

2018 Chairman's Report

The Parish Council consists of myself as the Chairman and I am the Council representative on the West Trust; Ken Green who is the Vice Chairman and heads up the Footpaths Committee and has responsibility for the Website; Debbie Levy leads the Planning Committee; Mike Wells who runs our Speedwatch activities and also works on our website, Paul Whitton who has responsibility to monitor Fly Tipping, Kevin Ludgate who is responsible for Police Liaison, Lesley Smith who is our Parish Clerk and new Councillor Janet Day who replaces Barbara Jackson..

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.

Our Precept this year is £7,217. About a quarter 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 on our website or via the Clerk.

The Great Pond of Tebworth has taken up much of our time over the past 18 months. To keep you up to date - the PC has been at odds with a resident living next door to the Great Pond. We believed the issue was around privacy but now the PC knows that the issue was always about ownership. The resident is now claiming ownership of nearly half of the pond area through 'Adverse Possession'. Adverse Possession has two elements – (1) that the resident has been solely dealing with that land and nobody else has for ten years, (2) there has been an intention to possess the land for ten years. The PC had not realised until recently that there was intent to possess the land. The resident has denied on at least two occasions over the years that he was intending to own part of the land surrounding the Pond. We are very disappointed that someone is trying to claim a piece of land that has been part of the Parish and a public amenity for hundreds of years. The issue will be going to Land Registry Mediation and then possibly Tribunal.

Mike is leading our Speedwatch Campaign. We are out on Toddington Road, Wingfield Road and Tebworth Road. We are limited to where we can use the speed sign because of Health and Safety. Please speak to Mike if you want to know more or to volunteer. We are aware that the VAS on Toddington Road is not working. We are looking at the cost of repair or replacement but as I mentioned last year we waited until we knew if there will be a 20 MPH speed limit through Tebworth now that the Link Road is open – as discussed with CBC. We were somewhat taken aback when there was a proposal from CBC, completely unexpectedly, to increase the speed limit to 40 MPH! Fortunately, because of a backlash from residents, the PC and a nudge from Mark Versallion, they have withdrawn the proposal and it will remain 30mph going down to 20mph on the bends. The 20mph will be advisory.

The A5/M1 link road has made a significant difference to the number of vehicles – particularly lorries – coming through our Parish. I don't have the numbers in front of me but when we do Speedwatch I believe it has cut the numbers by over a half.

Fly tipping has always been a problem in the Parish. Cllr. Paul Whitton has been doing a splendid job of trying to find the source of any fly tipping by looking through it for evidence of addresses. He has had success – one person has been fined and there are two more cases going to court. Please contact Paul to report fly tipping so that he has a chance to investigate.

We continue to work on an Emergency Plan. This is planning for any emergency that might occur in our Parish such as a long-term power outage. The plan will include a list of the more vulnerable in our Parish, transport volunteers, availability of such items like generators, 4-wheel drive vehicles, etc. The Plan can be used when we have problems with snow as we did early this year - Cllrs Green and Whitton with the help of Barbara Jackson contacted members of the community to ask if they needed anything. It resulted in a run to the shops for supplies in Pauls 4-wheel drive.

We are always concerned about Planning. There are several houses being built in the Parish – down The Lane, behind Ivy Farm and on College Farm. This increases our housing stock by about 10%. We recognise that there is a need for new houses, but we strive to maintain the rural nature of our Parish. So, we look very hard at any planning application and make sure that planning rules are not broken.

We are fortunate to live in a low crime area. However, there are break-ins and burglaries so please make sure that doors and windows are locked and outbuildings are secure. Please report anything that you think is suspicious and report any crimes.

Central Beds Council have a number of on-line consultations over the year on a variety of subjects. We respond to them on your behalf, but we are concerned that one or two of them should also be responded to by individuals. There is currently a consultation on Waste and Recycling – you should have received a leaflet about the proposals. Please comment before the 20th April. The PC is concerned about a three-week black bin collection and a charge for green bins. We feel that the charge may lead to an increase in fly tipping.

We are concerned with the parking at the bottom of Wingfield Road. Cars are parking too close to the corner making visibility difficult. It is in fact illegal but we don't want to go down the route of yellow lines but would prefer people to be considerate.

We are aware of the potholes and continue to press CBC on a regular basis.

We are still trying to get the streetlamp at the end of St Marys Close working. It has been years now, but we are still trying!

Finally the Millennium Youth and the Community Awards for the past year. We need nominations. 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 18s 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.

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. Minutes of our meetings are posted on the Chalgrave Parish Council website and on the notice boards.

Phil Parry
Chairman