

LITTLE CHALFONT PARISH COUNCIL

Newsletter – Spring 2017



Our new village community centre

Progress report

After five long years of research, redesigns and discussions with local residents and the Chiltern District Council (CDC), we now believe that we are close to a design for the new village community centre that will be acceptable to all.

Our present village hall was built 50 years ago when the village had just 2,000 residents. Now there are 6,000 and we have completely outgrown the hall – it is inflexible, with only one room available for hire at any one time, whether for a group of 10 people or 100. Recently, there were occasions when people had to be turned away from public meetings because of lack of space and this is simply not acceptable.

We urgently need a new community centre that will provide the sort of facilities we need now and for the future. The proposed new village community centre will have



The current village hall (left). Artist's impression of the proposed new village community centre (right)

more rooms of varying sizes that can be hired for different functions, including a larger hall, excellent kitchen facilities, the parish council office and many other features.

We have, of course, considered other options for the village hall, one being that, instead of building a new hall, we refurbish the current one and add an extension on the back to create more space.

However, this option would provide only limited flexibility, with high

Come and see the plans for the new village community centre. There are three chances to view the plans and let us have your thoughts:

- **Friday 19 May 2.30pm – 7.30pm**
- **Saturday 20 May 9am – 3pm**
- **Sunday 21 May 10am – 1pm**

running costs. Additionally a refurbished village hall would have only a very short lifespan, whereas we urgently need a community centre that will serve local residents for the long term.

Therefore, the parish council is of the opinion that the best way forward is a new village community centre, and previous surveys of local residents have shown that there is overwhelming support for this course.

We would now like to invite local residents to come along to the village hall to see the latest plans, understand the cost implications and make comments on what is proposed.

This new village community centre will become the focal point of our increased community, and we very much hope that you will take part in deciding on its future.

Completion of the project depends on the parish council reaching agreement to resolve certain land ownership issues.

We hope to submit a full planning application later this year, but this depends on your input to the consultations taking place soon. So do come along to one of the meetings shown above, to see full details of this exciting project. ■

You are invited to attend the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2017**

In the village hall on Wednesday 17 May at 7.30pm

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

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Guest speakers:

Superintendent Yvette Hitch, Thames Valley Police

Hannah Huntly, GE Healthcare

PLUS: A presentation on the work of the parish council

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



From the chairman

During my first year as chairman the learning curve has continued and I have been amazed at the variety of things that need my attention, from seminars on HGVs to celebrating the achievements of local youth.

I could not have fulfilled my role without the unerring support of the parish clerk and assistant parish clerk and, of course, my other councillor colleagues, all of who bring their own particular expertise to the table.

It will be some time before we know what will happen regarding the threat to our green belt, but we are determined to fight to maintain the integrity of the village and not to become a sprawling satellite town.

I hope that you've noticed the continued little improvements to the village such as the hedges being cut back on White Lion Road, the re-siting of the noticeboards that will be followed by a pathway onto the village green and the new defibrillator on the wall of the village hall. But some changes can be frustratingly slow to implement because of the different agencies involved.

The community action plan consultation held in March generated some interesting ideas and I was particularly pleased to see the support for a litter-picking group. I hope the support shown will materialise in participants joining in a village clean up prior to Village Day.

A major concern is that councils and community groups have an age disparity that needs addressing. The parish council and Little Chalfont Community Association are really keen to get the opinion of all age groups.

If you have any ideas, especially of how to promote engagement with all parts of our community, please let us know. People with social media skills are particularly needed. If you'd like to get involved please phone the parish clerk on 01494 766655 or email clerk@littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk

Gill Roberts

Parish council precept

Why the increase this year?

Several local residents have queried why the parish council precept has increased by 8.4% for this financial year. Below we set out the reasons for this and show exactly where your money is being spent for the benefit of the village.

What is the precept? The amount of money that the parish council instructs the billing authority (in our case, Chiltern District Council) to collect on its behalf. The amount claimed is based on the annual budget, which the parish council produces prior to a new financial year.

