

LITTLE CHALFONT PARISH COUNCIL

Newsletter – Spring 2020

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CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL

What help is available in Little Chalfont?

There is currently a wealth of information available nationally from official sources about how to stay safe during the outbreak of coronavirus. However, please be aware that we have people in our local community who are less able than others that may need assistance during the coming weeks and months.

DO YOU NEED HELP?

Government restrictions allow people to go to shops for essential food and other supplies. The advice to those aged 70 or more is that this should be avoided if possible. Also, those under 70 with certain health problems are advised to stay at home.

In Little Chalfont there are several ways of accessing help with obtaining food and other essential supplies as well as collecting prescriptions, posting letters etc. Two of the main sources of help are:

● **Little Chalfont Good Neighbours:**

A group supported by Little Chalfont Community Association and the parish council.
Tel. 01494 762395
Email: goodneighbours@littlechalfont.org.uk

● **Little Chalfont Coronavirus Facebook Group:**

This group has over 400 members and around 100 volunteers.
Tel. 07597 843260
Email: littlechalfontcoronavirushelp@gmail.com
Website: www.itmadeeasy1.wixsite.com/lchelpme

The two groups work closely together, and you can contact either. Most roads in Little Chalfont have at least one volunteer.

Warning – only accept help from someone you know or who has been recommended by an appropriate agency.

Do not give money to anyone until you have received the goods. Preferably, arrange payment by transfer of funds direct to bank accounts, not cash.

Keep at least two metres (six feet) away from anyone visiting your home to deliver groceries etc.

Continued overleaf ➡

CAN YOU OFFER HELP?

If you wish to offer help, the two groups mentioned in the column to the left would be pleased to hear from you. There are protocols in place and these will be explained to you.

Other small groups exist, usually covering one road or part of a road. Some of these use WhatsApp or Facebook for communication between volunteers and those needing help.

There is nothing to stop an individual offering help to neighbours without being part of a group but, if you do this, please follow basic procedures to ensure that you protect yourself as well as the people you support.

A card for this purpose (sample below) is available to download from www.littlechalfont.org.uk. Also, there is a helpful guide for volunteers available on the website: www.itmadeeasy1.wixsite.com/lchelpme/volunteerguidelines

HELLO! If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is

I live locally at

My phone number is

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:

<input type="checkbox"/> Picking up shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> Posting mail
<input type="checkbox"/> A friendly phone call	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgent supplies

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep. #ViralKindness

Continued overleaf ➡

Do you need help?

(Continued from previous page, column 1)

● Advice for accepting genuine help:

Lots of people are offering help and support to anyone in their communities who are staying at home.

Although the majority of people offering help are genuine, sadly there may be others who try to take advantage for their own gains.

Here is some guidance to follow:

- Only accept help from family, friends and neighbours that you know.
 - The exception to this rule is when you are dealing with someone introduced by organisations that you know. For instance, the Little Chalfont Good Neighbours and Little Chalfont Coronavirus Help Group as mentioned overleaf – both having special identification procedures in place.
 - If someone turns up on your doorstep when you are not expecting them, do not get involved and do not let them into your home or allow them to try to pressurise you. Let family, friends or even the groups mentioned know what has happened.
 - Never pay for shopping before the goods are delivered and only against a receipt.
 - Little Chalfont Pharmacy (McParland's) offers a delivery service for fulfilled prescriptions when there is no suitable alternative.
- If you wish to enquire about this valuable service, please phone the pharmacy Tel. 01494 762206. ■

Can you offer help?

(Continued from previous page, column 2)

● If you have not yet checked on your neighbour – now would be a good time!

Remember – you can provide support to vulnerable people only if you fulfil all of the conditions below:

- You are well and have no symptoms like a cough or high temperature and nobody in your household does.
- You are under 70.
- You are not pregnant.
- You do not have any long-term health conditions that make you vulnerable to coronavirus.

