

LITTLE CHALFONT PARISH COUNCIL

Newsletter - Spring 2015



Derelict land in Chenies Parade

Permission to build on site despite strong objections

EVERYONE WHO uses the shops in Chenies Parade will have noticed the appalling state of the derelict former car park space between Chenies Parade and the Citygate showroom.

This site, together with the adjacent derelict garages, is to be turned in to a block of eight flats with retail or office spaces on the ground floor. This follows a successful appeal against Chiltern District Council's decision to refuse planning permission.

Little Chalfont Parish Council and the Little Chalfont Community Association (LCCA) objected to the plans. We would have preferred the land to be returned for use as car parking spaces in the Parade, where the need is great and growing every year.

Both the parish council and the LCCA are quoted in the planning inspector's report, which produced



The derelict site in Chenies Parade is an eyesore, but instead of much needed parking it will be turned in to a block of eight flats and retail outlets and/or office space

evidence of parking problems and local residents' rejection of the proposal.

The inspector's report clearly states that "the views of local people should not be ignored", but then the report seems to go on to do just that.

"I consider that actual surveys and my own observations provide a more useful impression of the [parking] situation.

"Although my midweek lunchtime visit only gave a brief snapshot, what I saw, nonetheless, broadly tallied with the appellants' survey".

The inspector's conclusion that, "Having regard to parking provision, the proposal would not harm highway safety or the vitality and viability of the local shopping centre and living conditions for future occupiers...would be satisfactory".

Little Chalfont parish, district and county councillors, together with the community association, have submitted a letter of complaint about the decision; however, a reversal of the decision is not expected.

The community association intends to work with all the occupants of Chenies Parade and the district council to reach agreements with the developers that will try to minimise the disruption during the construction. This is expected to start in the near future. ■

You are invited to attend the

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

In the village hall on Wednesday 22 April at 7.45 pm

(A glass of wine or soft drink will be available from 7.30 pm)

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Guest speakers:

David Stewart, team delivery manager, Transport for Bucks

Katie Duggan, JBKS architects, appointed architects for the community centre project

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

BY THE TIME this newsletter is published, the election for a new Little Chalfont Parish Council will be only a few weeks away.

The majority of existing councillors will be putting themselves forward for re election, but two or three are taking this opportunity to stand down.

I would like to thank all of them for their work on the council and the support that they have given me. It is eight years since Little Chalfont became a separate parish; in that time we have achieved much for the local community and I believe that we can take some pride in what has been done, but there is still more to do in the future.

Great thanks, which will be echoed by many people, also go to Janet Mason, who was our parish clerk for most of Little Chalfont Parish Council's existence. Janet was highly respected and will be greatly missed.

Seven people were shortlisted and interviewed to find a successor, and I am delighted that Natasha Meldrum, who joined us as assistant clerk last October, has been appointed as parish clerk and responsible financial officer.

Natasha is already well known to many, especially users of the village hall and Westwood Park sports grounds; I am sure that she will do an excellent job of guiding the new council through the next few years.

We are now seeking to appoint a new assistant clerk, and hopefully by the time this newsletter reaches you, that position will have been filled.

The new council will hold its first meeting, in the village hall, on Wednesday 13 May, when the chairman for the next 12 months will be elected.

This is your village, so why not come along and see what goes on?

Brian Drew

Little Chalfont war memorial

New plaque to mark the fallen



IN GLORIOUS sunshine, over 350 people attended the Little Chalfont Remembrance Day parade on Sunday 9 November 2014 to inaugurate the new village war memorial commemorating those who gave their lives in pursuit of peace. This parade to the new memorial had particular significance because it marked the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of WWI in August 2014.

At the beginning of WWI, Little Chalfont had a population of around 200, and little more than 2,000 at the end of WWII, so it was not surprising when research showed the names of only three local men who had died in either of the wars.

However, for several years, the local uniformed organisations paraded each Remembrance Sunday but without having a central point in the village at which to gather and remember the fallen.

Earlier this year Little Chalfont Parish Council set up a working party, consisting of representatives of the council, uniformed organisations, local churches and the community association, to look at the possibility of having a war memorial in the village as a focal point for people to gather for a Remembrance Day parade service.

The parish council accepted a recommendation from the working party that a simple stone memorial, with no names but an

inscription reading "Remembering those who gave their lives in pursuit of peace" engraved on a slate plaque, be erected on a raised flower bed close to the village green.