The precept is the main source of income for the parish council, with other funds coming from a variety of sources including fees for the hire of the village hall and sports pitches.

Please note that, over the previous six years, the precept has increased by a total of just over 3%, considerably less than the rate of inflation.

How does the precept relate to the amount payable by householders? The amount varies according to the number of residences in the parish when the calculations are made.

Therefore, developments such as the Donkey Field help to reduce the amount payable by all residents.

What is the effect of the 8.4% increase? A 'band D' property will pay approximately 10p per week more this year compared to last year; 'band G' will be about 18p per week more.

The full council tax bill also includes contributions to the county and district councils as well as the police and fire authorities.

Why is the increase necessary? Apart from the increase in a number of costs to our services, the parish council made two substantial changes to the budget this year:

- At the public meetings, held last November to discuss the options for release of green belt land for housing and employment development, there was strong support to set up a fund to allow the community to employ an expert to help fight any threat to valued areas of green belt in our village. The parish council decided to budget a sum of £7,500 towards this fund, *if required*.

- The other main increase goes towards ongoing costs of the proposed new community centre. This project is taking longer than expected but we now have a realistic chance of applying for planning permission later this year. Our architect's fees are therefore beginning to impact on our budget.

What about the future? The parish council is always trying to keep costs to a minimum but, if the community centre goes ahead, there will be further increases to the precept. However, from previous consultations, the great majority of residents support this. ■

Housing developments

Work on the new apartments in Chenies Parade, where the old car park and garages used to be, is nearly on schedule and is due for completion in early 2018.

Paradigm Housing Group (PHG), which is both a charity and a registered provider of social housing, is undertaking the other major developments.

Applefields

Work on this site, which is next to the mini roundabout at Nightingales Corner, is due to start towards the end of April 2017 and should be completed by the end of May 2018.

The development will consist of 18 flats in one block. Six of the flats – four two-bedroom flats and two one-



Artist's impression of the completed Chenies Parade development

bedroom flats – will be affordable rental properties.

The remaining 12 units, eight two-bedroom and four one-bedroom flats, will be for shared ownership (part rent / part buy).

Elizabeth Avenue

PHG has planning permission to demolish the existing retail units and maisonettes and build two new retail units with six flats above and a further four three-bedroom homes on the land behind the shops. However, work on the site has been delayed while PHG tries to resolve some outstanding issues. ■

Parking latest

Changes finally implemented

Residents will be well aware of the serious parking and traffic flow problems that exist in the village. As well as a lack of parking spaces, we are experiencing increased anti-social parking.



*Anti-social parking – double whammy!
A vehicle parked on double yellow lines
and blocking the dropped kerb in
Chenies Parade*

Efforts to solve these various problems are ongoing. However, the long, drawn-out project of reviewing and implementing revised waiting restrictions in the village has finally been completed.

The changes decided were based on the responses to a village-wide parking survey conducted by the parish council in May – July 2012.

It took much time and effort for the parish council to liaise with Transport for Bucks (TfB) to arrange all the necessary advertising, informal and formal consultation processes, then payment and finally making the relevant traffic orders before introducing all the new waiting restrictions.

Timing of changes

Implementation started in Burtons Lane in January 2016, and the changes received very positive feedback.

The remaining changes proved to be more difficult to implement, and the new waiting restriction signs and yellow lines, other than in Station Approach, were not finished until 30 March 2017.

As well as being more difficult, some of the changes have had a less than a totally positive response. For example, we had some adverse reaction to the use of signs for restricted parking areas instead of yellow lines.

However, TfB claims that the new method is as equally enforceable as a single yellow line and is cheaper to implement and maintain.

Despite all the previous consultation and communication, there was also

some 'protest parking' (owners refusing to move their vehicles), which delayed some yellow lining in Bell Lane.

The new disabled parking bay in Cokes Lane was initially established in the wrong part of the bay but TfB's contractors have now correctly repositioned it.

Station Approach

The final changes relate to Station Approach where waiting restrictions were amended and a pay-and-display machine introduced, an initiative of TfB.

