

# Chalfont St Peter Village Voice

## June 2010



**Editor: Elaine Quigley 01753 886412 [equit.text@virgin.net](mailto:equit.text@virgin.net)**  
**Chalfont St Peter website [www.chalfontstpeter.com/villagevoice](http://www.chalfontstpeter.com/villagevoice)**

**THE** AGM of the Parish Council took place on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> May in the Council Offices, with Chairman, Richard Allen, giving a comprehensive coverage of the past year's activities and directing thanks where it was due. Of course we are all focused on what is to happen on the grange site and Cllr Allen started with the Cores Strategy that has been worked on so diligently by our local team of hardworking and determined residents. He promised that Phil Turner of Planning Aid, would bring the meeting up-to-date, once the business was dealt with, which he duly did. More later. Cllr Allen praised Mr Turner and his colleague Pam Moore for their invaluable help and making it clear that our Village wouldn't be as well focused and prepared without their help to us through this charity. Their advice helped us to complete our Village Design Statement (VDS) in record time. This can be seen in the Village Library.

Many changes were demanded of the Village by the past Government and also we were getting increasing local government responsibility. As we are now in our new and larger Council offices, it behoved us to make a fresh start and reorganise administrative processes. Temporary Clerk, Samantha Payne is getting through a demanding workload and it is planned to take on more staff to replace those who have left, plus an on-going review will extend to all our working practices. As we've had the Village survey, it has produced a huge amount of information and though there have been generous volunteers to collate them, there is a great deal to do. CSP is the largest Parish in the UK and is closer to a town than a village so we are faced with quite a task, but having made a number of major changes to the democratic processes within the council we feel we are now able to move forward with many practical issues.

In addition to the VDS we have had to deal with a planning application on Holy Cross and the Core Strategy. Both of these are being dealt with by a planning consultant called CERDA who have issued an excellent response to both the Core Strategy consultation and the planning application on Holy Cross. Anyone interested in seeing these can look at the website. We employed CERDA because the village survey indicated that the majority of the village (over 75%) were opposed to the high density housing plans for Holy Cross and the Core Strategy. It was felt we had to employ a professional and CERDA with their team of planners and expertise in over 11 LDFs seemed perfect

for the job. This is costing the Parish money but we feel that it is justified. What is proposed for Chalfont St Peter in both the Holy Cross planning application and the Core Strategy would alter the character of the Village forever. It would also turn us into a town. We have heard a lot of positive noises from local politicians but what we'd like to see is the application refused and the Core Strategy altered. We don't want either the proposal from Gerald Eve or the Core Strategy in its current form and I can say that with certainty, because the Village has spoken. .

As you can imagine the amount of work generated by both the VDS and the Core Strategy has been vast. However we have been getting on with other stuff as well. Sponsoring Feast Day was a huge success and this year looks like being an even better event. I worked in the music industry for 20 years and I've been in some pretty strange places watching bands and don't think I've ever seen such determination to enjoy a concert in the pouring rain as in Chalfont St Peter. We had over a 75% approval rating from the village for sponsoring that event. Well done to the Feast Day committee for all the hard work on that event. The Village Appraisal Groups have been working hard and anyone who went to the Village Appraisal Group AGM will know just how much work the various branches have been carrying out from dealing traffic through to trying to improve our local environment. The River Misbourne Action Group has done a fantastic job with the river removing all the rubbish and improving the river banks and the River looks better now than since I can remember (and I swam in it once when it was full of old tyres so I have firsthand experience!) The Historical Group put in a fantastic letter to English Heritage to have the Grange site listed (which is still ongoing) These groups are always looking for volunteers so if you are looking for a rewarding hobby then please make yourself known to Cllr Linda Smith who chairs the Village Appraisal Group.

The council committees have of course been very busy and a short summary of the chairman's comments from each are below:

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT - Cllr ISOBEL DARBY**

We continue to provide: grant support to local organisations, refurbished two bus shelters, provide first hours free parking at point of use in the Church Lane car park and pay towards the cost of a PCSO dedicated to CSP.

We changed our internal auditor in the year and now thanks to his input have more robust financial procedures in place (financial regulations and purchasing policy adopted and computerised instead of handwritten records now kept). We reviewed our authorised signatures at the bank, contributed £10k to cycle path & pledged support to the Misbourne River Action group.

