

LITTLE CHALFONT PARISH COUNCIL

Newsletter – Spring 2016



Emerging local plan

Strong local opposition to green belt development

Three public meetings were held in the village hall in February to help local people better understand the implications of the emerging local plan. This plan is in preparation jointly by Chiltern District and South Bucks District Councils.

The consultation document identified several sites in and adjacent to Little Chalfont to be tested as 'options' for release from the green belt. This news created strong concern and a wave of action in the community.

The LCCA is aware of over 550 responses from Little Chalfont opposing release of green belt land and further urbanisation, with the final number of responses received by Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils having topped 6,000 for all areas.

The coordination group set up to advise the parish council and the



Standing room only at the meetings in our small village hall to discuss the emerging local plan

LCCA on the plan prepared a comprehensive response, which has been submitted jointly by the two bodies.

The response took account of views expressed at the public meetings and in the opinion survey that we held last spring. It put the case against releasing any of the five local green belt sites mentioned in the consultation document.

It recalled that Little Chalfont's

infrastructure is already under great pressure: the village has recently taken more than its share of new housing, and further urbanisation would damage the character of the village.

The response gave notice that further comments would be submitted after the deadline because the district councils had published important new information very close to the end of the consultation period.

This new information included arguments to support the case that two land parcels, one of which includes the field at Stony Lane and the other the former golf club, could be considered for release from the green belt.

The addendum to our response rebutted these arguments. Our initial response and addendum are now available on the parish council and LCCA websites. The coordination group will continue to monitor the situation as the district councils select their 'preferred options' in a further consultation document due for publication this autumn.

● Shortly before this newsletter went to press, an outline planning application (CH/2016/0672/OA) for up to 201 houses to be built on the field behind Chessfield Park, with access from Stony Lane, was lodged with the district council. ■

You are invited to attend the

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2016

In the village hall on Wednesday 25 May at 7.30 pm

(A glass of wine or soft drink will be available from 7 pm)

+++++

Guest speakers:

Matthew Bailes, Paradigm Housing Group

Marc Lister, First responders ambulance service

PLUS: A presentation on the work of the parish council

+++++

There will also be an opportunity to meet your parish councillors, ask questions and make suggestions for future projects

From the chairman

It is with some excitement, but mainly trepidation, that I have taken on the role of chairman of the Little Chalfont Parish Council.

I would like to say a huge thank you to Brian Drew for over six tireless years of dedication to the role. He has led the council to achieve many things in that time, and I am glad that he will remain as a parish councillor so that his invaluable experience will not be lost to the village.

It is the changes that I could see in the village, following the inauguration of our own parish council, which made me want to get involved.

I intend to fulfil the projects already started and continue to support and try to improve the amenities in the village.

I am very much looking forward to the imminent opening of the Little Chalfont Nature Park, having been an active member of the working group.

The project shows just what can be achieved if people put their minds to it and with continued pressure on finances it may be that, if we want things done, we might have to do them ourselves.

The parish council faces many challenges in the coming years, not least of which is the potential threat to our green belt with the ever greater need for housing in south east England.

The other major project, which has been in the planning process for several years, is the new village hall.

Our current village hall is too small for our growing community. This was clearly evidenced by the fact that there was standing room only for the three meetings that were held in February to discuss the emerging local plan. Many people who would like to have attended had to be turned away.

Clearly this is something that must be tackled in the near future.

I look forward to receiving ideas from anyone for ways in which to enhance our village, and hope that I do justice to the role.

Gill Roberts

New chairman for parish council Brian Drew steps down after 6 years

After six years as chairman of Little Chalfont Parish Council, Brian Drew has decided to step down from the role. He will, however, remain a parish councillor, so his invaluable experience will not be lost.

Brian has played an active role in village life for several years. He was chairman of the Little Chalfont Revitalisation Group, one of the founders of village day, and helped to organise this event for the first six years, 2004–2009.

Along with others, he successfully campaigned for a separate Little Chalfont Parish Council, and subsequently served on this since it was founded in May 2007. He was appointed vice chairman in 2008, and chairman in September 2009, after the previous incumbent, Francis

Wilkinson, had moved away from the village. During his time as council chairman Brian has achieved many things for the village.