The parish council underwrote the total cost, a little under £2,000, but to date it has gratefully received donations totalling £705 towards this cost. This includes donations from local organisations (The Entertainer, Cansdales Chartered Accountants, the Little Chalfont Surgery, CDC, LCCA) as well as from members of the public.

The Rev Ruth Boughton, deputising for the Rev David Allsop who was indisposed, led the Remembrance Parade service. As well as local residents, the service included around 100 children and representatives from the various uniformed organisations who paraded from the Methodist Church to the village green.

Wreaths were presented by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, the leader of Bucks CC, the chairman and vice chairman of Chiltern DC, Little Chalfont PC, Guides, Scouts, the Little Chalfont Methodist Church and Little Chalfont High School.

Richard Slade, from the Amersham Music Centre, played the last post and reveille.

Following the service, refreshments were served by the evening WI in the village hall. A number of people said how much they had enjoyed the service and there were also many favourable comments on the design of the memorial. ■



Parish council elections

May 7th 2015 – come and have your say

NO LESS than three different elections will be held on Thursday 7 May 2015. Parish council and district council elections, as well as the general election, will all be held on the same day.

Little Chalfont is now divided in to three wards for parish council purposes. The south ward, with two parish councillors, remains the same ie, the area of the village that was part of Chalfont St Giles prior to May 2009.

However, the Little Chalfont ward (formerly part of Amersham) is now divided into Little Chalfont, with five councillors, and Little Chalfont northeast with two. This will bring the total number of parish councillors for

Little Chalfont to nine.

You should shortly receive a polling card, which will tell you where to vote. Voting will take place in the following locations:

- Little Chalfont ward – village hall, Cokes Lane;
- Little Chalfont south ward – community library, Cokes Lane;
- Little Chalfont northeast ward – Little Chalfont Primary School, Oakington Avenue.

The results of the election are normally known late on the following day. The first meeting of the new parish council will be on Wednesday 13 May at 7.30 pm in the village hall. The chairman for the 2015/6 year will be elected at this council meeting. ■

Briefly...

Free parking in Snells Wood

The parish council continues to receive many favourable comments about the one-hour free parking scheme. Although the cost to the council will increase in the new financial year, it is expected that the subsidy will continue for another 12 months.

Please remember to display a valid ticket before leaving your car.

Nightingales Corner makeover

As we are sure local residents will agree, the grass 'island', between the main road and service road for the pharmacy and the building society etc, is not the most attractive area in the village.

The parish council has successfully bid for some Local Area Forum funding that will allow the area to be tidied up. As well as some planting, new bollards will be installed and it is hoped to have a village sign. Replacement bollards will also be installed adjacent to the A404 near the village green.

Library closure for elections

Please note that the Little Chalfont library will be closed all day on Thursday 7 May 2015 for polling.

The library will be used for voting for residents living in the Little Chalfont south ward of the parish.

For those living in other parts of the parish, please see announcement above about location of other polling stations.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused by the one day closure of the library.

Looking after our village

Grass cutting to move to parish council

TO CONTINUE making Little Chalfont a great place to live, work and play, we need to maintain its appearance as best as possible. We are fortunate to have several green spaces and grass verges in our growing village but they all need regular care to keep them looking trim.

From April 2015 the parish council will be taking over, from Buckinghamshire County Council, the grass cutting on the verges in Little Chalfont. Some other associated activities are also included and we are doing this for a number of reasons.

First, the parish council should be able to provide a better service, which will be delivered and managed locally.

Secondly the county council is hard pressed by central government to make even more savings as the need to reduce the national deficit continues.

The funding for the services passed over to us by the county council will not cover the cost of the work, so the overall cost will be topped up by the parish council.

We hope to be able to keep the verges in the village centre short and well kempt. Other verges will have at least six cuts a year but this may vary according to weather conditions.

Councillors will continue to be very grateful to those homeowners who regularly mow the verges outside their houses. ■

SpeedWatch can come to Little Chalfont

But we need your help

A GROWING NUMBER of complaints from residents indicate that speed is becoming a serious problem on a number of roads in the village.

SpeedWatch is a joint venture with community volunteers working alongside Thames Valley police officers to identify vehicles breaking the speed limit. A minimum of six volunteers is required to make the scheme viable. Thames Valley police provides training and equipment.

With sufficient support, it is hoped that training can be arranged for May. The scheme provides equipment that identifies vehicles breaking the speed limit.

Details of the speeding car registration are entered on to a database; the registered keeper is then sent a letter informing them that their vehicle has been noted exceeding the speed limit and requesting them not to do so in the future.

