

Westbury Leigh Village Association Newsletter

Newsletter Number 2 – July 2007

WESTBURY LEIGH CAR PARK

The public car park in Westbury Leigh, with 42 spaces, has been an asset to the village for around forty years. The very restricted on-street parking, with the fact that most houses in the village do not have garages or off-street spaces, makes the car park vital.

In February 2006 West Wiltshire District Council announced plans to close the car park and build eight new houses there, as part of its Housing PFI (Private Finance Initiative) scheme. The scheme requires the Council to provide land for at least 200 houses from its existing estate, and as the Council does not possess enough appropriate land it has to use inappropriate sites such as village greens, allotments and car parks.

Alerted by Russell Hawker, a local Town and District Councillor, a group of Westbury Leigh residents immediately started to lobby the Council, speaking at Council meetings and quickly producing a report pointing out the importance of the car park to the village. Supported by Westbury Town Council and together with similar protests from groups in Melksham and Bradford on Avon, this lobbying persuaded the District Council to undertake full public consultation, which included a “drop in session” at Westbury Leigh Community Hall in August 2006.

Shortly before that session, the Council announced a revised plan to build five instead of eight houses on the site, leaving 17 spaces for public use. This was a victory for the residents, but lobbying continued as the entire

car park is regarded as essential for the village. Numerous items appeared in local newspapers, more representations were made at Council meetings, and there was a great deal of correspondence with the Council. The Council nonetheless continued with its plan, applying for planning permission in February 2007.

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About the Village Association

At the last meeting of the Village Association we set up a basic structure (meetings, newsletter, chair/ secretary/ treasurer). The purpose of all this is to enable YOU to have YOUR say. We want above all for the Association to be democratic, with only the minimum of red tape. Our meetings every six weeks are very important, and a chance, first and foremost, for you to meet your neighbours. There is the opportunity for you to share your interests and concerns. At every meeting there will be an agenda and you may well wish to suggest items for future occasions. A major item for discussion at the next meeting will be Traffic (which is a matter concerning many people). However, we hope that meetings will also be a place to talk about social events and special interests (Local history? Wildlife? Footpaths...). So remember that, if you live in Westbury Leigh, this is YOUR Association. Do please come along!

Nick Sherwood

Notice Board

Events

Next Meeting: 7:30pm at the Community Hall on Thursday 26th July

Harvest Supper: Saturday 6th October. For further details contact Eileen Dredge on 822469. Eileen is keen to hear from any talented entertainers in the village.

Contacts

Debs and Nick: Tel: 302226 Email: njsherwood@hotmail.co.uk

Ian and Sue: Tel: 822659 Email: ianandsusan.taylor@zen.co.uk

Community Hall Website - The Community Hall has its own website where you can see, amongst other things, a history of the Church and a history of the village too - why not visit www.westbury-leigh-community-hall.org.uk and take a peek.

Westbury Leigh Village Association Website - A very new website especially for Westbury Leigh. If you have a business based in Westbury Leigh why not add a free listing. If you are prepared to sponsor the printing of the newsletter then you can have an advert in the newsletter and your very own webpage to promote your business. If you have any ideas for the website please do not hesitate to let us know. www.westbury-leigh.co.uk

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Finally, in June 2007 the Council informed residents that “after taking into account car parking, amenity and street-scene issues, it would not currently be possible to provide a viable housing scheme on the developable area of the site”, and that the planning application had been withdrawn.

This episode involved a large number of Westbury Leigh residents and shows what can be achieved by determined local action. There can be no doubt that without the residents’ protests the car park would have been lost, greatly worsening the already difficult parking situation in the village.

John Graham-Leigh



Photo Provided by John Graham-Leigh

Future Traffic Problems?

I have noticed that the amount of traffic passing through Westbury Leigh is increasing. I have seen an increasing number of large lorries (well over 7.5ton) trundling by, and there also seems to be traffic later at night (1am, 2am), and also earlier in the morning (5am, 6am). If the traffic continues to increase, then it might well become a significant problem. There is also more noisy traffic (heavy goods, loud music, mopeds etc) which is I know, a sign of the times..... but I think that it would not be unreasonable to request some form of traffic calming/reduction methods in this street.

Many houses that front on to the street have no paving. The tarmac that was laid only three months ago is already showing substantial signs of wear and tear. The signpost for main routes actually directs the traffic through Leigh Park but I think this is often ignored for various reasons. The so-called main route through the development is not ideal because it has three roundabouts and a well-used traffic-light controlled pedestrian crossing. If I lived there I would not want that to be a main through route either. Persimmon should have built a proper through road without these obstacles and not fronted by housing, that skirts both Westbury Leigh and Leigh Park, but they have not; even though that would have gone a long way to truly enhancing the local environment, as that is not their priority. Westbury Leigh therefore remains the easy option for through traffic. The lorries are probably being guided by 'sat-navs'. When the development is completed at the south-western end of Westbury Leigh, it will surely increase the problem further.

So what, if anything, can we do? There are various traffic calming options, some of which present their own set of problems, (e.g. road bumps which cars clunk over) and would therefore be inappropriate. There are other possibilities, some more realistic than others: chicanes, one-way street, cul-de-sac, road narrowing.....any other ideas? *Debs*

Design a Logo Competition

We are running a competition to design an official ‘Village Association’ logo, which represents both the village, and its residents. Be as creative as you like; all we ask is that designs are submitted in a format no larger than an A4 piece of paper. All entries are to be received no later than the end of August and should be dropped off to any of the following addresses:

- *23 Westbury Leigh*
- *Phipps Manor, Westbury Leigh*
- *68 Westbury Leigh*

The winning entry will be decided at the September meeting, where all entries will be on display. As well as seeing your logo on all future newsletters and publications, you will receive a small prize too! This competition is open to everyone and we would love to see entries from the children of the village. Please include your name and address on the back of your entry.