The parish council would like to thank all those in Little Chalfont who are helping to ensure essential supplies are available. This includes staff in the few shops that are open and a special thank you to Little Chalfont surgery and McParland's pharmacy. Thanks also to all those who delivered the leaflet about coronavirus to most homes in the village.

The parish council has been alerted to many instances where help has been given. There are some heart-warming stories of local people desperate for food, receiving the assistance they require.

Shoppers and shop workers might see, in Little Chalfont pharmacy and other shops, people who are wearing a knitted sunflower. This will indicate that the wearer is a volunteer from the Coronavirus Facebook group and is shopping for someone, or possibly more than one person, in need of help. ■

From the chairman



Coronavirus is affecting almost everything around us and the duties of the parish council are no different.

The decision has been taken to close the village hall and this includes the parish council office.

Our staff are working from home and, at the time of writing, still able to respond to email and telephone messages. However, I hope you will understand that there may sometimes be delays in receiving a response.

Council meetings have been cancelled for the time being. As far as possible, business will continue but I cannot guarantee as usual.

I did not expect to be writing the message from the chairman for this newsletter. However, as our previous chairman needed to stand down for personal reasons I agreed to take over for what was expected to be a short time before the next elections, which were due to be held in May 2020. Those elections have now been postponed until next year.

One of my first actions as chairman was to welcome Felicity Copp as our new parish clerk. There is much to learn but she has settled in very well and is proving to be a worthy successor to our previous clerk, Natasha Meldrum.

Life can sometimes be very frustrating. You will read on page three that our appeal against the district council's planning committee's decision, to reject the application for a new community centre, has faltered.

The exact reasons are unknown to us but it seems extraordinary that, nine months after our appeal was validated, we are told that the appointed inspector had left his post without completing his work.

We hope that his replacement will be able to devote sufficient time to allow a decision to be made within a short time scale.

Brian Drew

GE Healthcare helps NHS

Much needed PPE provided

GE Healthcare team, situated at the Grove Centre in Amersham, was pleased to be able to help Buckinghamshire NHS with its call for PPE (personal protective equipment) for medical staff.

The team was able to deliver 2,000 items of PPE, including surgical gloves and microfibre clean room garments to Stoke Mandeville hospital in Buckinghamshire in the first week of April (as shown in the picture, right).

In addition it was able to help equip GE Healthcare's own engineers, who are crucial to the maintenance and functioning of hospital equipment around the country.



The equipment that GE makes includes CTs, ultrasound devices, mobile xray systems, patient monitors and ventilators, all important in the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 patients.

It is in the process of ramping up manufacturing capacity, while taking steps to ensure safe operations for employees. ■

Our new community centre

Decision delayed

We regret to advise residents that the parish council was informed in February this year that a decision on our appeal to allow the building of a new community centre on the site of the present village hall has been further delayed, possibly by some months.

The appeal was lodged in May 2019 against the Chiltern District Council planning committee's decision not to allow the new building.

The inspector originally appointed to adjudicate this appeal visited the site at the beginning of August 2019. We had hoped for a decision by the end of October and felt confident that its receipt would be before Christmas.

Having chased the inspectorate on two occasions, the parish council was taken by surprise when it was informed without warning that the inspector had left his position without completing his remit.

The following is an extract from the letter, dated 12 February 2020, received by our agents:

"You will be only too well aware that the inspector's decision on your client's appeal is long overdue. In recent months we have been trying to work with the inspector to get the decision submitted to this office and ready for issue but, despite our best efforts, this has not proven possible."



Our proposed new community centre, which is still awaiting a planning appeal decision

"Unfortunately the appointed inspector has now left the planning inspectorate. I'm very sorry that this has happened and that your client's appeal has suffered delays as a result."

This is extremely frustrating, not just for the parish council but for the whole community.

Our earlier consultations showed that there was great support for a building of the type proposed. It is several years since the idea of a community centre was first suggested and, perhaps optimistically, there was an expectation that building work would have started by now.

