

## The Village Pond

Following the bi-annual risk assessment of the Village Pond by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), the Parish Council decided to take a more proactive approach to the management of the Pond. Certain maintenance aspects are necessary to comply with RoSPA's recommendations, but there is also a balance to be made between retaining the natural features of the Pond & associated marsh and creating a public amenity. Importantly, we need to ensure that no activities undertaken could impact the Pond and surrounding area as a major conduit for runoff water in the Village.

Currently Philip Edwards kindly mows the grass verges on a regular basis. A little more day-to-day maintenance is required to trim the edges of the pond and keep more of the weeds under control. This is usually done by volunteers from the Itchenor Society and the Parish Council. This Summer further strimming was done to try and control the weeds and stinging nettles. Also some of the rotting vegetation was cleared to be replaced by natural planting with mixed hedge saplings, kindly provided by the Woodland Trust. Some additional saplings have also been offered by the Chichester Harbour Conservancy, following our discussions with them. They have also kindly offered to help with an environmental survey on parts of Shipton Green Common.

There is concern that the Pond appears to have silted up quite a lot over the past few years. If the silt level gets much higher it could limit the pond's ability to absorb runoff water during heavy storms and hence increase flooding in vulnerable parts of the Village. It is possible that parts of the Pond should be dredge from time to time but the Parish Council is seeking further advice in this respect and no works are planned in the near future.

## Neighbourhood Plan

Following the Parish Council Newsletter explaining the concept and implications of a Neighbourhood Plan (which was delivered with the questionnaire to all households and businesses in the village) 84 responses were received, a response rate of 36%. Responses were received not only from residents but also from the businesses and the landowning community. We also received a response from the Harbour Conservancy.

A common theme to the replies is that residents are very aware of the unique character of Itchenor and although many are not completely adverse to future development, they want any such development carefully controlled. This applies to home extensions and improvements as well as new builds. People generally felt safe in their own homes but many would like to see greater security in the village such as an increased police presence and CCTV strategically placed. Many residents participate in the same organisations but views were expressed by some that it would be desirable to have more recreational availability, such as a community tennis court and play areas for younger children. The public footpaths are very popular and, based on the replies, well used. On "Green Issues" allotments and car sharing were very popular. Many residents expressed a desire for a village shop/café.

The next stage of this project has now been completed with a Neighbourhood Map submitted to Chichester District Council for approval. If this is accepted by CDC, it will be published on their website for six weeks for consultation.

As this is a village project, letters have been drafted to send to organisations and special interest groups inviting them to send a representative to sit on working parties, participate in the discussions and help formulate much of the Neighbourhood Plan.

This is a project that requires careful thought and consideration and therefore will take time to complete. However updates will be published in the Parish Newsletter to ensure the community is kept informed at all stages of the process.

### Chris Watson



Sarah Varvill resigned from the Parish Council in the Spring. The Parish Council was fortunate in co-opting Chris Watson at its May meeting. Chris has a lot of relevant professional experience which

promises to be very valuable. Chris has lived in Sussex for almost all his life, the last 14 years with his wife & family in Itchenor. Their 3 children & 7 grandchildren are still local.

After graduating in London, Chris worked as an Environmental Research Scientist, specifically on Freshwater Ecosystems and in various aspects of Education. Now semi retired, he was a school governor for 20 years and has been involved with Neighbourhood Watch for 5 years, acting as the village coordinator for the last 18 months. No longer an active sports person, Chris and his wife, enjoy time with the family, cycling, gardening and walking, (they are currently preparing to be on top of mount Kilimanjaro on Boxing Day).

## Public Participation at Parish Council Meetings



The Parish Council is aware that there has been some concern among residents about being able to speak at Parish Council meetings. This guidance is intended to inform residents of their rights in relation to Parish Council meetings and how they can make their views known to the Council.

Members of the public have a legal right to attend meetings of the Parish Council and its committees, except where they are excluded (by a resolution of the meeting) for specific items which need to be discussed in confidence – for example, staffing matters or tenders for contracts. They have no legal right to speak at meetings of the Council or its committees. However, as part of its community engagement West Itchenor Parish Council sets aside time for public participation at its meetings.

Residents are advised that it is not a good use of time for members of the public to complain about hedges, street lights, pot-holes and so forth during public participation. Public participation is best used for issues where a decision will or could be made by the Council, or for comments on items already on the agenda.

It is undesirable to allow members of the public to speak throughout the meeting as this runs the risk of confusing the roles of Councillors, who participate in the meeting, and members of the public who observe it.

The Parish Council allows ten minutes at the start of a meeting for members of the public to make their representations. If there is a possibility that a large number of people will wish to speak, the Chairman has discretion to increase this time, although people will be encouraged not to repeat comments made by earlier speakers. In some circumstances the Chairmen may ask for a single representative to be appointed to make comments on behalf of a group.

It is up to the Council when to allow public participation. Comments made during public participation will be (very briefly) minuted. Libellous, offensive and discriminatory comments will not be minuted as the Parish Council is liable for what is in its minutes, even if someone else said it.

Neither councillors nor the clerk are obligated to respond immediately to comments made during public

participation other than those which relate to items on the agenda. Comments may be referred to the Clerk to write to, or meet the speaker, or could form the basis for an agenda item at a future meeting. Members of the public do not have a right to force items onto the Council agenda. However the Parish Council does want to respond to public concerns in some way and therefore residents are asked to speak to the Chairman or the Clerk in the first instance.

Residents are reminded that the Agenda for the Parish Council and Planning Committee meetings are posted on the Parish Council website ([www.westitchenorparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.westitchenorparishcouncil.org.uk)) and the notice boards the week before the meeting. If there is an item on the Agenda that you are concerned about then residents are welcome to raise any such concerns with the Clerk or Councillors prior to the meeting.



The strong winds in the early morning of 28 October brought down the large willow tree on the island in the Village Pond. A working party from the Itchenor Society and Parish Council has begun the clear up operation, re-establishing the island albeit with a truncated willow tree.

### West Itchenor Parish Council

**Chairman** Michael Chater - Itchenor Cottage, Shipton Green, PO20 7DA  
**Vice Chairman** Graham Colbourne - Mizzen Top, Itchenor Road, PO20 7AA  
**Councillors** Jane Boadle - River House, Spinney Lane, Itchenor PO20 7DJ  
Jim Hartley - Fairfield, Itchenor PO20 7AE  
Alastair Spencer - Anchor Cottage, Itchenor PO20 7AB  
Susan Taylor - Dobbies, Itchenor Road, PO20 7AA  
Chris Watson - Maple Cottage, Itchenor Road, Itchenor PO20 7DH

**Parish Clerk :** Carol Smith - 6 Locksash Close, West Wittering. PO20 8QP  
[parishclerk@westitchenorparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@westitchenorparishcouncil.org.uk)

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