and priorities. We wish to support and keep what is good about the parish and improve what is lacking. As we work within a limited budget, however, the reality is that the Council has to use its best judgment to prioritise what it can achieve and it does sometimes have to change priorities to meet circumstances as they arrive. This is why it is so important for a good dialogue to be established with parishioners, local organisations, local businesses, neighbouring parishes and Wokingham Borough Council. The Parish Council would urge you to share your views and priorities in whatever way works best for you – attend a Parish Council meeting, telephone the Parish Clerk, write a letter or simply speak with a member of the Parish Council.

Our priorities include:

1. Maintaining our rural ethos
2. Creating a vibrant village where everyone can enjoy good health and wellbeing and where vulnerable people are supported.
3. Ensuring our parishioners feel safe and share an active social life centred around a cohesive community which includes clubs and activities in the village halls and recreation spaces.

The Localism Bill that is being put before Parliament will place greater emphasis on local decision making and specifically targets four areas –

- New freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- New rights and powers for communities and individuals
- Reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- Reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally

The legislation will put more pressure than ever before on us as a community to shape the area in which we live. The following Parish Plan has been compiled by Swallowfield Parish Council based on its experience and knowledge that residents desire to maintain the rural quality of life that we enjoy.

Areas of responsibility	What we want	
<b>Community Development</b> ( <i>fulfilling the potential</i> )		
Parish Council	To further relationships with the organisers of all pre-school provision and work towards the provision of better facilities	
Juniors/youth	Quality/safe facilities Both recreation grounds to be suitable for football	
School liaison	Environment as safe as possible Speed limits outside schools	
Club liaison	Support for the creation and continuance of specialist interest groups within the Parish Maximised use of halls and facilities	
Adults	Parishioners feel inspired to start new ventures and contribute towards the community	
Elderly	Footpath stiles to be replaced with kissing gates Fitness opportunities Community transport to continue with more routes, especially a link with Wokingham	
Medical Centre	Good relationships to continue	
Churches	Keep a vibrant environment for parishioners to worship Assist with transitioning the use of St. Johns Church, Farley Hill Continue to grow the Remembrance day Service community involvement	

Areas of responsibility	What we want	
<b>Economic Development</b> ( <i>growth and sustainability</i> )		
Business liaison	To be constantly in touch with all sections of the Parish To develop PC support for local business needs and create greater liaison and dialogue in general with the business community	
Farming liaison	Maintain PC support for the farming community PC support for sensitive in-keeping diversification Maintain annual workshop Promote agricultural ethos with WBC to influence planning and development Promote a rural community	
Parish properties	Keep property in good repair and giving a good, in-keeping, impression Maximise grant opportunities to reduce carbon footprint	
Shop	Focal point to village Opening hours that fit the needs of the community Improved facilities Maintain Post Office facility	

Areas of responsibility	What we want	
<b>Environment</b> ( <i>protecting our environment</i> )		
The Parish as a whole	To maintain the “Village” style and culture whilst enhancing the visible features throughout the parish	
Open Spaces	1. Preservation 2. Maximising of opportunity	
Flooding/ditches	Removal of flooding situation, keeping ditches and drains clear Encourage permeable hard standing to promote effective management of water run-off In conjunction with WBC and the EA, establish a strategic solution for drainage and surface water across the Parish Involvement with Thames Water, the balancing pond and installation of new pumping station Parishoners and landowners to be responsible for ditch maintenance adjacent to their properties	
Conservation	Audit the Bio-Diversity, within the Parish, and determine action plan Maintain The Marshes as a biodiversity area	
Footpaths	Maintain the condition and report to WBC as appropriate Accessibility – programme of change; broken stiles to kissing gates	
Planting	To improve the general appearance of all hedges, verges and open areas More roadside planting Hedges to be carefully managed Oak trees planted Village streets to have plants and flowers Creation of a Community Orchard	

Areas of responsibility	What we want	
<b>Transport</b> ( <i>keeping our Parish moving</i> )		
Public	Regularity and reliability of service Link with Wokingham Link between Farley Hill, Medical Centre and Shinfield	
Infrastructure (highways, cycle-ways, signage etc)	An environment that is as good as it can be through action and understanding Speed limit on all B3349 in the Parish and commonality on all other roads Promotion of cycle routes	
Byways	Continued involvement with WBC to keep in all year round good order for walkers, joggers and cyclists	