A new inspector has been appointed and he visited the site on 17 March. This is a complex application and there are numerous reports associated with it. We hope that a decision will be made within a reasonable time. ■

Briefly...

Finch Lane pond

The parish council restored this pond last year and the spell of very wet weather we had earlier in the year resulted in the pond filling with water.



However, the more recent dry spell has dried it up again! When it once again has water in it, keep a look out for the return of the visiting ducks.

G E Healthcare

The anticipated sale of G E Healthcare's biopharma business to Danaher Inc was completed on 31 March 2020. The biopharma business will be run from Amersham Place under the name of Cytiva. More details of the operations of this international company from within our village will be available to read in the July edition of the community association's newsletter.

THANK YOU to all the key workers and volunteers in Little Chalfont who are doing such a wonderful job in this current crisis to care for people, deliver food, stack shelves and all the many other services needed to keep us going.

Local plan update

Examination of plan postponed

The 'Examination in public' hearings, to be run by two independent planning inspectors and scheduled to begin with stage 1 on 17-26 March, were indefinitely postponed for coronavirus reasons. This will delay the process of approving and adopting the local plan.

When the hearings are reorganised, they will take place in cooperation with the new, unitary, Buckinghamshire Council, which came into being on 1 April.

The abolition of the district councils and formation of the new unitary council went ahead in spite of the postponement of elections until next year.

Expertise on the local plan has moved from the district councils to the unitary council with the transfer of

many staff and councillors. It is likely that the existing draft plan will continue to be considered when the time comes.

The coordination group, formed by the parish council and Little Chalfont Community Association, will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates on our website, savelittlechalfont.org.uk and on the Save Little Chalfont Facebook page.

We remain determined to fight the local plan's proposal to site 700 homes and other facilities on green belt land between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane.

Thanks to public donations we were well equipped with professional help and studies to approach the public hearings now postponed. We shall keep our powder dry. ■

Little Chalfont Farmers Market

The farmers market was held on 11 April with strict distancing controls and a reduced number of stalls. It is expected to be open again on **Saturday 9 May**. We hope you will be able to take advantage of this valuable local service.

The ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2020

due to be held in the village hall on **Wednesday 29 April 2020** has been **CANCELLED**

Street lighting

Broken lights are being fixed

The council would like to apologise to residents for the unusual number of streetlights not working recently.

When a light is reported as not working, it is usually repaired within about 10 days. However, in the last couple of months, that has not always happened. Cokes Lane has been especially badly hit, partly owing to vandalism, which has meant that the lamps need total replacement.

The good news is that the parish council is in the process of obtaining a loan that should allow it to replace all its streetlights with LED lamps in the very near future.

Originally the plan was to replace them gradually during the next few years. However, a government scheme

to allow councils to apply for an interest free loan means that they all can be replaced in one contract.

We have already met the conditions for the loan, by justifying the cost with the projected savings, and now await approval by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

Before this can happen, we need to ensure that local residents are informed of the scheme.

The total cost of replacing all parish council owned lamps is £85,645. The loan is £71,740 and will be repaid in ten equal instalments every 6 months over a 5 year period. The annual electricity cost savings have been calculated as about £11,500 per annum. LED lamps have a long life, which



Two of the vandalised street lights in Cokes Lane

means further savings on maintenance.

We hope you will agree that this is a worthwhile exercise but if you would like more information or wish to comment, please contact the parish clerk. ■

Little Chalfont parks

Still open for you to enjoy!

If you are taking exercise outside your home, you may like to know that our parks are still open. However, *please* take care to keep your distance from others to at least two metres (six feet) for your safety and that of others who may be using the parks.

Also, please note that the children's play areas in both parks are currently closed because of the distancing rules, along with the tennis courts and multi user games area in Westwood Park.