Council Tax is all paid to CDC who collect it on behalf of the Parish Council in addition to that for BCC, CDC, Fire Service, Police Service. Out of the £14.10 average charge per resident, Chalfont St Peter PC's share is just 44pence per week!

2010/11 £59.66 pa or £1.15 pw £29.94 per person pa or 44p per person per week

Financial facts assuming 5000 properties and 13000 population in CSP

(2009/10 258050/5000=£51.61 per household per annum OR £19.85 per person per annum £1per property pw or 38p per person pw)

**It is still cheaper to live in CSP than C St Giles, Little Chalfont Amersham or Chesham**

## **PR AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT – CHAIR Cllr PETER NOWELL**

The main activity in the year was the replacement of the Council's Website. This has now gone live but there is still development required and procedures for keeping it updated need to become part of our regular administration. The address is [www.chalfontstpeter-pc.gov.uk](http://www.chalfontstpeter-pc.gov.uk). Please visit the site and give us your comments including anything that needs changing.

We intend to renew two of our main notice boards at the top of Gold Hill and at Chalfont Common. We will also renew our "Bye law" notice boards on Gold Hill, Southside, and Cheena Meadow.

Meanwhile it is fair to say that the Council has probably done more this year than at any time in the past in communicating with Chalfont St Peter residents not least by promoting the Village Design Statement, the District Council Draft Core Strategy, and the proposed Holy Cross development.

Next year should see the website further developed and the new notice boards in place.

## **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE REPORT – CHAIR Cllr . JANET HARPER**

Last year we saw the River Misbourne flowing more continuously than it has for years, and the opening up of pathways through the woods in Austenwood and Gold Hill Commons, examples of the semi-rural nature of our village which we've proved is so important to us all.

The Open Spaces Committee has become increasingly involved in making the most of these natural assets, and worked through the year planning for positive changes in our allotments, playgrounds and in the

Garden of Rest. Much of this work involved painstaking review of regulations and operations which is resulting already in better communication with and more efficient service to the community. For example, the committee interviewed the allotment tenants last summer and followed up with a meeting this spring to work together on solving problems and generating improvement. The committee is very pleased with the number of people who have volunteered to instigate innovations such as the new online allotments forum. The committee already works with other community organisations on making the most of our public areas, and plans to engage more members of the community in working together on upgrading our playgrounds, tackling litter and building biodiversity into our green spaces which we all value so highly.

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT - Cllr. LINDA SMITH**

The Planning Committee met 18 times over the past year. We look at every planning application which has been made in the village and make comments to the District Council Planning Department.

We have averaged 18 applications per meeting with the most recent meeting reaching 28 applications.

We have responded to consultation documents such as Bucks County Council's Freight Policy, Parking & Enforcement Policy, Network Hierarchy and Emergency Planning and changes to bus services.

We have commented on Licensing applications for outlets in the village; reported breaches of planning to Chiltern, monitored enforcement and spoken at CDC Planning Meetings where appropriate.

The response to the Holy Cross application has been dealt with by CERDA on behalf of the Parish Council. We understand that an application for Newland Park is also imminent.

Thanks were offered to Eleanor Wilson for producing Agendas and Minutes and the members of the Committee for their hard work over the past year.

## **Cllr LINDA SMITH also provided the APPRAISAL GROUP REPORT**

Since Village Appraisal's inception in 2003 our groups have achieved some outstanding successes.

Last year we launched our Market Town Health check document at Feast Day. There are ambitious action plans which will be carried out when funding allows.

Most applications for grant funding must refer to actions in this document. We are currently seeking funding for an environmental project taking in Church Lane, the car park and additional work along the river. We have new members on the Environment & Heritage Groups and a new Group - Change for Chalfont who joined us this year.

We have received help and funding from the Parish, District and County Councils for which we are grateful. Our volunteers give up a lot of time and this recognition, help and funding is vital to them and I believe the reason why they feel that the work they are doing is valued and worth continuing.

Collaboration between Councils and other village groups is working well which is essential to make the best use of volunteers and limited funding to achieve improvements for our village.

### **Cllr KEN ADAMS reported on the Maria Taylor Trust**

saying that the £300 left by this lady in 1824 still did its charitable work, with monies also raised by the Carol Concert each year in the Parish Church and a request for legacies providing extra funds to invest. Originally the needy recipients received coal and bread at Christmas, but last year 25 elderly people received £28 each.

Cllr Allen summed up by noting the number of objectives which have been met this year and thanked all councillors and appraisal groups.

