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Chalfont St Peter Village Voice

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ChalfontSt Peter website: www.chalfontstpeter.com/villagevoice

THANK YOU to everyone who supported the initiative of Chalfont St Peter C of E Middle School in their fund raising for Kenyan orphans. They raised **£5,800** in two weeks. Very well done all who contributed. The school in Kenya IS now able to bore its own water hole. You may remember the sad story, which is repeated below, just to show how much appreciated all this fund raising is by the school in Kenya.

Our Chalfont St Peter school was working directly with a school in a Kenyan slum, corresponding with the children and raising money. The school is run by one woman and sadly all of its furniture, bedding and equipment was bunt by political rioters earlier this year. All the children are orphans and sleep on the floor of the school. Orphans in Kenya are not allowed to have free state education as it's a social stigma. They are trying to replace everything and bore a water hole which the woman who runs the school can use the water to sell (water is not free in Kenya) and help fund the school. The aim is to raise £2500 in a week. Not only is this a worthwhile cause but it helps the children at the middle school realize that you can work together as a community locally and globally and raise money.

POP-IN meets every Thursday morning during term time from 10-11.30am in the Gold Hill Baptist Church and there is a crèche for babies and activities for pre-school children. This is a non-denominational group and all ladies are welcome to join the meetings. A warm welcome awaits mums with young children who can enjoy a coffee, home-made cake and chat, or simply chill out with a paper / magazine in the Jugglers' Café. For further information call GHBC on 01753 887173, or Joyce Gledhill on 01753 88026.

THE CSP WI meets on the second Wednesday in the month at the Church Hall, Church Lane at 2.15pm. On June 11th the topic will be Marks and Spencer Preview - 2pm start and on July 9th it is Seasonal Plants with Edwin Rye.

ALL SAINTS' Church Music Festival is in its fourth year and as ever and they have two confirmed events for May and June, with two more planned during the autumn. For further information and tickets, please contact: Anne Hatton (01753) 882425 or Paddy Hague (01753) 883384.. This summer performance is **THE BAND OF HM ROYAL MARINES PORTSMOUTH on Saturday, June 14, 2008, at 7:00 pm. £18/adult and £14/under 13 Includes BBQ supper In aid of an Armed Service charity (tbc)** More in next month.

VOPAG has been set up as part of the Chalfont St Peter Village Appraisal to give the older people of Chalfont St Peter the opportunity to meet together as citizens and exchange views, news and information of interest and concern. It provides an authoritative voice to take up issues with people who can do something about them. The next meeting is **Tuesday 19th June** and members are reminded that meetings now start at 10am for coffee, with business at 10.30am, held in the Parish Council office and new members are always warmly welcomed age group involved is over 55's.

THE AGM of the CSP Parish Council was well attended on Thursday, May 15 and the reports from the different committees brought us up to date with Village happenings and led effectively to the superb presentation by Tom Oliver, Head of Rural Policy for the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and Richard Moseley, planning Policy Campaigner.

Cllr Pamela Bacon, representing **the Open Spaces Committee**, started the proceedings and spoke on behalf of all the Councillors of the loss of Michael Miller to the Council, as a result of his sudden death recently. As a Civil Engineer his specialist advice was a very valuable and he will be sorely missed.

The Hay Wardens were also thanked, as well as Sue Moffat the Parish Clerk and Elinor Wilson, her deputy. Much changing and mending has been done over the past year, with the exchange of the kissing gates with more traditional ones. Litter has been a constant problem, but the Hay Wardens try to keep abreast of it in both the village streets and the green spaces and play areas. Litter has been a constant problem, though co-operation from local people who pick up litter as they encounter it, has helped to keep the village centre reasonably clear.

Ken Adams from the **Amenities and Planning committee** said that their meetings were once every three weeks. The planning committee examines all the plans associated with properties in the village and also with any tree felling and comments are passed to the Chiltern District Council for inclusion in the officers' report. Sometimes the views are upheld but not always. Over 300 plans have been examined and they have used electronic systems over the past year, which limited the amount of paper and its use is becoming more familiar. The committee deals with specifications of extensions and new buildings, where size has to be considered.

