

## **Chairman's Annual Report for the 2012/13 Council year.**

Little Chalfont Parish Council is now half way through the second 4-year term since it was established in 2007. The past year has again proved to be a busy one. In addition to normal business, the Council has spent some considerable time organising a parking survey and reviewing the results. Parking issues are a major source of concern among local people and a feasibility study will soon be undertaken to help decide on practical solutions to some of the problems. We would not wish to raise expectations too much, as the Parish Council has no authority in this area and can only press the County Council to add and alter parking restrictions as felt appropriate, but we feel certain that some improvements can be made.

More work has been done in Westwood Park. The MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) has now been completed to offer a full basketball or 5-a-side football pitch. Grants from the Local Area Forum have covered much of the cost of this. A further grant from the LAF will now enable a soft surface to be installed. The tennis courts have been re-surfaced and a planting scheme for the flower beds in the play area is under way. Flooding at the Chessfield Park pedestrian entrance has been a serious problem; an attempt to improve this was not successful so more major work will soon be commissioned. The play area, installed two years ago, continues to be well used and much appreciated. Football and cricket ensure the park is very busy at weekends throughout the year and the Westwood Park working party is looking at ways to encourage more use during the week. The lack of toilets is a concern but the very high cost of providing and servicing them is currently considered to be prohibitive. However, the local 'Churches Together' experimented with opening the pavilion on some days in school holidays, offering light refreshments, and this has allowed the internal toilets to be made available. It is hoped this service will be available on weekdays for much of the summer school holiday.

The Council's Planning Committee meets every three weeks and discusses all planning applications within the village and occasionally ones outside which may have impact on Little Chalfont. The expected application for the Donkey Field, in Burtons Lane, was discussed and the Committee decided to object but the application was withdrawn. A further application is expected soon. A new application, to develop the old car-park and garages site on the eastern corner of Chenies Parade and provide a commercial unit on the ground floor with eight flats above, has just been received. At the time of writing, the Committee has not discussed this but is likely to be again concerned at the additional parking problems that this development will produce.

The Community Library is recognised as a great asset for the village and the Parish Council makes a significant financial contribution towards the running costs. Other donations have been made to a small number of applicants including Dial-a-Ride and the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Council has again paid for several of the hanging baskets in the village centre and arranges for some of the Christmas lights to be installed. We are grateful to the Community Association for organising the hanging baskets and for its share of responsibility for Christmas lights. Additionally, we thank the Association for arranging the delivery, to local homes and businesses, of the Council's newsletter which is published twice each year.

The Parish Clerk is a member of the working party, set up by Little Chalfont Charitable Trust, which is planning a potential design for the proposed nature park; this is the land to the south of the approach road to Dr. Challoner's High School, purchased by public subscription. When work on the park is completed, the Council will take on responsibility for future maintenance, so it is essential that we are happy with the final design.

During the past year, the idea of a new community centre has been publicised. As the community library is also in need of additional space, a working party was set up with representatives of the Parish Council, the Community Library and the Community Association. Various options have been considered including incorporating the library in to the new proposed building. Local people were invited to a series of presentations on the thinking behind such a scheme and this was followed by a distribution of a leaflet giving brief details and a request that people indicate if they would support the principle of a new building. With over 650 replies and only a handful voting against, the Council believes it has a mandate to go to the next stage. During the next few months, an architect will be selected to submit ideas for the building; the community will then have a further opportunity to comment before final plans are drawn.

During the year we lost two Parish Councillors due to the resignation of Michael Dear and the death of Sheila Keighley. Sheila had been a member of the Council for only a few months but had made a valuable contribution to our work and will be greatly missed. On a positive note, we were delighted that Janet Walford OBE put herself up for co-option and joined the Council in March. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all my colleagues for their support and hard work. John Hinkly has been very supportive as Vice-Chairman and Michael Parker has done an excellent job as Chairman of the Planning Committee. David Rafferty (Vice-Chairman, Planning Committee), Lesley Hunt and Vinny Patel have all been valuable members of the team throughout the year. Finally, my sincere thanks to our Parish Clerk, Janet Mason and the Assistant Clerk, Karen Sterling. Their devotion to the job ensures the work of the Council runs smoothly and efficiently.

*Brian Drew*

*May 2013*