These changes were delayed because the implementation team was unable to access the site on several occasions because traffic management cones were removed and signage at the site ignored.

This work was eventually completed on 6 April, with the pay and display machine coming into operation with effect from 7 April.

Westwood Park

The parish council is aware of cars parking on the footway of the driveway leading to Westwood Park. The problem is particularly acute on Saturday and Sunday mornings during the football season.

Although signs are now in place, asking motorists not to block the footway in this way, some thoughtless



*Cars parked
on the
footway
leading to
Westwood
Park*

drivers have ignored them.

The footway is intended for pedestrians, including those with baby buggies, wheelchairs, prams and so on, who are forced to walk in the road if cars are causing obstructions.

The children's play area is particularly popular at the weekend, as well as the sports facilities, so special care is needed at these times. Drivers should park only in the proper car park and not along the approach road. ■

Dog fouling nuisance

Persistent dog fouling has been reported in Oakington Avenue. Dog fouling is never acceptable, but in Oakington Avenue it is particularly dangerous because of the proximity of the primary school.

Owners are reminded that, if they fail to pick up and dispose of their dog's mess, they can be fined £50 or, if prosecuted, a maximum court fine of £1,000 and a criminal record. Dog fouling can be reported to the following website: www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/report-a-dog.

Stony Lane footway

The work to lay a footway on Stony Lane from the junction with Amersham Road to the footpath that goes through to Chessfield Park

has been completed. Pedestrians now have a safer walk along this short stretch of road.

50% of the cost was paid by a grant from the Local Area Forum.



Free parking days

Five days of free parking have been agreed for Snells Wood car park. These are: Saturdays 17 June for village day, and 2, 9, 16 and 23 December.

Fly tipping incident

There was an incident of fly tipping in the village recently. A badly soiled mattress was dumped outside the Age UK shop on Nightingales Corner in early March. The shop acted quickly to report this, but the district council was unable to remove it until the next day.

The average penalty for fly tipping is around £1,500. You can report incidents of fly tipping online at the CDC website.



Speedwatch volunteers needed

The speedwatch initiative does make a difference to drivers' speeds in our village, but we need more volunteers to operate it and keep up the good work.

If you have a couple of hours free occasionally, and would like to get involved, please contact the parish council, details shown on page 6.

Little Chalfont Nature Park

Spring has sprung!

Spring has definitely arrived and, with the bright sunshine, the nature park is coming into its own.

The meadow is blooming and visitors cannot fail to be charmed by its verdant grass and peaceful aspect.

There is so much to see in the park and, when you next visit, why not download one of the spotting guides from the 'learning zone' of the website.

Also, if you are a first-time visitor there is a self-guided tour to download in the 'visit us' section. The plans don't stop there.

New wooden sculptures

There are several new wooden sculptures to greet the eye, a reminder of the park's history as an outdoor canvas for sculptors.

Then there are two new benches in what will be the sensory area. Children will love the hopping bench, where a cheeky toad and a solemn frog are perched.

Nearby there is another bench featuring two beautiful coloured woodpeckers, busily pecking away – maybe they are



looking for food, marking their territory, or trying to attract the attention of possible mates? Come and



Jake and the giant strawberry!

see them up close to decide!

There is also a very large and surreal wooden strawberry sculpture basking in the sun, eventually to be enclosed in the sensory area.

The latest sculpture is a stunning red kite, balanced on the very edge of its nest at the top of a high tree trunk near the story-telling circle.

This carved red kite looks as if it is just coming in to land, wings spread and talons stretched out. It's very dramatic and looks very real!

Will Lee, from Chainsaw Carvings, installed the new sculptures, made possible by the park's generous sponsors, for which many thanks.

Slide into spring!

Still to come this spring is a fun children's slide. It will go down into one of the old clay pits, which are a magnet for small children who enjoy rolling, climbing and scampering at speed down the slopes.

A few other features are planned, so



there are still opportunities for sponsorship. If you would like to sponsor a feature, a sponsorship form is available on the website at naturepark.littlechalfont.org.uk or you can contact the team by emailing naturepark@littlechalfont.org.uk.

