

CHENIES PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report for the year to 31 March 2017

The Council met 6 times during the year. Meetings are held in the Sun Room at the rear of The Baptist Chapel and are open. The first item on the agenda is the democratic quarter hour which gives parishioners the opportunity to raise any issues of concern .

The Council consists of me as chairman, Charles Macleod Matthews as vice chairman, Martin Walker, Gill Leaper and David Martin who was co-opted in July. The important role of Parish Clerk passed from Kathryn Le Neve Foster to Peter Waite at the end of September following a hand-over period. We are very grateful to Kathryn for all her hard work over many years and for agreeing to stay in post for an additional 6 months and to Peter for agreeing to take over and for his work over the last 6 months. The Council also values the support and advice of Noel Brown, our County Council representative, who manages to find the time to attend the majority of our meetings. As chairman I should like to thank them all for their hard work and advice during the year.

Countess of Warwick Charity. The Parish Council appoints the trustees of this charity. Following the death of Elizabeth Macleod Matthews, who had been a trustee for very many years, the Council was very pleased when Boo Macleod Matthews agreed to be appointed trustee in her place.

Maintenance

Repairs to the bus shelter were completed. There is a question over whether the new roof shingles should be treated with stain or be left to weather naturally.

Amersham Town Council's Grounds Staff do an excellent job cutting the grass on the village green and greensward and now the verge along Claypits Lane. They agreed to hold their price for a new two year contract covering the year under report and the current year. The Council also arranges for the cutting of the hedge along the greensward.

Highways and Footpaths.

We continue to struggle with Bucks County Highways in getting even the smallest jobs carried out and they in turn struggle with lack of funding and at times acute staff problems. Our current maintenance list includes repair of the VAS at Latimer cross roads, a solution to the flooding issue at the top of Village Road just before the A404 and having all the white lines and road markings re-painted. These and the usual potholes and footpath repairs are regularly chased.

The dire condition of Claypits Lane is well known to us all and was commented upon at this meeting last year. Despite the efforts of this Council and of residents and with the full support and influence of Noel Brown the best we have been able to achieve is a place on the schedule of re-surfacing works for the 2018 financial year.

30mph Speed Limit. Following the approach by a resident the council submitted an application to Bucks Highways via the Local Area Forum to have the start of the speed limit as you enter the village from the A404 moved much closer to the main road junction.

Unfortunately we heard in January that the proposal did not meet Department for Transport criteria. We immediately appealed this decision and as a result an application has now been made for a speed limit assessment to be carried out and we await the results of this application.

Parking/Speeding along Greensward At our November meeting a delegation from Village Road Residents addressed the Council to highlight the road safety issues being experienced including speed of traffic past their front doors and parking by non-residents. A meeting with Bucks CC took place on 12th January to discuss the issues generally. It was agreed that the Network Road Safety team would look at the site and put forward proposals however, after chasing, all that has emerged is a pamphlet entitled 'Traffic Calming in Bucks' and the suggestion we submit our own scheme. We have again requested professional advice from County and discussions are ongoing with residents who have been encouraged to experiment ie with temporary cones to create no parking gaps at intervals and to monitor the outcome. Meanwhile the Council are working on possible schemes to consult with affected residents and to discuss with County.

Planning. The draft Chiltern & South Bucks Local Plan is making its way through the process and in November/December everyone was given the opportunity to comment on the list of potential sites for removal from the green belt thereby making them available for development. None of the sites were in our parish however two large sites one at Lodge Lane, Little Chalfont and one in the Lye Green area of Chesham would have an effect. Your council submitted its own response which was circulated through the e-mail system and is published on the website. The next opportunity to comment will be on the final draft plan probably in October.

We continue to consider all planning applications in the parish and comment on these to the planning department at Chiltern District Council. We also report on works which may have been carried out without permission not necessarily because we might object but because it is fair that everyone should be subject to the same process when wishing to alter their properties.

Local Government Bucks County Council have submitted a proposal to The Secretary of State to replace the present County and District Councils with one Unitary Authority. Whilst it is generally accepted that change is required to save money and to increase efficiencies the District Councils have submitted their own case for two Unitary Authorities – one for Aylesbury Vale and the other for Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks.

Water main. Affinity Water have announced their intention to replace the water main from the A404 down Claypits Lane and around the green. The work had been scheduled for October however this was postponed until a date yet to be announced.

The Precept for 2017/2018 increased by 2% to £6,630. Confusingly this year's bills show a decrease of 6%. We believe this is explained by the increase in the number of houses in the parish eg Great Green Street Farm.

Best Kept Village We gained 80 points out of a hundred and were awarded a Certificate of Merit.

Road names. Following consultation with the village our request to name our roads was submitted to District Council. It has been made clear to us that this kind of project is not a priority for them and that we suspect for budgetary reasons they will not risk starting the process if it is possible anyone might object since this would trigger a costly legal process. For this reason they have asked for a letter signed by every home owner agreeing to the road name. Appropriate letters will be prepared and delivered for signature.

Broadband. We have continued to lobby for faster broadband for the village. Gill Leaper has been leading our efforts and will report separately in a moment.

David Le Neve Foster

Chairman

20th April 2017