Areas of responsibility	What we want	
<b>Culture, Leisure and Sports</b> <i>(to promote healthy living)</i>		
Recreation grounds	A good standard for both pitches Encourage more participation from clubs	
Halls	Commercially viable and promotion and development of premises Maintenance of good quality halls Seek greater community involvement	
Play facilities	As above Maintain the quality of services available	
Sports	Maintain the refurbished MPG court Maintain football pitches	
Arts	Encouragement for all forms of arts	

<b>Areas of responsibility</b>	<b>What we want</b>
<b>Crime and fear of Crime</b> ( <i>promoting a safer Parish</i> )	
Police liaison	Good, pro-active relations
Security	Continue to promote
Neighbourhood watch	Start more groups
N.A.G	Continue with active support
Anti social behaviour	Active village police presence

<b>Areas of responsibility</b>	<b>What we want</b>
<b>Communication</b> ( <i>Information for all</i> )	
Quarterly Newsletter	Constant development and enhancement of style and presentation
Annual Report	Maintain Annual Report
Web site	Provide an enhanced level of information regarding the Parish
Community Feedback	Work to understand local priorities and requirements

Areas of responsibility	What we want	
<b>Planning</b> <i>(To retain our rural environment)</i>		
Village Design Statements	To ensure that these documents are used as a planning resource and kept up to date	
Planning Development	Essential we retain rural ethos	

Areas of responsibility	What we want	
<b>Finance</b> <i>(Good management of Parish Financial Resources)</i>		
Parish Budgets	Good, prudent budgeting and management to continue	

## Swallowfield Parish Council - Areas of Responsibility

<p><b>1. Community Development - Fulfilling potential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre School</li> <li>• Juniors/Youth</li> <li>• Club liaison</li> <li>• Adults</li> <li>• Elderly</li> <li>• School liaison</li> <li>• Medical Centre</li> <li>• Churches</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Culture, Leisure and Sports - To promote healthy living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation grounds</li> <li>• Halls</li> <li>• Play facilities</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Arts</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Economic Development - growth and sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business liaison</li> <li>• Farming liaison</li> <li>• Parish Properties including the village shop</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Crime. Fear of Crime – promoting a safer Parish</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police liaison</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Neighbourhood watch</li> <li>• Anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. The Environment - protecting our environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Spaces</li> <li>• Flooding/ditches</li> <li>• Conservation</li> <li>• Footpaths</li> <li>• Planting</li> </ul>	<p><b>7. Communication – information for all</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter</li> <li>• Annual report</li> <li>• Web site</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Transport - keep our Parish moving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public</li> <li>• Private</li> <li>• Infrastructure(highways, cycle ways etc)</li> <li>• Byways</li> </ul>	<p><b>8. Planning – to retain our rural environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village design statement</li> <li>• Planning development</li> </ul>
	<p><b>9. Finance - good management of financial resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parish budgets</li> </ul>

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***PARISH PLAN***

***Record of Achievements 2010 - 2011***

***for***

**SWALLOWFIELD PARISH**

***(Riseley, Swallowfield and Farley Hill)***

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Produced by Swallowfield Parish Council

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## Introduction

This report contains the record of achievements of the Swallowfield Parish Council during the period April 2010 to April 2011. The achievements are shown against the areas of responsibility as set out in the Parish Plan below.

<p><b>1. Community Development - Fulfilling potential</b>  <i>(Community development Fulfilling the Potential of residents )</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre School</li> <li>• Juniors/Youth</li> <li>• Club liaison</li> <li>• adults</li> <li>• Elderly</li> <li>• School liaison</li> <li>• Medical Centre</li> <li>• Churches</li> </ul>	<p><b>9. Culture, Leisure and Sports - To promote healthy living</b>  <i>(Culture leisure and Sport)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation grounds</li> <li>• Halls</li> <li>• Play facilities</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Arts</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Economic Development - growth and sustainability</b> <i>(Economic growth &amp; sustainability)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business liaison</li> <li>• Farming liaison</li> <li>• Parish Properties including the village shop</li> </ul>	<p><b>10. Crime. Fear of Crime – promoting a safer Parish</b>  <i>(Crime fear of crime)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police liaison</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Neighbourhood watch</li> <li>• Anti social behaviour</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. The Environment - protecting our environment</b>  <i>(Protecting the Environment)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Spaces</li> <li>• Flooding/ditches</li> <li>• Conservation</li> <li>• Footpaths</li> <li>• Planting</li> </ul>	<p><b>11. Communication – information for all</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter</li> <li>• REACH</li> <li>• Annual report</li> <li>• Web site</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Transport - keep our Parish moving safely</b>  <i>(Keeping the district Moving )</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public</li> <li>• Private</li> <li>• Infrastructure(highways, cycle ways etc)</li> <li>• Byways</li> </ul>	<p><b>12. Planning – to retain our rural environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village design statement</li> <li>• Planning development</li> </ul>
	<p><b>10. Finance - good management of financial resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parish budgets</li> </ul>