All donations are very gratefully received, and if you would like to donate please visit the website at: naturepark.littlechalfont.org.uk.

If you have time to spare and would like to help out with conservation of the park by joining our brilliant volunteer team, The Friends of the Nature Park, to help keep the park running, please contact Rob Rolls at: parkfriends@littlechalfont.org.uk or via the nature park website. ■

The following is the third in an occasional series of articles about groups that regularly use the village hall

The Toddler Group

Little Chalfont Toddlers is a friendly, mum-run toddler group, taking place every Friday morning in the heart of Little Chalfont.

We entertain little ones from around 18 months to school age, with baby siblings welcome to come along. Our toddlers enjoy play, crafts, books, puzzles and singing whilst carers have a cup of tea or coffee and a well deserved biscuit.

We have a wide range of toys and equipment, including ride-ons and cars, train table, kitchen area, toy cars, farm toys, see-saw, slide, dolls and pushchairs, along with a host of other play houses and



Some of the toddlers enjoying a healthy snack at the toddlers' group in the village hall

role-play opportunities.

Our craft tables alternate each week with opportunities for our toddlers to express their creativity and take their creations home with them.

Each session includes dedicated time when the children sit together around the table to enjoy a healthy

snack and drink.

We finish up by winding down with story books and puzzles and enjoy a group singing session with instruments at the end.

We hold special events at Christmas time (along with a special guest!) and a summer party in Westwood

Park. We also encourage the children to dress up at key times of the year (eg Halloween, World Book Day).

Our group is a great way to meet new friends especially if you have just arrived in the area. We are currently reviewing numbers to join us in September 2017 so please contact the group at the email address below if you are interested in coming along for a free trial session.

We run Friday mornings during term time from 9:45am to 11:30am in Little Chalfont Village Hall. littlechalfonttoddlers@hotmail.com ■

Challenge to green belt outrage – pledges needed

Please read the leaflet delivered with this newsletter

The leaflet asks for pledges of funding, large or small. Such pledges are requested in case we need to employ planning consultants to help us challenge the dubious case made in the emerging local plan for building up to 1,000 new dwellings in the green belt between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane.

At four public meetings held in November 2016, most of those present indicated that they would be willing to help pay for professional support if necessary.

The parish council and the Little Chalfont Community Association (LCCA) now need to know whether sufficient contributions would be

available; see the leaflet for details, and how to make your pledge.

This has arisen because, in spite of over 1,300 letters of objection from Little Chalfont residents to their first consultation last year, and many hundreds objecting to their second, Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils appear determined to persist with their plan to destroy this fine area of green belt.

The proposed new estate would increase the number of dwellings in the village by about one third, with inevitable environmental damage and pressure on our already overloaded infrastructure.

Matters will come to a head over the

next 12 months if, despite our opposition, the councils include this proposed development in their draft local plan when published and put before a government inspector's enquiry.

The case for protecting the land, which in our view strongly meets government criteria for green belt, can be read in the joint parish council/LCCA submission of December 2016, sent in response to the district councils' 'Preferred Options' consultation. This can be found on the LCCA website at: www.littlechalfont.org.uk/plan.html.

Please pledge your support if you can. ■

Little Chalfont Community Association updates

LCCA website: www.littlechalfont.org.uk

Our community action plan review

Thank you to all who responded to the questionnaire and called into the village hall over the weekend of 17 – 20 March. We received a wealth of ideas and suggestions for refreshing the action plan and all of these have been tabulated. The team is currently preparing the new plan and, once completed, it will be presented to the community for endorsement.

Litter picking group

Following the success of last year's *Clean for the Queen* campaign we thought that it would make sense to have a village clean up just before Village Day.

We are looking for the whole village to join in by just cleaning outside your house or nearby if you don't want to go further afield; it would be good if this coincided with volunteering week, 1 - 7 June.

The idea of a litter-picking group was well supported at the Community Action Plan consultation held in March and we are looking for a volunteer to take the lead on this.