Since the closure of the Holy Cross Convent, very little has happened until the last few weeks. Permission has been sought to build a block of housing units for which the first application was refused.

A number of pubs in the village are closing. A few years ago we had more pubs than we had houses! In Gerrards Cross several pubs have had permission to be converted to houses and it's hoped this won't happen in Chalfont St Peter.

7 shops in the village are currently for sale. It is important that type of retail use should be maintained and the drive to parking restrictions and meters has been a matter of concern to the Parish Council and the public. The Parish Council has put in a request to the Chiltern District Council for a free first hour in the car park, behind the village church, to be available for the next 3 years, but are awaiting their reply.

Policy and Finance was the next report, given by Jenny Brooke on behalf of Isobel Darby. She said that the committee met four times over the last year, to carry out its day to day work of recommending the making of grants to needy local organisations, agreeing and monitoring the annual budget, with the assistance of the clerk, Sue Moffat, in her role as Responsible financial Officer.

In particular this year, they discussed the manner in which our council interfaces with other local organisations and now have a working party looking into it. They also were aware that there may be a better way for them to deal with personnel matters and now have a human resources working party to look into this also.

They also mentioned the negotiations about the car parking in the Church Car Park, obviously something very dear to the hearts of all Chalfont St Peter drivers and shopkeepers, and they continue to spend your money wisely, setting a precept for the year 2008/09 of £251,511. This is a larger than normal increase, but is still significantly lower per household than in neighbouring parishes. This will be available to fund the free parking and assist with achieving Quality Council status.

The Maria Taylor Trust, for which both Bruce Allen and Ken Adams are trustees, was presented by Bruce Allen, who mentioned that when Maria Taylor died in 1823, she left £300 to provide coal, blankets and bread for the needy of Chalfont St Peter, but said that if only she'd left land, the trust would be so much better off! Bruce Allen quoted the minute book of 1895, which recorded that 54 people received tokens to get goods at Christmas.

At Christmas last year, they had a donation of just over £600 to share out, £200 of which came from the fair on the Common and the Carol service made up the shortfall. Each year they give out £25 to each person and both trustees said that the relief and gratitude that they were shown was most moving. One lady had nothing for heating, so Ken Adams collected some logs from the Hay wardens to take to her. It was stressed that it would be most appreciated, if anyone who could, would consider leaving even a small legacy in their will.

Linda Smith reported on the Village Appraisal Groups and initially paid tribute to Michael Miller, whose recent untimely death has been a great loss. At the time of his death he was a member of the Environment Group, Vopag, Traffic & Transport and the Community Safety Group. He was also Treasurer of the Steering Committee. They also miss his civil engineering expertise.

This past year has again been busy for all the groups and she thanked all members for their continued support. Apart from the loss of Michael, Corinne Jefferies who led the older persons action since the beginning has moved on to other things and shortly Megan Wall from the Youth Group and the Community Safety Group and Malcolm Bird from the Transport & Traffic Group, will both be moving away from the village. So they are looking for new recruits.

Moving to the activities of the groups over the past year, in alphabetical order:

Community Safety Group has been successful in setting up more Neighbourhood Watch schemes throughout the village and this will continue, If anybody is interested in a scheme for their road please let Megan or Tony know. They have also continued with the successful police surgeries in Budgens Supermarket which the Police are finding most useful. It does give the opportunity for residents to speak privately to our local Police.

The Environment Group was successful in securing a Lottery Breathing Spaces Grant of £10,000, to fund improvements to the banks of the River Misbourne from the Greyhound to the tennis club. An improvement plan was drawn up by a Chalk Streams Project Officer from the Countryside Agency and the Environment Agency who own the river bed. The work is being overseen by BCTV. Tree work has already been carried out. The next phase will be called Operation De clutter and is due to take place on Saturday, 7th June between 9.30 am. And 3.00 p.m. This will involve the de-cluttering of the river bed and the river bank and it is hoped that residents and children will volunteer to do this work under the guidance of BCTV. The final phase will be the planting of natural flowers along the banks. This work is being carried out with the permission of CDC who own the land and they have moved the recycling bins away from the river bank as part of this project. This Group also, with the Parish Council, successfully lobbied the County Council for our new crossing outside Mill Meadow, having carried out a survey at Feast Day two years ago.