A second letter is sent if the vehicle is logged again exceeding the speed limit in any SpeedWatch area in the Thames Valley.

The registered keeper will be advised that, if the vehicle is caught a third time, the information will be passed on to roads policing for further action.

If you feel that speed is a problem in your road or one nearby and you want to improve the situation, help us to help your community. Anyone interested in taking part in the initiative please contact the parish council office at 01494 766 655, or clerk@littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk ■

Where does your council tax go?

Projects that benefit our village

RESIDENTS WILL recently have received a council tax demand for the 2015/6 year. We thought you would like to know how this is spent.

The amount payable is divided between the local councils plus the local police and fire authorities. Little Chalfont Parish Council receives 4.3% of the total eg, £67.25 (£1.29 per week) for a band D property and £112.09 (£2.16 per week) for a band G property.

What do you get for your money?

The parish council will receive £218,600 from the council tax. This includes a discretionary grant from Chiltern District Council of £5,985, but there is no guarantee that this grant will be available next year.

Other income eg, hire of village hall, sports facilities etc, amounts to approximately £57,000.

From this, the following are the major items of expenditure budgeted in the present financial year (all figures rounded):

- £21,000: street lighting;
- £47,000: Westwood Park;
- £6,300: other open spaces (village green etc);
- £19,000: village hall;
- £11,500: grants to other organisations (including library);
- £74,000: administration;
- £11,000: one hour free car parking in Snells Wood car park;
- £9,000: contribution towards parking consultation process;
- £14,500: repairs and maintenance;
- £35,000: transfer to reserves (to build funds for capital projects and improvements to facilities). ■

Parking survey

WE ALWAYS said that it would take some time to implement any changes to parking restrictions, but the informal consultation last year has resulted in further meetings between Transport for Bucks and the parish council in order to progress this matter.

Other than four roads, where a further mini-consultation will take place, there is consensus on the way forward. It is therefore hoped that a formal consultation can take place later this year with a view to implementing the changes in 2016. The parish council has obtained funding from the local area forum to cover part of the cost of the consultation and the subsequent work regarding signage and yellow lines.

It is impossible to satisfy everyone, as there is a conflict between not allowing parking by commuters etc and enabling visitors to residents' homes to park freely. We believe the proposals will be the best solution possible. ■

New parish clerk appointed

Assistant clerk takes over the reins

WE ARE PLEASED to announce the appointment of Natasha Meldrum as parish clerk and responsible financial officer with effect from Wednesday 1 April 2015.

Natasha has been our assistant clerk for the past six months and the appointment follows the departure of Janet Mason, who has been the clerk of our Little Chalfont Parish Council for most of the eight years that it has been in existence. Sadly for us, Janet has decided to move on to new challenges and all our parish councillors will be very sorry to see her go.

Many people, not just councillors, came to know Janet and appreciated the way that she always found time to listen and advise on a whole range of issues.

Although qualified in many areas, Janet had no previous experience of the workings of parish councils when she joined us but, in a testament to her ability, quickly absorbed the necessary knowledge to allow her to do the job extremely competently.

Apart from the obvious tasks, such as preparing agendas, minutes, accounts, helping users book the village hall and instructing contractors, she also had to negotiate contracts, draft various council procedures,



Pictured above, left to right: councillors David Rafferty; Brian Drew (chairman); James Wyper; Janet Mason, outgoing parish clerk; John Hinkly; Janet Walford OBE; Vinny Patel; Gill Roberts; Michael Parker. Pictured below, Roger Funk, chairman of the LCCA and outgoing LCCA treasurer, Colin Steele.

satisfy auditors, attend meetings in Little Chalfont, Amersham, Aylesbury etc, and ensure that all council matters were conducted in a lawful and expedient manner.

To mark Janet's departure, a private celebration was held on 30 March, attended by about 35 people, to thank Janet for all her hard work and the help she has given.

Janet's departure coincided with Colin Steele leaving the Little Chalfont Community Association's committee. He has been treasurer for the association for the past seven years



and was also treasurer of the youth club. Members of the community association, Little Chalfont Charitable Trust and the nature park action group joined with parish, district and county councillors, plus others, who had dealings with Janet and Collin, to wish her well in the future. ■

Westwood Park update

Titan swing ready for the summer

WESTWOOD PARK continues to be a great local attraction, with football pitches, tennis courts and an exciting play area for children. We continue to keep the park maintained as best as possible for local residents' enjoyment.