The report from Phil Turner followed and his calm and articulate information showed how important and effective his advisory support had been. He summarised the process that enabled us to have the benefit of free advice from Planning Aid, which gives priority to those facing major change, which is our situation and he commented on the fact that large numbers of people attended the various meetings and even stayed for workshops on the subject. There was high support for open spaces and green areas and the worry of the high density of proposed building brought people into the discussions. Mr Turner guided our volunteers working on the VDS in their knowledge of how to apply for and fill in forms and he gave high praise to the speed in which it was all done and delivered. A record in local activity's results.

Our local MP, Cheryl Gillan addressed the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February this year and 400 heard her promise to do all she could to ameliorate the potential problem. Our team has now got the planned building of dwellings down to 260, but there is a long way to go yet in finalising what will happen to the Holy Cross site.

Mr Turner mentioned that there was a very good local response to the questionnaire 3166 replies which = 32% and in general there was a 92% objection to the Draft Core Strategy that had been proposed. 74% wanted the School to move to the Site and to build some houses as well and 84% said no to Developers Gerald Eve's proposal.

Public involvement has been at record levels, with three manor tasks undertaken at the same time VDS is to influence the quality The small working group that is doing so well, can continue to rely upon professional advice from professional planning consultancy group - CERDA. And a number of recommendations will be carried forward by the Parish Council.

**A LOCAL Social Care Surgery** will be held at Budgens Chalfont St Peter 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 between 11am - 1pm this will enable residents of the local area a chance to "drop in" for advice and guidance on services provided by Adults and Family Well-being.

The Surgeries are also working in close partnership with Thames Valley Police and a local PCSO will also be attending to provide crime prevention and reduction advice.

Also the Local Area Technician from the highways department will be available to discuss any issues related to the roads in the local area.

**RETREAT Day:** Contemporary Spirituality and the Mystical Tradition, at Jordans Quaker Meeting House.

June 4<sup>th</sup> marks the first in a series of Friday Retreat Days offering you the chance of stillness in a hectic and busy world, with the opportunity to carry over that "being" mode into the weekend and your home life. It will be facilitated by Harvey Gillman, an inspiring and engaging presenter with a wealth of experience in writing and leading workshops on the themes of Spirituality, Language & Mysticism. The day will be split into four sessions: 1) an exploration of mysticism. 2) Quiet reflection on mystical texts, (to take place outside in our garden, weather permitting) 3) bringing together personal experience with what has been discussed 4) a final shared worship. Arrivals from 9.30am, when refreshments will be available. Session one will begin at 10am. Bring lunch to share at a midpoint during the day, with the day concluding at 4pm. Why not come to Jordans Quaker Meeting House at the bottom of Welders Lane to reflect, and seek some peace and tranquillity in its rural surroundings? Spaces still available but limited so book soon to avoid disappointment!

For enquiries or to book contact Cáit Gould on 01494 876 594 or [office@newjordans.org](mailto:office@newjordans.org) Visit our website at [www.newjordans.org](http://www.newjordans.org)

**JUNE** is our celebratory month in Chalfont St Peter and plans are well in hand for Feast Day activities. These will take place on old Hill Common on Saturday, 26 June, officially starting at 10.20am with entertainment throughout the day, including the traditional school display of gymnastics and country dancing, through to a football demonstration, a flyball event for dogs, the new Gerrards Cross Rock Choir and a vintage car parade, plus much more. The Battle of the Bands will take place between 4 and 6pm, to be followed at 8pm by the free concert, this year featuring The Bohemians, a Queen tribute band. Any surplus money raised on the day will go to charity and the Parish Church will be actively involved in the whole weekend and will be running the event raffle again this year. For the first time this year there will be a second hand book stall and no doubt donations of books would be welcome. Look out for the programmes, which will be sold in advance of the Feast Day and will contain lots of information about it.



**BEECHWOOD Artists** are holding their Spring Art Exhibition on 5/6 June at Chalfont St Peter Community Centre. The exhibition will be open between 10am and 5pm and refreshments will be available. Large free car park. Entry free of charge. For more information check out [www.beechwoodartists.org.uk](http://www.beechwoodartists.org.uk)

**ALL SAINTS' Church Music Festival** will feature The Memphis Jazz Band performing an informal concert on Saturday 12 June at 7pm (£15 pp including BBQ supper. Tickets are now on sale from: Anne Hatton 01753 882425 or Paddy Hague 01753 883384.