The Heritage Group, or Celfunde Inheritance as they wish to be known, arranged a very successful launch of their first exhibits last October in the foyer outside by the Lord Lt. of Buckinghamshire. Thanks are due to the Parish Council for allowing the group to use this foyer and to CDC for a grant to cover the cost of the display boards and the graphics. A website has now been commissioned. The next big project will be the Living History project and the group is working in partnership with the NSE and has submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund which, if successful, will fund an archivist to head up this project. It is also looking at future exhibits, portable exhibits and an education programme, all of which will require funding. The Group also has an agreement with the Open Air Museum to stage an exhibit over the August Bank Holiday weekend, during their 'Roman Weekend'.

Transport & Traffic has dealt with a number of consultations recently on the proposed new runway at Heathrow, the NATS change of flight paths and CDC's parking proposals. The Group also continues to lobby the bus companies and County with regard to the provision of bus services and the state of the roads and pavements in the village.

VOPAG has now become the voice of the elderly in the village. It holds monthly meetings in the Council offices in Gravel Hill with a regular attendance of 40 to 60 people who are able to voice their concerns and to listen to specially chosen speakers. It has also over the past year established a Simply Walks programme with a trained leader. This has led to it holding raffles to raise money to match-fund changing some of our stiles to gates by BCC, as some elderly walkers could not manage the stiles.

Since the **Youth Group** was elected to the Management Committee of the Youth Club, it has gone from strength to strength. There are now over 150 young people attending each week and a bank of around 40 volunteers. Their aim is to be open on more evenings of the week and during school holidays. The Youth Club's special project last year was the painting of the subway which was a great success. Both Vopag and the Youth Group were nominated in CDC Chairman's Volunteering awards and both gave a presentation at the ceremony last year which was a great advertisement for the way that Chalfont St. Peter Groups are leading the way. Our attempt to start a business group has not been successful and we have therefore decided that the Chamber of Commerce and the Village Association will be our conduit.

The Steering Committee's main task at present is to produce a Market Town Health check. This is being led by Bryan Sheppee. All Appraisal groups in Chiltern are producing a health check which it is hoped will lead to opportunities for external funding. The Health check will look at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and will consist of 4 categories - economy, environment, transport & traffic, and the community. The aim is to launch a draft document on the 28th June in the Parish Church Hall and it is hoped that other village societies will join in an create a Village Open Day. There will be a consultation period to enable Councils, local groups and residents to comment before the final document is printed. This will then form the basis of applications for funding for various identified projects and to concentrate each group's efforts in providing what the Village wants and needs.

Chairman of the Parish Council, Richard Allen, said that he was surprised to be chairman, but said he was always up for a challenge. He is happy that the council offices are used regularly and he hopes that there will be a fully up-to-date website operating by the end of the year.

Mill Meadow is an important green space for Chalfont St Peter. He mentioned about the news in the press that Chalfont St Peter was the most attractive place to live and talked about the in-filling in Chalfont St Peter.

After further discussions and reports, it was time for the speakers from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), Tom Oliver - Head of Rural Policy, who is a Landscape Architect and Richard Mosely whose speciality is Planning to give their excellent presentation.

They showed a poster by Frank Newblot from 1942, which encouraged people to come out and enjoy the country and take it more seriously. In fact the CPRE was set up in 1926 and is all about fight or things or against them, but always with the best interests of the countryside. It began when there was a great expansion of travel outside the cities, mostly due to the car and local councils rely upon it, as its purpose is to protect landscape, beauty, diversity and tranquillity. In the early days of the 20th Century, road signs proliferated and the CPRE sought to either have them removed or lessen their numbers.