Areas of responsibility	<b>1. Community Development – Fulfilling potential</b>
Pre School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both village halls are used to deliver excellent preschool education.</li> <li>• After two years of uncertainty the Swallowfield preschool has elected to stay at Swallowfield hall for the foreseeable future. Swallowfield preschool has expanded its hours slightly to include lunch and from Easter will be completely full with 24 children.</li> <li>• SPC is planning to provide better security and improved facilities for preschool who are major contributors to the venue and community but have to adhere to strict government standards. This will include an exclusive entrance so the school is separate and secure as problems arise through multiple hall usage.</li> <li>• Meetings between the SPC hall working party and preschool take place frequently and informally.</li> </ul>
Juniors/youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many activities for young people at both the village halls: cubs, scouts, beavers\ Russell Players’ youth group</li> <li>• The new play equipment at Swallowfield is being well used though SPC have been disappointed by some vandalism on the site.</li> </ul>
School liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC does not at present have any representation on Farley hill school governors but email links are regularly used.</li> </ul>
Club liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC values the clubs that use the halls</li> <li>• SPC are aware of the difficulties of sharing hall facilities for all clubs and have had many informal meetings with representatives of these clubs to try to support their needs and to sort out equitable storage and other solutions.</li> <li>• Successful hall users group meeting in December 2010 highlighted many shared concerns.</li> <li>• Stripping and resurfacing both hall floor s for the benefit of clubs, took place in 2010 and the badminton line markings were repainted. SPC are grateful to the Russell Players who paid for the resurfacing of the stage flooring.</li> <li>• SPC understands the concerns about hall rates especially for groups with small numbers and does try to keep the hall hire rates as low as is possible for local residents</li> </ul>
Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC clerk operates open door policy in council offices (though preferably between 11 and 12 noon!)for any member of the community</li> <li>• Day time in Davies room and afternoon and pm sports sessions in Swallowfield village hall designed for adults (table tennis, badminton) New activities include belly dancing and zumba</li> </ul>
Elderly	<p>Continued support for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the local shop and post office to provide an amenity for those unable to travel outside the village</li> <li>• the 154 weekly bus which goes via Loddon Court Farm Park homes site</li> <li>• Wednesday coffee mornings</li> <li>• individuals who are in restricted circumstances; council member personal visits</li> </ul>
Medical Centre	

Churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active individual council member support for church social functions including the Fete</li> <li>• Parishioners informed of SPC activities through regular contributions to <i>Loddon Reach</i></li> <li>• SPC help to organise the annual Remembrance day ceremony at the war memorial</li> <li>• Village Carol singing organised for the Memorial garden link church and community.</li> </ul>
<b>Areas of responsibility</b>	<b>2. Economic Development – growth and sustainability</b>
Business liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the upgrade to Swallowfield Parish Hall , it is proposed to alter the use of the changing rooms to a self contained ‘Smart Room’ with suitable facilities and technology for meetings and business hire. SPC hopes to support local business through the availability of this.</li> <li>• SPC to develop improved links with local businesses in same manner as with Farmers’ forum. To be publicised in parish newsletter.</li> <li>• Continue to promote local businesses in Newsletter; specific support for the only local village shop and post office in the Parish</li> <li>• Owners of Deepwater business premises and Brookside Nurseries attend Farmers’ meeting</li> </ul>
Farming liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Famers’ meeting now an annual event with much improved relations between police and farmers, with support from SPC.</li> <li>• Farmers’ meeting held in January 2011 and attended by 10 farmers, police and council members. Discussion of litter, paperwork demands, problems of Chinese lanterns released across open land which could cause fires, hedge cutting, speed of traffic in The Street. Next meeting scheduled for January 2012.</li> <li>• SPC involved in organisation of Rural Matters conference (involving the whole Borough) developed from SPC Farmers’ Forums, December 2010; issues on security equipment, traveller communities, fly tipping, DogWatch, reduction of crime, covered. Attended by local farmers, police and parish councils. Now also planned as an annual event.</li> </ul>
Parish properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular maintenance visits to The Marshes , external painting, hedge trimming</li> <li>• Flat roof to be repaired at office block behind parish stores</li> <li>• History society has been given permission to store archives in the unused room behind the shop</li> <li>• Repairs to burst pipes at Riseley Tennis Club carried out</li> <li>• Replacement fridge, heater, burst pipe repairs to Flat 2 Fieldfayre</li> </ul>
Shop/Fieldfayre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC continues to support the local shop in order to provide a shop and PO facility for the parishioners</li> <li>• Repairs and painting of shop front, erection of frontage light and emergency lights in communal corridor</li> </ul>