His notable achievements while in office include helping to design and secure funding for the highly popular children's play area in Westwood Park; the installation of the war memorial alongside the village green in 2014; promotion of the idea for a new community centre for the village; and being a supporter of the creation of the nature park.

Following Brian's announcement, a new chairman was duly elected at the parish council meeting on 11 May, and we are delighted to announce that Councillor Gill Roberts has taken on this demanding role. We wish her every success for the future. ■

Nightingales Corner

Work has started

The much heralded improvements for Nightingales Corner (pictured right) are, at last, under way.

New bollards have been fitted around the area, some old ones have been repainted, and the new village sign has now been erected.



Furthermore the large bush at the entrance to Burtons Lane has been removed.

A grant from the Local Area Forum has helped with this project.

New planters will shortly be in position and we are grateful to 'Flower Boutique' for agreeing to supply the plants, which will help to make this area much more attractive. ■

Local pharmacies under threat

Funding cutbacks will hit chemists

As part of its austerity measures, the government proposes to reduce the funding offered to the retail pharmacy network by 6% across England. This equates to around £15,000 per pharmacy and is to be enacted in September 2016 without consultation.

Without doubt, this would force the closure of some pharmacies (possibly up to 3,000 across England) and will reduce the services that all pharmacies can offer. Staff will be the most likely casualties in the first instance.

While accepting that the government is trying to balance the books, Ian Edgar, the pharmacist at Little Chalfont pharmacy, strongly

objects to this short sighted solution. "The government cannot, on one hand, say that patients should use pharmacies more often to take the pressure off GPs and A&E departments, and then get rid of pharmacies by removing essential funding required to run our businesses", he said.

Ian is hopeful that his pharmacy would survive, but obviously the removal of such a large sum of money would reduce its ability to serve customers in some way. He set up a petition against the cuts, which was signed locally by 380 people. Nationwide the campaign against the cuts to pharmacy funding attracted 500,000 signatures. ■

75mph recorded on Cokes Lane

90% of drivers ignore speed limits

The MVAS (movable vehicle activation sign), which records speeds of approaching drivers, has proved that speeding in parts of the village is still a serious problem.

The MVAS can be moved between locations where speeding is known to be a particular problem. This has certainly proved to be the case in Cokes Lane; the speed limit is 30mph, but there are straight stretches of the road where too many drivers pay no heed whatsoever to the limit.

The MVAS was positioned in Cokes Lane in autumn 2015. We took a sample from the data for an average week in October to analyse the speed of vehicles along that lane. During that sample week, 32,000 vehicles were recorded leaving the village.

Of these, only 3,600 drivers (just over 11%) were recorded at under 30mph, which meant that the great majority of drivers leaving the village during that sample week paid no heed whatsoever to the MVAS warning to slow down. One vehicle was even recorded speeding at over 75mph at 9pm!

In November 2015 the MVAS was moved, to measure speeds of motorists coming into the village.

28,500 vehicles came into the village during the sample week. Of these, only 5,900 drivers (just over

20%) were recorded at under 30mph, which meant that a large proportion of all drivers recorded during the sample simply ignored the speed limit. One driver was recorded speeding at over 70mph at 10.30pm.

In January 2016 the MVAS was moved to **Burtons Lane** specifically to record traffic speeds before and after the new double yellow lines were put down on 27 January. Although the yellow lines resolved parking problems, general speeds increased slightly.

We took data from an average week in January, before the yellow lines were painted. 9,500 vehicles were recorded leaving the village.

Of these, 4,500 (47%) were recorded at speeds below the limit, with 16% of drivers travelling at speeds at least 5mph above the speed limit.

After the yellow lines were installed, we took a sample week at the end of February. The traffic had increased to 10,100 vehicles during the sample week.

Only 3,600 (35%) were recorded at speeds below the limit, with 30% of all vehicles travelling at 35mph or more.

The current location for the MVAS is opposite Long Walk, and we will report on findings for that in the next newsletter. ■

Parking update

Some progress made

The project of reviewing and implementing revised waiting restrictions in the village is still in progress, but we are making headway.

Not long after it started, this long drawn-out project was split into two parts:

- new waiting restrictions in Burtons Lane and double yellow lines from the A404 to just beyond Birkett Way, were successfully introduced at the end of January. This timing was dictated by the development of the Donkey Field, now obscurely called Harvard Grange. The Harvard Grange developers funded the associated costs.

