

# Wonersh Parish Council

Blackheath, Shamley Green and Wonersh

## Summer Newsletter 2026

### Introduction

We had an excellent turnout of some 80 people at The Parish Annual Assembly on 14th May, in the Memorial Hall, Wonersh. The slides are on the new Parish website [wonershparish.gov.uk](http://wonershparish.gov.uk) and were emailed to over 600 people via the Council mailing list and to more through our distribution partners - do [join the mailing list](#) if you haven't already, via the website.

We try to communicate via many channels (email list, website, Facebook, Church magazines, noticeboards, paper copies in the village shops, A-board outside the Wonersh Stores etc), but are very conscious it doesn't reach a significant number of residents. We are relooking at how to improve this!

Below are updates on what your Parish Councillors have been progressing across our three villages. As always, do feedback your thoughts.

Anthony Shutes, Chair

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### Council Tax Precept

The precept is our share of the Council Tax residents pay via Waverley Borough Council and it funds Council operations and services. We have increased our precept by 7.9% to £138,900 for 2026/27, up from £128,800 for 2025/26. This is equivalent to an extra £4.89 per annum for a Band D property, and remains close to the average across Waverley parishes. 5% of this increase represents inflation and the remaining balance includes:

- provision for IT kit to enable us to move to hybrid Council meetings, and so involve more of the community
- provision for costs associated with assets or services we are considering taking on as part of Local Government Reorganisation (see overleaf)

The majority of our precept is spent on staff, administration and contractors to manage and improve the 89 acres of commons, woodland and playgrounds in Shamley Green and Wonersh. Last year we made significant spends on making safe and repairing parts of St. John's Church, Wonersh closed burial ground walls, which the Council is responsible for, and for which the Church also made a significant contribution. We approved a one-off grant of £100,000 to the Arbuthnot Hall in June 2026 for their redevelopment project, to be paid in instalments across the project term as part of the signed grant agreement, and an update on the Arbuthnot Hall's progress on this project is below. The Council has taken out a Public Works Loan of £100,000 to fund this grant which sits alongside its existing loan for purchasing the Barnett Fields and Healy's Wood, the balance of which currently stands at £190,000.

More details of our 2025/26 spends and 2026/27 budget are in the Annual Assembly slides, which can be found on the website.

## Local Government Reorganisation

Our last newsletter contained details of the local government reorganisation taking place, with Surrey County Council and its associated borough councils, due to be replaced by two unitary authorities, East Surrey and West Surrey. Wonersh Parish will fall under West Surrey Council and our existing Waverley Borough Councillor, Jane Austin, alongside our existing Surrey County Councillor, Kevin Deanus, were recently elected to the West Surrey Shadow Authority. The Council enjoys working with both Jane and Kevin in their roles as Borough and County Councillors and are sure they will bring the same level of dedication to their shadow councillor roles.

The Shadow Authority is responsible for preparing for the transition to the new council to ensure Council services continue without disruption. Until 31 March 2027 services remain the responsibility of Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council, and existing councillors remain in their roles. On 1 April 2027, the old councils will be dissolved and the new West Surrey Council will officially take over, with shadow councillors automatically becoming full councillors.

While most of Surrey's and Waverley's responsibilities will be taken over by West Surrey, Wonersh Parish Council may have the opportunity to take on either assets or services that are currently within the Parish boundaries, subject to resources, competency and funding. This could include land we do not already lease and some emergency resilience (e.g. warm hubs and provisions in the event of power failure). We have recently set up a working party to explore options for taking on more land, which includes representatives of local community groups, and the results of this will be presented at upcoming Council meetings.

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## Annual Governance and Accountability Return

Wonersh Parish Council were pleased to have received a clear internal audit and have now submitted the unaudited accounts to the External Auditor. You can find out more information on our website, and during the period of public rights (22<sup>nd</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> July) you can arrange an appointment to view the 2025/26 accounts by contacting the Clerk at [clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk).