We already have a group of volunteers litter picking in the nature park, a village litter-picking group would be an extension of looking after our environment. Many groups already exist around the country and are supported by the Keep Britain Tidy campaign.

If you are interested in taking part in either the village clean up or a regular group please contact Sallie Matthews Assistant Parish Clerk, 01494766655 or at clerk2@littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk ■

Unitary authority proposals – decision not yet taken

As this newsletter goes to print, the Department for Communities and Local Government is still considering its decision on the alternative proposals. These are:

- A Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority that embraces the four districts of Chiltern, South Bucks, Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale. If implemented, the district councils would cease to exist, although parish councils would remain, (proposed by Bucks County Council).

- Two unitary authorities covering the north and south of the county. The north would be Aylesbury Vale and the south would be the remaining three districts, (proposed by the districts).

Staying as we are is not seen as a viable option and, with the decision overdue, it is hoped that the minister will soon make his choice and remove the uncertainty.

Community information directory

Work on updating this really useful directory continues and if you are a business or organisation that has not checked it recently, it would be helpful if you could do so soon.

It can be found in the quick links box on the home page of our website (see above) and changes can be advised to directory@littlechalfont.org.uk.

Have you just moved to Little Chalfont? Why not have a look at the wealth of information that the directory provides. ■

Village Day – Saturday 17 June 2017

Make a date to come along to our annual celebration of the community – the showcase for our clubs, organisations and local talent.

Enter the dog show, art competition and join in the fun run; make a scarecrow with a book theme to recognise our community library's 10th anniversary; run a stall; perform on the village green or in Station Approach.

Help is needed on the day – with setting up bunting and gazebos, ensuring that people safely cross the road, selling programmes and helping to tidy up afterwards.

Could you spare an hour or so to help? All materials are provided – all you need to do is turn up at the LCCA tent five minutes before your chosen shift (see below) to be briefed on specific details for the day:

- Between 9am and 12 noon, for setting up and helping stallholders;
- 12 noon to 4pm, for marshalling and programme selling;
- 4pm – 5pm, final shift for dismantling and tidying up.

Please email villageday@littlechalfont.org.uk if you are able to help.

Fun run

The Little Chalfont Fun Run will kick off on village day. As in previous years, it will take place in Westwood Park at 10am with registrations from 08.45 and a warm up at 09.45. £5 for an individual and £15 for a family entry. Entrants can run 1, 3 or 5 kms and all proceeds go to charity – Neuroblastoma UK and our own nature park. Good luck!

New defibrillator

We are very grateful to Amersham Rotary Club for kindly donating a defibrillator to Little Chalfont. The defibrillator is supplied by Community Heartbeat Trust and is sited on the front of Little Chalfont Village Hall in a locked cabinet.

Access is gained by phoning 999; the ambulance service will give the box code and support the person using the machine. The defibrillator is designed to be used by anyone; it will give clear instructions so never be afraid to use it ■



l-r: Derek Bryant (chairman, Amersham Rotary); Chalmers Cursley (district governor, Rotary District 1260); Grace Petrie (global scholar, Rotary International); Gill Roberts, (chairman, of the Little Chalfont Parish Council).

Little Chalfont farmers' market

For spring/summer 2017, the farmers' market and craft fair will be held in the village hall from 9am-1pm:

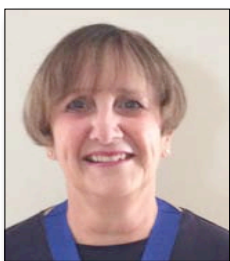
Saturday 13 May
Saturday 10 June
Saturday 8 July
Saturday 12 August

Farmers' market: info@tvfm.org.uk.
Tel: 01235 227266

Craft fair: If you are interested in taking a stall at the craft fair, please contact the organiser, Carolyn Towner on 01895 677455

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 CMG



Vinny Patel



Janet Walford 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 meetings of the parish council will be held on 10 May and 14 June 2017.

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 meetings of the planning committee will be on held on 23 May and 14 June 2017.

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:

Mon, 9am-3pm. Tue-Fri, 9am-1pm.



*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.

JW/04.17

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!