- new waiting restrictions throughout much of the rest of the village.

Progress, albeit frustratingly slow, has been made. Proposals were initially

made by Transport for Bucks (TfB), largely consistent with the parish council's recommendations. These in turn were based on the parish council's parking survey in the summer of 2012.

Some proposals were modified to reflect the responses to TfB's informal consultations with our residents in 2015, and a very localised consultation this March in relation to an additional restriction proposed for the lay-by adjacent to the shops in Elizabeth Avenue.

The next step, the formal consultation, required by statute, on all the proposed changes, is expected shortly.

The parish council has already made its contribution towards the associated costs and has been assured by TfB that the resulting, finally agreed, waiting restrictions would be implemented before the end of this year, hopefully in either November or December. ■

Briefly...

Defibrillator

The parish council is seeking funding for a defibrillator, which would be sited outside the village hall. This would be of the type that allows anyone to access it after they have obtained a code, by mobile phone.

Once opened, the machine gives audible instructions to ensure correct use. Although no special knowledge is required, it is hoped to offer training courses for people who would like to be able to use it with total confidence.

Help wanted

Little Chalfont Parish Council is looking for someone who can help with running the village hall. This is a paid, part time, position, averaging 2-3 hours per week, which could be shared by two people.

The main duties are checking the hall and ensuring that it is tidy after some bookings, several of which are at weekends, and being on call in case of emergencies/problems.

For more information, please contact the parish clerk.

Free parking at Snells Wood

We are pleased to be able to continue the one hour free parking scheme for another year.

Chiltern District Council has reviewed the formula for charging parish councils, resulting in a small reduction for Little Chalfont.

The concession, which is much appreciated by local shoppers, will therefore continue until at least March 2017.

Congratulations to HM The Queen

We would like to extend our congratulations to HM The Queen, on the celebration of her 90th birthday.

July tea party

To raise funds, the Little Chalfont Community Library is holding a tea party, serving cream teas and cakes from 2-5pm on Saturday 16 July 2016.

There will also be various events for children to enjoy, so make a date to come along and support the invaluable work of your local library.

Tickets, or further information, from Christine Crease on 01494 764080.

Precept reduced Small council tax cut

The parish council is funded through a small amount of the local council tax, called the precept. Little Chalfont residents may have noticed a small, but hopefully welcome, reduction in the amount of council tax payable to the parish council, compared to an increase in all other elements such as county and district councils.

This cut is due to savings that the parish council has been able to make in some areas of expenditure, resulting in a precept decrease of about £2,000.

It is likely that in 2017 there will be a need to increase the precept, and therefore the council tax element, owing to anticipated additional expenditure in certain areas.

Keeping the grass cut

Residents may recall that, last year, Little Chalfont Parish Council took over responsibility for grass cutting etc, which had previously been the responsibility of Bucks County Council. The scheme has worked well but, for financial reasons, we have changed our contractor.

From 1 April, Amersham Town Council took on this responsibility. ATC is already maintaining the sports

grounds in Westwood Park but you will now see their operatives around the village. As with any new contract, there could be a few teething problems so, if you notice any area of grass that has not been cut, please contact Little Chalfont Parish Council office (Tel 01494 766655).

Residents who have hedges and shrubs that border footways or roads are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that no overhanging vegetation causes a nuisance to pedestrians or vehicles.

Last year, some residents were politely asked to cut back their vegetation and we are grateful that most responded positively and quickly. ■

Clean for the Queen Week leading up to 5 March

Little Chalfont entered into the spirit of Clean for the Queen and the parish council would like to say an enormous thank you to all those who took part. For those missing a shoe, a boot or assorted underwear, sorry it's still in the bin! Little Chalfont must be the party destination du jour if all the bottles and cans that were collected are anything to go by.

The scouts did a fine job Wednesday evening, followed by the schools and WI, who had the best weather on Friday. Westwood Park Football club braved the cold Saturday morning but the brownies had to contend with snow in the afternoon.

One of the groups of volunteers for 'Clean for the Queen' with some of rubbish sacks they filled!



Several individuals joined in and everyone's efforts produced a lovely clean village to be proud of. Thank you everyone.