Areas of responsibility	<b>3. The Environment – protecting our environment</b>
Open Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual grounds maintenance continues (2 recreation grounds, the Marshes Common, Swallowfield Meadow, Riseley Village Green, and Nutbean Cemetery. The Dog and Partridge footpath, Benham Lane footpath and Foxes Run.)</li> <li>• The annual cut and hedge trimming have taken place on Swallowfield meadow and it will be reseeded with wild flowers this summer</li> <li>• Mr Eric Nichols has taken over litter picking duties at both recreation grounds</li> <li>• A highly successful litter picking day was held on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March. WBC provided litter picking equipment and over 50 residents, including families, turned up to help out. Thanks to Nigel and Celia Adams for organising the event.SPC provided lunch in the village hall for all the workers.</li> <li>• Allotments have been successfully provided for local inhabitants in Part Lane, using land leased from the Calico Trust. The Allotmenters have formed a society- Swallowfield Parish Allotment Association (SPAA) and working closely with SPC and the Calico Trust, all the necessary leases have been signed. Water has been laid on and the plot ploughed, harrowed and individually marked out. SPAA committee have cut back brambles, dug ditches and are in the process of applying for grants for hard standing for cars, fencing and other extra facilities. All plots have been taken by local inhabitants and the new web site provides good communication between members. A grand opening was held on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.</li> </ul>
Flooding/ditches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Resilience Group continues to meet regularly and is seen as model of excellence within the Borough.</li> <li>• A second phase of flood relief has been partially completed and should be finished before the end of summer 2011 with partnership work between the Flood Group and WBC. A new, improved and larger drainage pipe has been installed across Part Lane which will connect with new ditches across farm land and help to prevent the bottom of Part Lane flooding.</li> <li>• The Arborfield mill scheme has been completed.</li> <li>• SPC has granted a regular annual sum of money of £1000 to keep the parish ditches in good state of maintenance and the work is monitored by a member of the Flood group.</li> <li>• Members of the Group regularly keep a flood watch in times of risk and monitor ditches and drains, reporting any problems to WBC.</li> <li>• Thanks to farmers who supported phase 2 of the Part Lane project (Mr. and Mrs. Pidgeon, Mr. Mayes and Mr. Waterer)</li> <li>• Phase 3 will e to look at drainage at the junction of Trowes Lane and Charlton Lane</li> </ul>
Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member attendance at Wokingham Biodiversity forum meetings</li> </ul>
Footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grounds Maintenance continues for annual cut/clear of Dog and Partridge and Benham Lane footpaths; and tree pruning in Foxes Run</li> <li>• Replacement of stiles with kissing gates at Van Demans land</li> </ul>
Planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC is in final stages of securing a grant for planting a community orchard in the area; work is progressing on identifying sites and choosing appropriate heritage fruit trees. It is hoped that records can be found through Berkshire's Record Office that will allow this to be done with reference to the agricultural history of the area.</li> </ul>

<b>Areas of responsibility</b>	<b>4. Transport – keep our parish moving safely</b>
Public	No. 72, 82, 111 and 145 bus services still in operation. Input made to the WBC Local Transport Plan (2011 - 2026)
Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 mph speed limit in Swallowfield; volunteers have come forward to help with police speed monitoring project</li> </ul>
Infrastructure (highways, cycle ways signage etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members attend the NAG meetings to maintain pressure for 30mph speed limits in Riseley and Farley Hill</li> <li>• Support for Farley Hill residents who are concerned by increase in traffic and inconsiderate parking by parents of children who attend Farley Hill Primary School.</li> <li>• On-going dialogue with WBC Highways Executive Member.</li> </ul>
Byways	