For example, the play area has been slightly relandscaped after some rotting wooden posts were replaced. The ever popular Titan swing (pictured) has been repaired and is now working again, ready for the summer.

You might have wondered why the white line has been added around the edge of the park? It is 1,000 metres long and is intended to help runners and walkers know the distance they have covered. Markers are on order and will be placed at 100 metre intervals.

Wooden posts have been installed in

the grass verge on the approach to the car park to deter inconsiderate motorists churning up the verge.

The fence around the multi user games area has been severely damaged by intruders going under and climbing over the fence. This has meant that the area has had to be closed while repairs, at some cost, were carried out.

On a positive note, the Westwood Park Football Club is thriving, training over 200 youngsters on Saturday mornings. Few matches were lost due to bad weather this winter.

Chorleywood Cricket Club will continue to play some of their



The ever popular Titan swing has been repaired ready for the summer.

matches in the park this summer.

Finally, a plea to dog owners. Please keep your dogs on leads whilst organised football and cricket matches are in progress. Thank you. ■

Updates from Little Chalfont Community Association

LCCA website: www.littlechalfont.org.uk

Nature Park update

Whilst delighted with progress of the appeal – £69,000 has now been raised, including grants from various organisations – a further £31,000 is needed before the Park can be opened.

The support received has enabled the charitable trust to make a lot of progress in dealing with the extensive clearance work in the woodland and the removal of dead or dying trees, for safety reasons, is planned very shortly.

Other work in the meadow continues to be addressed by our enthusiastic 'friends of the nature park' and the once heavily overgrown meadow and woodland are now transformed.



The action group is still offering escorted tours and these are highly recommended. Why not come along and see the progress? You can book a place on a tour by telephoning Rob Rolls on 01494 763982, or at the nature park stand at the farmers' market. The tour dates available are set out below; all tours start at 11 am:

- Saturday 11 April
- Wednesday 15 April
- Saturday 9 May
- Wednesday 13 June

Donkey Field development

Following the update in the LCCA newsletter in January, the development of the Donkey Field continues to gather pace. The present position can be summarised as follows:

- The groundworks are well under way, the site entrance has been

created and utility connections for the development have been made.

- The internal road structure has been started, allowing internal car parking to be created and construction of the first houses has started.
- With some unforeseen delays, prolonging the need for contractor parking on Burtons Lane, representatives from the liaison group have continued to voice concerns and have regularly met with the project and site managers.

With the site now more accessible, we hope that the disruption will be reduced.

- The development is expected to continue through 2015/16, with the first houses completed before the end of this year.

Village day

Saturday 6 June – put it on the calendar!

Paul Nicholls has taken over the organisation of village day and plans to continue the theme of 'A celebration of our community'.

There will be the usual fun run and dog show along with competitions and, as always, our local traders will be taking part.

For information and to offer help on the day, please contact Paul by emailing paul@leystar.net or telephone him on 01494 762053. ■

Little Chalfont farmers' market

For the summer of 2015, the farmers' market and craft fair will be held in the village hall from 9am – 1pm on:

Saturday 9 May
Saturday 13 June
Saturday 11 July
Saturday 8 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

Chiltern emerging local plan, 2014-2036

The parish council and the community association submitted a detailed joint response to the recent consultation to Chiltern District Council on 6 March 2015.

This response was much influenced by the replies received to the questionnaire that was delivered to the community with the association's January newsletter.

The key elements of the response came out against any review of the

green belt that surrounds the village and strongly argued that Little Chalfont would not be able to accommodate much more housing.

It also pointed out that the Turners Field, Old Mill Place and Donkey Field developments have already put our infrastructure under severe pressure – parking, traffic, primary school places to name but three – and that any further development would be unsustainable.

The full response is available on the LCCA website and can be accessed by following the links in the short article on the LCCA home page: www.littlechalfont.org.uk

When Chiltern District Council has analysed the responses and completed other research, it will be undertaking an issues and options consultation in October/November of this year.

In the meantime, the coordination group, set up to advise the parish council and community association, will continue to monitor the matter closely. ■

Parish councillors



Brian Drew
Chairman



Michael Parker
Planning committee
chairman



David Rafferty
Planning committee
vice chairman



Vinny Patel



Gill Roberts



Janet Walford OBE



John Hinkly
Deputy chairman



James Wyper

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 13 May 2015.

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 held on Tuesday 21 April 2015.

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

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.

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 your feedback!