This year was a low key event but, with the support shown and the results achieved, we are thinking of holding another event next year with, hopefully, far more people involved.

It was a pleasure discovering just how many people already voluntarily tidy up their environment. If everyone just looks after the area outside their house or business it would make a

huge difference, so please, look out for our village and help keep it the beautiful place it is to live.

If anyone would like to take the lead with a litter pickers group, or to organise an event next year, please contact the parish clerk on 01494 766655. ■

The following is the first of what we hope to be a series of articles about groups that regularly use the village hall.

Grand Union Canal

The Grand Union Canal, the first real motorway between London and Birmingham, was constructed in the 19th century to transport cargo by narrow boat.

But, after WWII, the use of the canal network for transporting freight in England was largely abandoned. However, the potential for leisure use and the importance of its environmental contribution was yet to be realised. As a consequence, the network was in serious decline.

Had it not been for Robert Aickman and Tom Rolt, who founded the inland Waterways Association (IWA) in 1946 and the subsequent campaign by the Association, the canal and river network of some



Enjoying a day out on the canals at Marsworth Lock

3,600+ miles could have been lost.

Although now in the safe hands of the Canal & River Trust, the battle is not over. There is much to do to safeguard the canals for future generations and there are opportunities to get involved on any level that suits you.

There are, in fact, some amazing free-to-access leisure facilities available, for walkers, joggers, cyclists, fishermen, canoeists, boaters, nature lovers, those interested in historical architecture and

many more. Whatever your age, these opportunities are there for you to use. If you'd like to find out more, the IWA Chiltern branch is the nearest to you.

It meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month from September to April at 8pm, currently at Little Chalfont Village Hall, for interesting talks on diverse waterways related topics.

Refreshments are provided. Visitors are always warmly welcomed. In addition to these meetings, the Chiltern branch is out and about at various festivals including the Rickmansworth Festival and at other volunteering opportunities, so look out for us!

To read more about the IWA Chiltern branch, please go to www.waterways.org.uk/chiltern/chiltern ■

Stony Lane

Footpath extension

A number of residents walk up Stony Lane from Amersham Road to the footpath that connects with Chessfield Park. From there, it is a short walk to another footpath into Westwood Park.

However, Stony Lane is narrow and has no proper footway, forcing pedestrians to walk in the road. This



Stony Lane, arrow shows the entrance to the footpath to Chessfield Park

can be dangerous as the road is a busy cut through from the A404 to the Latimer Road.

We are therefore pleased to announce that the parish council has successfully bid for Local Area Forum funding to allow the footway from Amersham Road to continue up Stony Lane as far as the footpath.

The parish council is contributing to this project, which should be completed in the current financial year. ■

Updates from Little Chalfont Community Association

LCCA website: www.littlechalfont.org.uk

Waste transfer station....no change

In the LCCA's newsletter in January, we reported that Bucks County Council (BCC) had not yet issued the planning approval notice and this remained the case as this update was prepared.

There is no information being supplied by BCC regarding its intentions. However, despite the many reasons why the project to build the waste transfer station (WTS) should not go ahead, we continue to work on the assumption that BCC remains intent, at present, to proceed.

Those following this matter closely will be aware of the valid objections and, in particular, the evidence produced that shows that the WTS is not needed. With recycling percentages still rising, and the amount of residual and commercial waste reducing, there is even less of a case for proceeding as time goes by.

The LCCA is aware that the protest group against the WTS has taken legal advice and that its solicitors sent a letter to BCC in February this year, making the case for the original planning application to be reconsidered and the approval overturned.

No formal reply has been received and indications are that it will not be

acted upon. The letter can be read by going to the following link: <http://www.no-amersham-wts.org/documents/>

Chenies Parade derelict land

This development of ground floor commercial units, with eight apartments on two floors above, is going ahead, but no start date is known as this update went to press.

The developers have first to comply with certain preconditions before a planning approval notice is issued and, thereafter, to satisfy other conditions in advance of starting on site.

The most important of these conditions to the community is the construction management plan, which needs to demonstrate how the disruption to the community, and Chenies Parade in particular, will be kept to an absolute minimum.

Chiltern District Council has recommended that the developers meet the parish council prior to submitting the plan.