<b>Areas of responsibility</b>	<b>7. Culture Leisure and Sport – to promote healthy living</b>
Recreation grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued maintenance of and litter picking on recreation ground</li> <li>• Replacement rotten gates</li> <li>• Annual tree surveys</li> </ul>
Halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC were sorry that Mr Ted Rose was forced to retire due to ill health after his many years of dedicated service as halls caretaker to the parish. He will be fondly remembered for all the extra things he did to support hall users and to help the clerk. He has been presented with a decanter to mark his retirement. Mr Mike Hibbert succeeds him as hall caretaker after working as temporary caretaker during Mr Rose's illness.</li> <li>• Both village halls provide community and social events and SPC have made a decision to support these by upgrading the facilities using profit realised from sale of parish property during 2011. The aim is to provide extra community</li> </ul>

	<p>facilities, a permanent meeting room also housing local history archives and to accommodate the needs of preschool who are major contributors to the venue but have strict government imposed conditions to which they must adhere. The underused changing rooms will become a smart room with computer access for business meetings. Ideas for changing the kitchen and atrium into a cafe are being discussed. Upgrades to lavatories in Swallowfield parish hall have taken place as part of the refurbishment as has internal decorating of entrance areas outside lavatories in the main hall and in the Davies room.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks have taken place between all hall users to try to support all groups through this refurbishment and retain the required amenities for all existing hall users. All hall user comments have been noted and where possible, taken account of in the plans.</li> <li>• New flooring to both halls</li> <li>• Roof repaired from snow damage at Parish Office in Swallowfield</li> <li>• Internal painting of Riseley Memorial hall, white gloss painting to main hall at Swallowfield</li> <li>• Replacement of curtains in Swallowfield Parish hall in summer 2011.</li> <li>• Repairs to car park</li> <li>• Regular monthly meetings take place between council members and employees to ensure smooth running of halls</li> <li>• SPC supports the local residents of Farley Hill who are hoping to develop the Victory Hall for social and community activities by attending meetings.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Playbuilder project has added a designated play facility for 8-13 year olds on Swallowfield Rec.</li> <li>• S.106 funding of £2,000 from WBC to go towards replacing most worn out existing equipment (Swallowfield Play area) Summer 2011</li> </ul>
Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swallowfield Wasps FC continue to use the pitches at Swallowfield and Riseley (several youth teams)</li> <li>• Tennis continues at Riseley (RSF Tennis Club)</li> <li>• Badminton and table tennis continue at Swallowfield Parish Hall; belly dancing and zumba have been added to what is on offer.</li> <li>• MPG court in good use, mostly for five a side football and tennis</li> <li>• Swallowfield Fishing Club use the river through Swallowfield Park land</li> </ul>
Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual council members support Russell Players especially in front of house activities</li> <li>• <i>SPC pays for the annual hall music licence fee at Swallowfield Hall</i></li> <li>• Art groups continue to meet in both Riseley Hall and Swallowfield Hall</li> <li>• SPC is working to be able to accommodate the history society archives at Swallowfield village hall; at present SPC has allowed the society to use a small room at the back of the shop for this purpose</li> </ul>

<b>Areas of responsibility</b>	<b>8. Crime and the Fear of Crime – promoting a safer parish</b>
Police liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular and successful meetings between parish clerk, chair of SPC &amp; local police &amp; PCSO</li> <li>• PCSO's undertake regular patrols of the Parish</li> <li>• Monthly written updates received from the neighbourhood policing team, published in parish newsletter</li> <li>• Successful drop-in monthly police surgery for parish has taken place</li> <li>• Farmers Forum identified theft and fly tipping as police issues</li> <li>• Thanks to local residents who keep the parish council and WBC informed of rogue operators discharging sewage illegally</li> </ul>
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved surveillance system at the Swallowfield Hall</li> </ul>
Anti social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful intervention &amp; liaison with police over anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Fly-tipping – close liaison with police and WBC through membership of the Rural Crime Action Group; police setting up stop and search operations; WBC logging all fly-tipping in Borough – Swallowfield parish nearly always having the most</li> </ul>
Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) A powerful local group formed by reps from the Police, WBC, PC's , Churches and local residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Members attend regular meetings.</li> </ul>