Little Chalfont Nature Park

The fine weather that we enjoyed towards the end of March brought out all the wild and cultivated daffodils, as our picture shows.

Elsewhere in the park, it may not look as though anything much is going on at present, but look carefully and you will see that lots of trees and plants are poised ready to burst into



Wild and cultivated daffodils in bloom in the nature park (left). Westwood Park (right)



life. For example, the bluebells are just beginning to push up fresh leaves through the soil at the edges of the woodland.

The green woodpecker can also sometimes be seen digging grubs out of the grass.

But if you are not lucky enough to see them you can often hear them in the woods, pecking for grubs in the trees with their familiar rapid hammering sound.

Other airborne regular visitors to the nature park are the magnificent red kites, and red admiral butterflies can be seen fluttering in the sunshine.

Westwood Park

Although the play and games areas are currently closed, Westwood Park is a big open space with plenty of room for you to wander around while keeping your distance from other park users.

There is a running track marked out around the edge of the park that you could use for jogging rather than the roads, keeping your distance from other runners, of course.

If you want a change from the grassland, you could wander into the Chess Valley to enjoy the beauty of the woods and their many paths. ■

Local shops still open

Several local shops in the village are still open for business during the current crisis to enable you to shop locally.

You are advised to check with each outlet for their opening hours.

Retailers shops open:

- The pharmacy
- Wenzel's Bakery

- Tesco Express
- Rex Artisan Bakery
- Fileppetos
- Village Wine Shop
- Tom Robertson Butchers, (pictured right) will remain open for the foreseeable future
- Pet Shop
- Martin's Newsagents
- Haranie's Food & Wine
- Avenue Stores (Elizabeth Avenue)



Food outlets (offering takeaway food)

- Meng House
- Shahin's Indian
- Rucola
- Efes
- The Metropolitan
- Sea World Fish & chips
- Mangal Express
- Nar Meze Grill ■



Community improvement plan (CIP)

The Little Chalfont Community Improvement Plan (CIP) represents the views and aspirations of the community. Its importance to the community is that, without such a plan, access to funding sources to enable projects to be delivered would not be possible.

A copy of the CIP is available on the community association's website using www.littlechalfont.org.uk/community_plan.html

Reports on projects will be a regular feature in all newsletters from both the community association (LCCA) and parish council (LCPC).

All the current projects are joint initiatives between the community association and the parish council.



Encouraging visitors

Although not a priority while we seek to overcome the coronavirus, self-isolation could well provide us with the opportunity to work on the leaflets that describe walks of interest to, from and around Little Chalfont.

We therefore repeat the request for help that was made in the LCCA's January newsletter:

We are looking for help from our many walkers in the community

and, if you have a favourite walk (short or long), and are willing to assist, please telephone either Roger Funk on 01494 762260 or the parish office on 01494 766655. A guidance note of the format and content will be available as a template.



Good neighbour initiative

The priority for the Little Chalfont Good Neighbours group is making sure that the community is pulling together to get through the coronavirus pandemic unscathed.

Please see the front page and other articles.



Underpass lighting - Beel Close to Marygold Walk

Completing the work by the end of March, as has been hoped, has not proved to be possible.

The final formality to be addressed is the agreement of Transport for London/London Underground and this is taking longer than anticipated.

Although agreement in principle is held, the final proposals and specifications that affect the underpass itself need to be accepted, and confirmed through formal documentation, as required by TfL/LU. The

specifications have been supplied and the response is awaited.

The current pandemic could well result in the implementation being further delayed and we will continue to keep you updated through the newsletters.



Village clean up and litter pick day

The clean-up and litter pick planned for the week of 17 to 24 May has been postponed until September at the earliest.