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## Blackheath Common Consultations



Waverley Borough Council are consulting on:

- Blackheath Common Management Plan 2014-2024 Revised Extension
- Blackheath Common Wildfire Management Plan 2026

Please scan the QR code to view the documents and submit your feedback online, or the direct link is: <https://bhcommon.commonplace.is/>

The deadline for comments is Monday 10th August 2026.

If you have any queries, please contact [parksandcountryside@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:parksandcountryside@waverley.gov.uk)

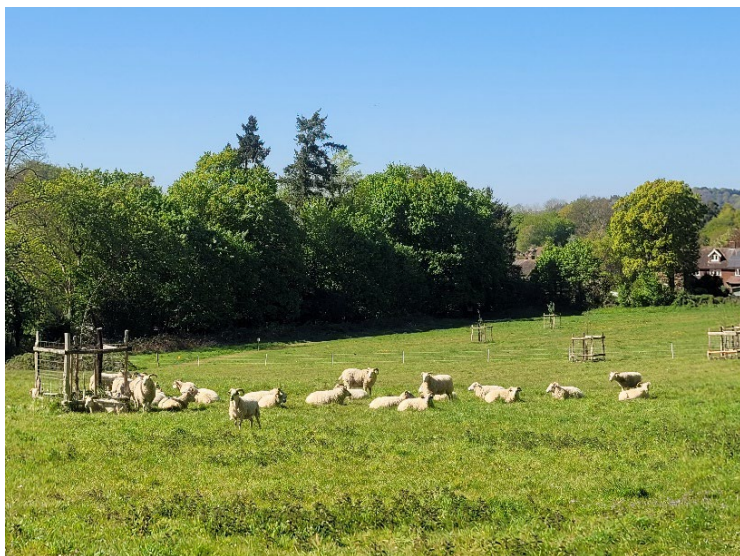
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## Football

In our last newsletter we asked for volunteers to step forward to lead on the formation of a junior football club for Wonersh Common, and we were delighted to find a willing candidate who has been hard at work getting permissions, governance and administration processes in place. He was originally planning for sessions to start before the summer but unfortunately this has been delayed to September due to the timescales involved in receiving Football Association accreditation. Sessions will initially be for the under-6 age group, so if you have a little one who is inspired by the World Cup this summer, please email [wonershfc@gmail.com](mailto:wonershfc@gmail.com) for more information.

## Wonersh Environmental Advisory Group (WEAG) & Barnett Fields Group (BFG)

WEAG and the subset volunteer team of BFG has continued to be very busy. The main woodland activity over the winter was coppicing chestnut and constructing dead hedge deer protection. This will allow light to start penetrating the woodland floor and hopefully allow plants to prosper and improve wildlife habitat. Around the fields we have installed new access gates, using donations for the gates with posts harvested from Healy's Wood. Sixteen trees and associated deer protection have been planted in the fields and two trees on the common, again all funded by grants and donations.



The 27 Surrey Wildlife Trust wether sheep were successfully grazed in the upper Barnett Field for a few weeks, and we are pleased to see that young ragwort has been eaten. In previous years, the ragwort was pulled by hand by volunteer groups which is extremely hard work, especially when the weather is hot and the ground hard. We think the sheep enjoyed their ragwort removal much more than our volunteers did! Water troughs and temporary fencing to keep the sheep safe and contained were added by BFG. Thank you to all the dog walkers who have kept their dogs on leads, and we hope the inconvenience of diverting the paths is minimal for the brief period the sheep were in the fields.

It's also been lovely to see how popular the sheep have been with some of our residents. The sheep were moved in late May to adjacent private fields and the Council will now review lessons learned at the July Council meeting with the current plan for the sheep to return in the autumn to reprise their roles.

A wildlife pond is currently under construction in Healy's Wood and a detailed proposal for an orchard in the lower Barnett field is being prepared by volunteers for consideration by Council at the July Council meeting.

