

From the Parish Council

## 2014 Chairman's Report

The Parish Council consists of myself as the Chairman and I am also one of the Council representatives of the West Trust; Ken Green who is the Vice Chairman and heads up the Footpaths Committee and has responsibility for the Website; Daniel Osborn who is on the Planning Committee, is our Police Liaison as well as the second Council representative on the West Trust; Debbie Hampson also on the Planning Committee and leads the Pond Project; Roger Mence who is able to attend many external meetings on our behalf; Mike Wells who leads the traffic calming measures including Speedwatch. Sharon Brown stepped down from the Council earlier this year – we thank her for her contribution to the running of the Council. We will be looking to co-opt someone new onto the council. And of course the most important member of the Parish Council and this is Lesley Smith who is our Parish Clerk.

As always the past year has been a very active one for the Parish Council. In case you are not aware we do a lot of work behind the scenes. We work on a voluntary basis trying to do as much as we can for our local community. As well as our monthly meetings and individual responsibilities we attend local and area meetings where decisions can be made that affect our Parish, we lobby MP's and local councillors, we defend the rural nature of our community, we encourage and support local activities, we look for ways of improving facilities and the infrastructure, we strive to keep our community spirit and, as your representatives, we listen to you.

Once again it would appear that the Parish Council has increased the Precept – this year by 1.5%. This is the amount that the Parish Council gets from your Council Tax Bill. At our meeting in February we decided that we would again not increase the precept this year. The increase has come from Central Beds Council. CBC calculates the amount householders pay for the precept by dividing what we ask for by the number of Band D properties in the Parish. There are, however, some Band D properties that, because of special circumstances, will get a reduced rate and be charged at a Band C Rate. In the past Central Government has paid the difference direct to the Councils. Central Government has now stopped this. Now CBC calculates the tax base by dividing the number of Band D properties paying the Band D rate. This has meant that the number of Band D properties paying the Band D rate has fallen and hence the increase. Central Government has provided funding to local authorities to cover any the loss of revenue from the reduction of Band D properties. Central Government expected Local Authorities to pass down this funding to Town and Parish Councils so that there would not be an increase in the precept. Central Beds is one of only 17 Authorities not to pay back the increase.

Our Precept is £6500 per year. Between a quarter and a third of our precept we receive from you goes straight back into our community in the form of grants and awards. We keep a third for contingencies and the rest is used in the running of the Council activities.

The accounts can be viewed via the Clerk, as can all Parish Council documentation – minutes of meetings, correspondence, accounts, etc. - if you are a resident of the Parish.

Planning is one of our many concerns, both at a Parish and County level. At a County and National level we are very vocal in our determination to protect the Green Belt. We want to maintain the rural nature of our Parish so we are keeping a careful watch on the housing development that will be

coming toward our Parish from Houghton Regis. The A5/M1 link road will be the barrier to the development.

Once the A5/M1 link road is opened there will be a weight ban on traffic through Tebworth plus we might get other traffic calming measures.

You also need to be aware that there may be Planning Application for a Solar Panel farm at Chalgrave Manor Farm.

We are concerned about the provision of Traveller and Gypsy sites. Whilst our Parish is not directly involved, our neighbouring Parishes are involved. We saw only recently in Harlington and Toddington the negative impact that some sections of the Traveller community can cause. However, we are heartened by the questions raised and debate in Parliament about defining a traveller and questioning why there appears to be one set of planning laws for the travelling community and another for the rest of the country. We are pleased that our MP Andrew Selous is central in raising these issues.

We will be doing more to monitor speeding through the Parish. Mike is working with the Police on the Speedwatch campaign. This involves speed checks using a mobile speed sign in both Tebworth and Wingfield. Registration numbers of speeding vehicles are noted, we can send the numbers to the Police and they send out a letter to the owner the vehicle. If they are reported a second time they get a stronger letter – the third time they get a visit from the Police. Other Parishes are also involved in Speedwatch and registration numbers are coordinated by the Police.

We continue to pressure Highways to repair our roads which have suffered over the winter. You will have seen that some work has been done but there is still more to do. We also concerned about the temporary patching. We trust the Central Beds will apply for funding from the money set aside by the Government for road repairs after the extreme wet weather.

The unprecedented amount of rain that we have had at the end of last year and the beginning of this year has led to flooding in Parkview Lane, Hill Close, Hockcliffe Road and down The Lane. We are getting all the gulleys cleared and we are in contact with Highways to look for solutions to Parkview Lane and Hill Close. You may remember we spent a considerable amount on Parkview Lane a few years ago and the flooding was cured – it may be that the soakaway has silted up or we may have to find a way of channelling the excess water.

There has been an increase in crime in our Parish. Please be vigilant and lock up sheds, windows and doors. If you see anything suspicious please report it to the Police or to Dan, myself or any of the Parish Council. We get information about crime in our Parish from the Police we would like even more information particularly % increase or decrease.

Finally the Millennium Youth and the Community Awards for 2013. We have some nominations which is great. Both awards are to recognise a significant achievement or community service. The Millennium Youth Award is for 18 years and under and is a 'well done' for academic or sporting achievement, contribution to the community, overcoming difficulties, or other significant achievement The Community Award is for over 18's and is a 'thank you' for service to the community. If you have a nomination please contact the Clerk, Lesley Smith, or any of the councillors asap.

You are invited to any of our meetings. They are usually on the third Tuesday of the month in the Memorial Hall at 7:30.

Phil Parry  
Chairman