**THE** Gerrards Cross Flower Club meets on Wednesday, June 16, in the Colston Hall, The Memorial Centre, East Common, Gerrards Cross at 2.15pm when Jane Fox shows "Bring me Sunshine". Guests are always welcome and of course new members. More details from Pam Houchen: 01753 884190 or Chris Edgerton: 01753 884940.

**THE** next Village Older Person's Action Group (VOPAG) meeting is on Thursday, June 17 in the Parish Council Building, Gravel Hill. Coffee is at 10am and Meetings begin at 10.30, after which there will be a speaker.

**ST PETER PLAYERS** will present The Cemetery Club by Robin Hirsch on 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> June at the Community Centre Tickets available from Tina Barclay 01753 882935. A well observed piece with lots of wry humour - worth seeing.

**CHALFONT ST PETER** Garden Club has its next meeting on Wednesday, June 16 from 8 - 10pm in the Church Hall. Speakers are Freda Earl & Angela Wheeldon – A year at Sunny Side Allotments. Visitors are welcome.

**CHALFONT ST PETER W.I.** will be taking part in the BUCKS. FED. BIG COFFEE MORNING in our Library on June 8th 10--11.30 am. You are invited to tea or coffee with cake and say "hello". They are also taking part in the St.Peters Day festivities on Gold Hill Common on June 26th. We when they will have another Chinese Auction.

**Crime is down across Chiltern Local Police Area**  
Less crime has been committed across Chiltern Local Police Area (LPA) than the previous year, according to figures released this week by the Community Safety Partnership.  
The full press report can be accessed on line.: <http://bit.ly/dnS7vu>

**LEPROSY** coffee morning result was terrific. They had a bumper crowd and the Church Hall was buzzing with more people than seats available. People arrived from as far away as Bourne End and Amersham as well as good support from local residents, apart from members of Gerrards Cross Methodist Church. £469.43 was raised during the actual morning but this has now grown to just over £500 with late donations and sales. Each year the aim is to collect at least £1,000 for this cause and has been achieved for each of the past four years, with the Coffee Morning being our main event. They are now well set for achieving the target again for 2010.

<b>ELECTION</b> totals	General Election
Labour	2942
Lib Dem	14948
Conservative	31658 Cheryl Gillan
Ukip	2129
Green	767

**THERE** is a recognised shortage of 10,000 Foster Carers in the UK. PACT, founded in 1911, is also known as the Oxford Diocesan Council for Social Work inc. We are a registered charity working to improve life chances for children. The focus of our work is within Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire and aims to build and strengthen families. **PACT** is an approved Adoption and Fostering Agency, which has a history of finding safe, loving families for children in care. Here are a few facts about Fostering:

1. Did you know you don't have to be married to become a Foster Carer?
2. You don't have to have children already although you do need to have experience of caring for children.
3. Did you know you get paid a Fostering Allowance of £335.70 a week to be a Foster Carer which is tax free and won't affect any other benefits?
4. Most of the children who need fostering are known as 'hard to place' children, they will usually be 8+ years of age.

Fostering is a hard but very rewarding job. If you think you might have what it takes to become a Permanent Foster Carer or you want to find out more then contact PACT now on **0800 731 1845** e-mail [fostering@pactcharity.org](mailto:fostering@pactcharity.org)

#### **Alzheimer's Bee-Friending Scheme**

There are many people with dementia in Bucks who are living alone and feeling isolated. Some of them are housebound and spend most of the week not seeing anyone. Reliable, caring volunteers are needed who would be interested in providing companionship to a person with dementia in their home or out and about. If you get on well with people and enjoy a good chat you may really enjoy being a volunteer befriender. It is very rewarding and an hour of your time each week can make a real difference to someone's life. Looking for volunteers throughout Bucks.

Good communication skills and empathy are essential. All volunteers will be offered training and out of pocket expenses. For more details, please contact Joy Johns, 01895 837545, e mail [joy@voluntaryaction.org](mailto:joy@voluntaryaction.org).

**NEIGHBOURHOOD** police teams work closely with district councils, Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAG's) and other local groups. Each month they are required to provide an update of their activities and these are posted on the police website: [www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk) You can find information specific to your neighbourhood by keying your postcode into the box on the right hand column.

Amersham on the Hill District By-Election	
Labour	203
Lib Dem	1073
Conservative	1125 Nigel Shepherd