Nature friendly village

To enhance our green spaces and provide a lifeline for pollinators, patches of wildflowers are planned for the following verges:

- The corner of Stoney Lane and the A404 on the R/H side as you approach the village from Chorleywood.
- Between Chalfont Avenue and the A404, visible as you approach the station.
- The corner of Bell Lane and Elizabeth Avenue – opposite Chalfont Valley Primary School entrance. ■

Little Chalfont Community Association updates

LCCA website: www.littlechalfont.org.uk

Many of our updates are incorporated in the community improvement plan section above.

Membership

The association is the 'voice of the community' and the larger our membership, the greater our strength in making representations on behalf of the whole village. If not already a member of the community association, we invite you to join.

Whether you are reading this newsletter for the first time or are a regular reader of the quarterly newsletters, (which alternate between the parish council and the community association), the extent of our activities will be clear.

We are looking to increase the strength of our influence and hope that you will help us to achieve even more for the community. Do please

download our application form, read about activities and join us today. It is available from the LCCA website or contact membership@littlechalfont.org.uk for a printed form.

Volunteer opportunities

Interested in being a part of the "voice of the community" and making Little Chalfont an even better place to live? We are looking for volunteers to join the team.

The current vacancies on the committee include the following:

- Minutes secretary
 - Editor for the newsletter
 - Committee member for businesses and shops
 - Webmaster (including redesign)
 - PR and Communication
- The Little Chalfont Charitable Trust, which was formed by the community

Village day for 2020 has been CANCELLED

Government directives apart, the coronavirus epidemic could well be around its peak in June and there will still be a risk of spreading the virus. The committee has therefore decided that we should not go ahead with Village Day in 2020.

An alternative date later in the year was considered but discounted as not realistically possible to arrange.

association to take on and deliver projects for the community, is also looking for new trustees to help prepare the charity for new projects. Its most significant project to date is the establishment of the nature park.

If you would like to learn more of all these opportunities, please contact chairman Roger Funk on 01494 762260 or by emailing chairman@littlechalfont.org.uk ■

Parking charges temporarily lifted

With effect from 26 March, all parking charges in car parks and parking bays were suspended and parking on yellow lines is permitted as well, during the current crisis. This will remain in force until further notice.

However, please be aware that it is *an offence to park where the kerb has been lowered* to help wheelchair users

and powered mobility vehicles. Dropped kerbs are clearly marked, either by a white cross painted in the road (like that alongside Nightingale's Corner), or by double yellow lines (like that in Chenies Parade).

It is also still *an offence to park in disabled bays* unless you are a disabled driver.

We have been hugely impressed by the number of people in the village who have offered to help neighbours in greater need than themselves.

However, when you are shopping for yourselves or neighbours in need, please keep clear of dropped kerbs. Please also do not park in bays that are especially reserved for disabled drivers. ■

About Little Chalfont Parish Council

Parish councillors



Brian Drew
Chairman



Mike Crowe
Vice chairman



Michael Parker
Planning committee
chairman



David Rafferty
Planning committee
vice chairman



David Alexander



Ian Griffiths



Chris Ingham CMG



Vinny Patel



Janet Walford OBE
Newsletter editor

Newsletter distribution

The parish council newsletter is usually delivered to all homes and businesses in the village. Current restrictions mean that this is not possible on this occasion and the newsletter is therefore being produced in digital form only.

Parish council meetings

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

The meetings are held at Little Chalfont Village Hall in Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont, commencing at 7.30pm. 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 have the opportunity at all meetings to express their views and to ask the council for support in relation to various matters. **Note: Meetings are currently cancelled during the present crisis until further notice.**

Planning committee meetings: Usually held every four weeks, starting at 7pm or 7.30pm – please check website or notice boards for details. At these meetings local residents can hear discussions on planning applications for Little Chalfont, comment on any that are of interest to you, and hear whether the parish council agrees that a planning application should go ahead. **Note: Meetings are currently cancelled during the present crisis until further notice.**

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:

Council offices are currently closed until further notice.

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



Felicity
Copp
Parish clerk



Sallie Matthews
Assistant parish
clerk

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!