<b>Areas of responsibility</b>	<b>9. Communication – information for all</b>
Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly successful parish newsletter informs parishioners of local events and opportunities</li> <li>• Newsletter : 20 sides A4 with photographs, issued quarterly</li> <li>• Local advertisements feature in the newsletter ; rates are very reasonable</li> <li>• SPC’s Circular Walk Book is still available for sale at £5 each (it includes maps and photos as well as some historic notes)</li> </ul>
REACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly news articles in Benefice magazine on SPC activities</li> </ul>
Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produced every year, in time for distribution at the Annual Parish Meeting.</li> </ul>
Web site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly updated with lots of information and additional links</li> <li>• Soon to be updated to improve overall appearance and functionality, giving a good mechanism to help communicate with the community</li> <li>• SPC working towards online hall bookings</li> </ul>
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC maintains an open office policy to the public and welcomes residents into the Parish Office.</li> <li>• Important activities often advertised by flyers delivered door to door</li> <li>• Questionnaires used to assess public opinion</li> </ul>

<b>Areas of responsibility</b>	<b>10. Planning - to retain our rural environment</b>
Village Design Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC continued to work with WBC setting development in accordance with the Village Design Statements (Riseley and Swallowfield) as a minimum requirement.</li> </ul>
Planning Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC continues to work with WBC to maintain our rural environment</li> <li>• SPC continues to make parishioners aware of all proposed WBC policies relating to housing and other developments in or around the Parish in order that they can comment and assist the Parish Council in keeping Swallowfield a rural parish.</li> <li>• SPC liaises closely with WBC over the provision of open space land (SANG) as consequence of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas.</li> <li>• SPC successfully supported WBC in stopping a Builders Merchants being built on the Balcombe Nursery site.</li> </ul>
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC has recommenced looking into the possibility of providing affordable homes within the Parish. As yet no sites have been identified.</li> </ul>

<b>Areas of responsibility</b>	<b>11. Finance – good management of financial resources</b>
Parish Budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Budget was set in March with the aim of matching the Council’s expenditure with its income.</li> <li>• Current Policy on Reserves is as follows: The Parish Council’s policy is to maintain its investments to a level which provides sufficient funds to meet its costs. This is on the basis that the Parish Council could not sustain its present level of services if the funds could not provide the income. The income is important because the Parish Council is constrained in its expenditure of the investments themselves; as such money has to be spent on capital items only. The Parish Council could not operate to its existing level if it had to rely purely on a precept, as this would be significantly less than its current expenditure. Our investment policy is to increase the portfolio as much as possible (i.e. have the best possible return on investments) while, at the same time, providing annual funds as required. The Budget is in part determined by the income received from these investments.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC has lowered the Parish Precept for the year 2011/2012</li> </ul>
Internal Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal audit carried out twice a year by an independent person. In accordance with audit requirements, SPC has to review the effectiveness of the internal audit and report their findings to the auditor</li> </ul>
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Management policy is that a review is undertaken annually and presented to the Council (in September).</li> </ul>
Code of Conduct and Standing Orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPC has adopted its own Code of Conduct and Standing Orders and these are reviewed regularly</li> </ul>

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**Swallowfield Parish Council**  
**Members, Officers and employees**

Members:

<b>Mr. J. Anderson</b> – Field House, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield RG7	988 5884
<b>Mr. M.F. Bowker</b> - Filmers, Swallowfield St., Swallowfield RG7 1QX	988 3558
<b>Mr. G.E. Collender</b> - Brambles, Trowes Lane, Swallowfield RG7 1RQ	988 5747
<b>Mr. E. Handley</b> – Greenacres, Swallowfield Street, Swallowfield RG7 1QX	988 3600
<b>Mrs. A. King</b> - Riseley Cottage, School Road, Riseley RG7 1XN	988 4126
<b>Mrs. M. McDonald</b> – Bird in Hand House, The Street, Swallowfield RG7 1QY	988 3251
<b>Mr. P.N. Sampson</b> – 1 Curly’s Way, Swallowfield RG7 1QZ	988 8571
<b>Mrs. B. Stanley</b> – Northcote, Swallowfield Street, Swallowfield RG7 1QX	988 2021
<b>Mr. D.J. Entwistle</b> – The Old Post House, The Street, Swallowfield RG7 1QY	988 3764

**Chairman:** Mrs. Margaret McDonald **Vice-Chairman:** Mrs. Angela King

Officers:

Clerk: Mrs. Celia Adams (tel/fax 988 5929 office / 988 4661 home / 07946 654424 mobile)

Financial Officer: Mrs. Emma Shepherd (988 5444)

Employees:

Halls Caretaker: Mr. Mike Hibbit

Parish Warden: Mr. Eric Nichols