In liaison with the parish council, the LCCA remains committed to holding a meeting with the developers, at which the shopkeepers and others will be able to have their views and requirements taken into account.

A further update will be included in the LCCA's newsletter in July and in the interim on its website.

Nature park

The team has been working hard since the start of the year and in anticipation of being able to open, the access road, fencing and gate (pictured right) have recently been completed.

Once an opening date has been decided, details will be made available on the Nature Park website: <http://naturepark.littlechalfont.org.uk>

There are still opportunities available



for sponsorship towards some of the key features to be installed in time for the opening. Should you feel able to help with these items, please contact Mandy Rooke at naturepark@littlechalfont.org.uk

Village day

The LCCA is busy organising this year's Village Day, which will be held on **Saturday 18 June**.

The day will commence with a fun run in support of local charities in Westwood Park. Registrations are from 8.30-9.45am on the day, with the run starting at 10am.

From 12 noon until 4pm, stalls and entertainments will be provided around the village, including displays on the green and the ever-popular dog show judged by Pets at No1.

Food will be available at several locations around the village.

Don't forget to enter your homemade cakes in the bake-off, which will be held in the village hall. Rex Bakery has kindly offered to judge this year's competition.

Further details will be available in the programme, which this year will include a prize draw for several dinners for two at the White Lion pub.

If you would be willing to help out on the day, by acting as a marshal for an hour or by helping with the tidy up, please email the LCCA at villageday@littlechalfont.org.uk. ■

Little Chalfont farmers' market

For spring/summer 2016, the farmers' market and craft fair will be held in the village hall from 9am-1pm:

Saturday 14 May
Saturday 11 June
Saturday 9 July
Saturday 13 August

info@tvfm.org.uk. Tel: 01235 227266
If you are interested in taking a stall at the craft fair, contact the organiser, Carolyn Towner on 01895 677455

New benches to be installed

Following a request from residents of Halifax House, the parish council is pleased to announce that two additional benches are being installed in the village.

The benches, which were originally sited at the rear of the library, have been refurbished by our local scouts, for which many thanks.

One of these new benches will be positioned on White Lion road outside the doctors' surgery and



the other almost opposite, near the bus stop.

We hope that residents will find these useful, as there is currently nowhere for people to rest while waiting for buses.

We are grateful to the Little Chalfont WIs for agreeing to pay for the installation of one of these benches.

The picture, left, shows the type of bench to be installed. ■

About Little Chalfont Parish Council

Parish councillors



Gill Roberts
Chairman



Ian Griffiths
Vice chairman



Michael Parker
Planning committee
chairman



David Rafferty
Planning committee
vice chairman



Melanie Davis



Brian Drew



Chris Ingham CMC



Vinny Patel



Janet Wolford OBE

Parish council meetings

Parish council general meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, except for August.

The meetings are held at Little Chalfont Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont, HP8 4UD, commencing at 7.30 pm. The meetings are always open to the public, so why not come along to a meeting and see your parish council in action?

Local residents frequently take advantage of the opportunity allowed at all meetings for public comments, to express their views and to ask the council for support in relation to various matters.

The next meeting of the parish council will be held on Wednesday 8 June 2016.

Planning committee meetings are usually held every third Tuesday. At these meetings you can hear discussions of planning applications submitted for Little Chalfont, and whether the parish council agrees that a planning application should go ahead.

The next meeting of the planning committee will be on held on Tuesday 17 May 2016.

Parish council office

The parish council office is located at the rear of the village hall in Cokes Lane. Contact details for enquiries:

TELEPHONE: 01494 766655. If unattended, you may leave a message on the answerphone and we will respond as soon as possible.

EMAIL: clerk@littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk

OFFICE OPENING HOURS: 9am – 3pm, Mon – Fri.

COUNCIL WEBSITE: www.littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk



Natasha Meldrum
Parish clerk



Sallie Matthews
Assistant parish clerk

Newsletter distribution

The parish council is indebted to Adrian Lockyer, membership secretary of the community association, for organising the distribution of the newsletters and to the volunteers who deliver them, ensuring that all homes and businesses in Little Chalfont receive a copy.

86 / 136

Any comments or suggestions?

If you have any comments or suggestions to make about this newsletter or its contents, please contact the parish clerk on clerk@littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk. We welcome all feedback!