

PARISH COUNCILLOR PROFILE: ROGER SHADE

When my daughter suggested I should become a parish councillor, frankly I wasn't too keen. But then I got involved in local 'politics' when some of us with gardens backing onto the Avenue were faced with the prospect of having to foot a bill for thousands of pounds for cutting down a number of trees. It all hinged around who actually owned the Avenue. My wife and I worked quite hard to find out, and although we didn't get a precise owner, we were able to prove that somebody did own it! Because of this Wyre Forest District agreed to remove the trees. After this I was persuaded to put myself forward for election to the Parish Council.



Unfortunately we still don't know who owns the Avenue, despite our continuing research. I would dearly like the PC to take over the Avenue as Wyre Forest will no longer be prepared to remove trees from it. On the council we don't have specific responsibilities. I believe this is unfortunate and will have to change

when Localism becomes a fact of life. You might not know this but Parish Councillors are the cheapest level of local government!

I have one wish for our villages and that is to divert the heavy traffic away from the A456 so it doesn't go through Blakedown. Nothing else could have such a beneficial effect.

Before I retired, I worked in international banking in both the City of London and Luxembourg. My last role was as a loss prevention investigator for Marks and Spencers.

I enjoy the theatre especially musicals, am involved in heritage research, and also help my wife with family history research.

MEETING DATES

Forthcoming Parish Council meetings are on 15th October, 19th November and 10th December at 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion. You are most welcome to attend.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about items for future issues, please contact the Parish Council Clerk on: 01905 830756 or email rogerdgurney@btinternet.com

NEW LOOK VILLAGE WEBSITE

Have you discovered our brand new village website yet? You'll find it at: churchillandblakedown.wordpress.com Village webmaster Gordon Stevens says: "People will notice it's entirely different, a clean, bright and modern website. New items appear down the left hand side so they're easy to find. Anyone can post a comment or give news of an event, subject to the webmaster's approval."

Oct
2014

CHURCHILL & BLAKEDOWN NEWS

Published by Churchill & Blakedown Parish Council

'BIN IT!' APPEAL MADE WITH LAUNCH OF IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

The Parish Council is appealing to villagers to make full and proper use of a collection of new litter bins which will be appearing gradually across the Parish.

Stylish bins will be placed in 29 locations and will be a vast improvement on what's currently available. In popular dog walking areas, such as the playing fields, Millennium Green and the Avenue as well as Churchill village there'll also be dispensers with free biodegradable dog bags. The improvements are possible because in July The Parish Council took over litter bin provision

and litter picking from Wyre Forest District Council.

Parish Councillor Jim Long explains, "Wyre Forest DC believes that parish



councils can deliver some services, such as litter picking and bin provision, more cost

effectively than they can, and they've given us a grant to do this for 12 months, plus a further grant to buy new bins.

"We think the economics of this are sound, especially as our village lengthsmen / handyman was already doing much of the litter picking anyway." All the new bins will accept both dog waste and litter, and Jim is keen to encourage everyone to take pride in their villages: "Dog waste is highly toxic and unsightly, and litter left around will make others think we don't care. So please back your Parish Council's initiative and use the bins."

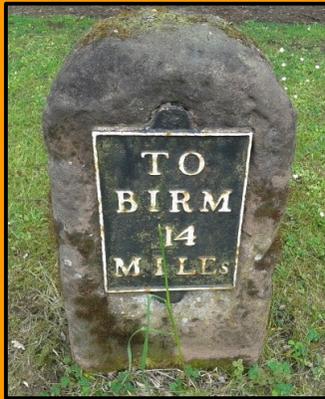
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TO RECEIVE EXPERT BOOST

The Parish Council is drafting in some expert help to formulate its Neighbourhood Plan and ensure it passes scrutiny within the legal framework.

The Council is applying for a grant from Locality, in order to engage Michael Wellock, an experienced consultant who has already helped Chaddesley Corbett PC move ahead with their Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan will play an important role in Churchill and Blakedown's future according to Parish Councillor Sue Fowler: 'You may remember our Parish Plan from a few years ago. The Neighbourhood Plan will

build on that, but it's going to have a lot more legal clout.



"We'll be consulting residents as we move forward developing the plan and eventually we will need to put the draft plan to the vote in a village referendum."

Work has already started with Parish Councillors

pulling together ideas around the main themes. These include Housing & Heritage, Business & Economy, Traffic & Transport, Environment & Community. In 2013 Churchill & Blakedown were designated as a 'Neighbourhood' under the 2011 Localism Act which aims to give communities more say in determining their future.

As Sue explains there's an urgent need to move quickly in developing the Plan: "There are plans to review the greenbelt policies within the next 18 months so we want to be sure that we've got a firm local policy in place by then."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Did you know that Gladstone Place, Blakedown's new housing development, owes its name to a piece of local horticultural history?

The development is built on the former site of Blakedown Nursery. Here, in 1868, the owner Mr Jackson

reintroduced an old English summer apple, dating back to the 1780s. To begin with,



he called it Jackson's Seedling, but in 1883 it was renamed Gladstone. News has reached the Parish Council that another Worcestershire nursery is cultivating a dwarf variety of the Gladstone apple and hopes to have specimens available soon.

GREAT NEWS FOR BUS USERS

Following discussions with the Parish Council, Whittles Coach and Bus have agreed to divert their flagship 192 service to cover parts of the former 197 route within Churchill and Blakedown. This route was axed by the County Council earlier this year. The diverted 192 service affects one journey a day in each direction. In the morning the 192 now diverts via Stakenbridge, Churchill (10.31) and Mill Lane Blakedown (10.35) on a 'hail and ride' basis, with no fixed bus stops. It then re-joins the A456 in Blakedown, arriving in Kidderminster at 10.50. From Kidderminster the return service leaves at 1.30pm. This diversion

now also gives a brand new Saturday service.

The other journeys of the 192 still go through Blakedown on the main road at 31 minutes past the hour into Kidderminster and get back at 44 minutes past the hour, six days a week, although passengers are advised to check the timetable. They arrive in Kidderminster in time to connect with the new Whittles Wyre Forest Link circular 2A/2C to Kidderminster Hospital and Bewdley. All journeys of the 192, including the diverted ones, now go via Kidderminster Station, and this route provides a direct connection to the growing 'civic' area on the Stourport Road which



includes Wyre Forest District Council's new offices and Community Housing's headquarters. The Parish Council is delighted at the cooperation received from Whittles in the recent County-wide timetable revisions and encourages all residents to consider using the 192 bus service through the villages

SIGNAL BOX FUNDING WORK CONTINUES

The Parish Council is looking to other sources of funding to rebuild Blakedown's iconic signal box after a second bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was unsuccessful due to stiff competition for limited funds.

A number of specialist funding bodies have already responded positively and the PC is working hard to ensure



In the meantime, could you provide covered storage for any of the dismantled structure? This would help avoid potential deterioration in case it takes longer than anticipated to obtain funding.

Parish Councillor Sue Fowler would love to hear from you on 01562 700798 or email: suefowler@btinternet.com

that full funding will be found to enable the signal box to be rebuilt for use as a community resource.