Elsewhere, WEAG have installed new fencing at the entrance to Gerald's Wood (again using posts from Healy's Wood). We have also carried out works to the ground at the entrance, to reduce the impact of the nearby spring. Do use the footpath up into Gerald's Wood which now extends downhill below the private vineyard and exits further up Chinthurst Lane.



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## Shamley Green Village Hall Update

Very good news on the Shamley Green Village Hall Redevelopment. The project has been declared fully funded and the redevelopment work is expected to start in July and take about a year. The Parish Council and Hall Trustees have concluded the grant agreement for £100,000 towards the project. While the Hall is closed some of its activities will continue at different sites. Full details of the project can be found on the Hall website ([www.arbuthnohall.org](http://www.arbuthnohall.org)) where progress reports on the building work will also be posted

## Wonersh Works

We are pleased to have completed the renovation of the BT phone box outside the Wonersh Village shop (thanks to Thrower Signs in Bramley and WonCares for funding the fit out) and it is now open as a book exchange.

We have also installed a new double waste bin outside the Wonersh village shop which will hopefully now not overflow during busy weekend use. We have positioned the old waste bin outside Lawnsmead Hall, by the footpath leading on to the Sports Field. Our routine maintenance contractor has also been busy re-oiling and repairing the commons benches ready for residents to enjoy in the summer.



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## Playgrounds

It's lovely to see families enjoying both our playgrounds with their new equipment. In Wonersh, we are about to install a new bench, funded by donations. This will replace the former 'Wonersh Parish Council' bench in the centre of the playground which was starting to rot. We have also re-seeded under the trees where the ground was getting bare, topped up the bark around the play areas, and our routine maintenance contractor has been busy repainting the table tennis tables. This has to be done in stages, as the paint requires at least two days drying time in between coats, so please respect the taped off area whilst this work is carried out.

In Shamley Green, we are working towards fundraising for a final piece of equipment to replace the removed play tower. Scan the QR code on the right or get in touch with the Clerk via [clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk) if you would like to contribute towards this. Any donations are greatly appreciated.



## Speedwatch

Speedwatch in Wonersh has been out and about over the last few weeks as the weather gets better. Speeding is a key issue in the village and Speedwatch is both an enforcement scheme and an education scheme. We urgently need more people to volunteer to help. Commitment is only one hour a month and full training is given. We were recently joined by our local traffic officer who pulled over a speeding car at 40mph, for which they were ticketed.

Speedwatch in Shamley Green needs a new co-ordinator after the unexpected and sad death of Simon Tomkins.

If anyone in either village would like to know more, please contact the Parish Clerk on [clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk).

## Shamley Green 'Duck' Sign

The sign on the Green is back in situ and we hope residents are as happy as we are with the care and attention paid to the restoration by our contractor. It is nice to have it back in place for the cricket season. As anyone familiar with the sign will know, it features a duck in front of a wicket, and a silhouette of the sign is used by Shamley Green Cricket Club as their logo. We are grateful to Cllr Kevin Deanus for funding this restoration through his 'Your Councillor Community Fund'.

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## Shamley Green Duck Pond

Talking of ducks, we thought we would give you an update on our progress with the Shamley Green Duck Pond. But first, meet our pond contractor David Smithers. He is contracted by Wonersh Parish Council to advise us on how best to maintain our historic, Victorian clay lined pond, known as the Duck Pond. He is also contracted to manage our more wildlife friendly deep pond near the Bricklayers Pub.

Managing a pond is quite complicated and in Shamley Green there are a lot of people to consult with. First, there is Waverley Borough Council, who own the land (which the Parish Council manage on their behalf under a lease agreement). We also have to consider the timing of works and whether they require licences from Natural England. Works usually need to be carried out in the winter months when our ducks and moor hens are not nesting and when the toads and frogs are not breeding. Finally, we have various interest groups in the area that have an interest

in our ponds, including Surrey Wildlife Trust, Shamley Green Environment Group (SGEG), Surrey Amphibian Group, near neighbours and of course the lovely ladies that manage the duck feeding rota.

