

Annual Report for the 2015/16 Council Year

Little Chalfont Parish Council is at full strength with nine councillors, three of whom are co-opted. Council meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month and planning committee meetings are held every three weeks. All councillors are members of the planning committee.

The parish clerk and responsible finance officer is Natasha Meldrum who has now completed her first year in the role, having previously been our assistant clerk. Sallie Matthews joined us towards the end of last year as assistant clerk.

The work of the council is very varied but, during the past year, the following items have been at the forefront of our activities.

Devolution of Services – we have taken over, from Bucks CC, responsibility for cutting all grass verges in the village and certain other activities such as weed-killing. Our contractors last year were Spruced-Up, who did an excellent job but, for financial reasons, the contract has now been awarded to Amersham Town Council who continue to maintain the playing fields in Westwood Park. Another contractor, First Grounds Maintenance, looks after other areas of the village including the village green, the Finch Lane area and the entrance to Westwood Park.

Parking – three years after we conducted a feasibility study to seek ways to restrict parking in certain areas of the village, we are now close to the implementation of a scheme that will see a number of additional yellow lines in a few residential roads and especially close to road junctions. There has already been a great deal of consultation to ensure, wherever possible, the views of the majority prevail and there will be one further formal consultation before the work is carried out. A separate, but welcome, action has been the installation of double yellow lines along Burtons Lane, the cost of this having been paid by the developers of the old Donkey Field.

Speeding – our MVAS (moveable vehicle activated sign) has been sited in several different locations and gives excellent feedback on speeds of vehicles passing it. Some of this information is passed to the police who then decide if the problem is sufficient for them to take action. We are grateful to a small group of volunteers who man the ‘speedwatch’ equipment which can be set up for short periods of time. Unlike the MVAS, speedwatch allows the registration numbers of speeding vehicles to be taken and passed to the police who may issue notices to offenders.

District Council’s Local Plan – a total of about 400 people attended three meetings in the village hall concerning the emerging local plan with the potential threat to the green belt that surrounds our village. Two members of the parish council are members of the co-ordination group, along with representatives of the Community Association and other interested residents. This group has spent a great deal of time in preparing and issuing responses to the consultation.

Nightingales Corner – following the awarding of a grant from the Bucks CC Local Area Forum, improvements have been made to this area. New bollards have been installed, the bush at

the Burtons Lane end has been removed and a village sign has been erected. It is hoped that planters and cycle racks will be added soon.

During the past year, the Council has awarded several grants to local organisations including the community library, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Dial-a Ride.

For the second year, the war memorial was the focus of a Remembrance Sunday service conducted by local clergy and accompanied by the Chalfonts wind Band. The uniformed organisations paraded from the Methodist Church to the village green to join a large number of people for the service and the laying of wreaths.

The Parish Council also helped to organise the Clean for the Queen initiative which took place at the beginning of March. Thank you for all of the volunteers who took part in this exercise including the Scouts, the Brownies, some schools, the WI and Westwood Park Football Club. Several individuals also joined in and everyone's efforts have produced a lovely clean village to be proud of. The Parish Council would also like to thank the members of the WI who work tirelessly on the village triangle, making it a lovely focal point in the village.

Westwood Park continues to be well used. During the winter, weekend football is the main activity with cricket being played in the summer. The tennis courts and the games area are much appreciated. The children's play area is a popular destination for youngsters from a wide area.

The council has recently agreed to purchase three items of equipment that will form a trim trail. These should be installed in the next couple of months.

The proposed community centre, to replace our village hall, is still work in progress but we hope that a planning application will be made before the end of the year.

We are delighted that the Nature Park will be open soon. The council is about to sign a lease to take on responsibility for maintenance of the park. A number of people have worked very hard to get the park to a position in which it can be opened and our thanks go to them all.

Our newsletter, published twice a year and edited by one of our councillors, is distributed throughout the village but a copy of the latest edition can be obtained from the Parish Council office or downloaded from our website www.littlechalfont.gov.uk

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