David is very patient with us all while we take his advice and then consult with the wider stakeholder groups on the best way to manage our ponds. There is always a variety of options and opinions, and this is democratically debated at Parish Council meetings. The Parish Council then needs to find the funds to do any of this work. We do now have an annual maintenance budget, so that David can plan annual jobs in rotation. He now removes about a third of the reeds from the Brickies pond each winter, leaving the rest for overwintering invertebrates and other wildlife. This is a far better way to manage ponds to increase biodiversity, rather than to leave alone for years and then blitz in one go - which can be very challenging for the wildlife. Since the Parish Council took over the management of the pond, we have been able to draw up a long-term strategy working with our engaged, knowledgeable local contractor, who has got to know our ponds well.

This year our Duck Pond sprung a leak in the spillway and David has done several visits to do temporary fixes whilst we liaised with stakeholders. We are delighted to say that we have secured the funds and the permissions to complete the works this summer, when the weather and pond levels allow works to take place. The plan is to create a new spill way, just in front of the current one. It will be slightly higher, which will give the pond slightly more capacity and help it during dry spells (which are becoming more frequent with climate change). With the assistance of members of SGEG, who have worked with David to create a temporary addition to the spillway last year, we have been able to assess the positive impact of a higher spillway.

Do keep an eye on our parish council agendas for further plans. Alternative ideas and debate are welcomed and SGEG are always on the lookout for new recruits. Please contact our Clerk for further details at [clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk).

## Thames Water

We know that residents are increasingly frustrated by the disruption which occurs when Thames Water undertake both emergency repairs and planned works. This is not simply a minor inconvenience to our lives; with bus route diversions impacting on attendance at hospital appointments and whole school closures throwing working days and education into disarray.

We appreciate that emergencies do occur and work needs to happen but this needs to be better communicated and suitable diversions signposted.

Most recently we have seen a closure of the main route from Wonersh through to Chilworth / Albury with no notice or any communication as to what was happening. The diversion route signposted was down single-track country lanes which are unable to accommodate A or even B-road volumes and types of traffic. This is not the first time this has happened, with the same issues occurring in Norley Lane and Northcote Lane, when the main road through Shamley Green and Wonersh is closed. The result is severe damage and destruction of verges and roads, with police resources required to resolve blockages.

We have spoken with our Borough & County Councillors who support us on the need for improved communications from utility companies and suitable diversions. We are also working with our local school, Wonersh & Shamley Green Primary, to try and prevent further emergency school closures. As part of this, we are writing to Thames Water and our local MP, Jeremy Hunt, to make clear our frustrations and request once again that Thames Water address our complaints.

Ultimately, we know that it will take legislation at a national level to properly hold utility companies such as Thames Water to account, but change will not happen unless we consistently apply pressure.

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## Upcoming Meetings

Our full Council meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month, at the Wonersh Sports Pavilion, although next month we are breaking with routine and will meet on **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2026**. There are no meetings in August or December.

Our Planning Committee meetings are held on a rolling 3 weekly basis, with the next Planning meeting being on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2026, followed by further meetings on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2026 and 27<sup>th</sup> August 2026.

Residents are invited to attend to speak in the open session at the beginning of each meeting and full details of all our meetings can be found on our website: <https://wonershparish.gov.uk>.

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## Keeping In Touch

If you've enjoyed reading about what has been keeping your Council and Councillors busy the last few months, or want to receive the latest Parish news, events and consultations, then please do join our [email mailing list](#) for more regular updates. You can find the link on our website under "Popular links" at the bottom of every page, or to the right on our "Contact Us" page.

Our next newsletter is scheduled for winter 2026, so we hope you enjoy everything the Parish has to offer over the summer and autumn months. In the meantime if you have any queries or concerns, please contact the Clerk at [clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wonershparish.gov.uk) or come to one of our Council meetings.