Protecting farming is an important area for them, because the farmer protects the countryside, looking after the land and allowing nature to thrive without it being impeded by buildings or uses which inhibit it.

Repair and development of farming, forestry, land management, and landscape character, which is special to its position are all concerns of CPRE, to achieve maximum efficiency of use and continuity of supply. The northern part of the Thames Valley landscape character area we have rolling clay farmland, 24% of this character area is agricultural and 10% is woodland. It was pointed out that not all this is being properly developed or used. There are four categories, Maintained, Neglected, evolving and Diverging and the last category, which is currently a worry, means that there is no consistency. The area is under threat and has too much development and the potential for more.

There was discussion about the growth of the population and subsequent demand for homes. In 1901, we were told, Chalfont St Peter's population was 1,700, in 1961 it was 8,114 a few years ago it was 12,939 and now it is above 14,000. The infrastructure of the area is fully stretched and the proposals for more building on the site of Holy Cross Convent and the Newland Park University building, plus the likely resubmission from the CSE for permission to build on their land, is a worrying black cloud on the horizon, as we just don't have the facilities to meet it.

We were told that as a community, we need to work together to put in place structures that will give us power to fight the demands of developers and you will notice in the coming months that requests will be published for people to get involved in saving our community from being stretched beyond its capacity. **YOUR HELP WILL BE NEEDED. PLEASE GET INVOLVED IN SAVING CHALFONT ST PETER FROM OVER DEVELOPMENT.**

THE LONDON & SLOUGH Run takes food to the homeless, is struggling to get enough donations of sandwiches, fruit, biscuits and soft drinks, as many of the regular givers are away. Help would be much appreciated if you can take donations of these items, sandwiches labelled please, to St Joseph's Priory in Austenwood by 4pm on Mondays.

THIS MONTH St Joseph's Furniture Market donated £250 each to Age Concern (Gerrards Cross & The Chalfonts), Multiple Sclerosis Society (Maidenhead & Slough), Bucks Association for the Blind, Sunrise Cancer Unit – Wycombe Hospital and it donated £72 to St Francis' Children's Society.

The Market is open every Saturday morning from 9.30 to 12.30. It is situated in Priory Road, the first building past St Joseph's church car park. All proceeds are donated to charity.

CHALFONT COMMON WI report that news that an air ambulance had been called to a couple badly injured in an accident on the A413 at Chalfont St Peter proved a salient reminder for Chalfont Common WI members. For just a week or two earlier the importance and value of the air ambulance service was the subject of a talk to the WI at the May meeting. The air ambulance speaker gave the history of air rescue which came into being during the last war when helicopters were developed. The Swiss used them for skiing injuries and it really came to the fore during the Vietnam war, getting the injured to a field hospital as fast as possible. The first air ambulance service in England started in 1987 in Cornwall, then six more began operating during the following decade. The growth of the service depended on money from voluntary sources and public demand. Now there are 18 air ambulance services covering the country; our area being Thames Valley, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, roughly two and half million people in 3,000square miles. The speaker explained that in the case of a severe trauma the first hour was known as the golden hour where it was usually a matter of life and death. The Thames Valley service is based in Benson in Oxfordshire and the helicopter was expected to reach anywhere within its territory within 12/15 minutes. Apart from speed, the key advantage in using a helicopter was that the injured party could be flown straight to a specialist hospital whereas an ambulance would go back to its base where vital treatment might not be available. Helicopter crews consist of a pilot and two paramedics, have many years' experience and have to do a Royal Marines' course to cope with difficult terrains. It costs on average £1.5m a year to run the Thames Valley service. Each time the helicopter takes to the air costs around £1,000. Nearly half their operations involved road traffic accidents. The service relies on charitable fund-raising as it does not receive any funds from the Government or the National Lottery.

Meetings are on the first Thursday of each month in the Tony Graham room in the CSP community centre. 7.30 for 7.45pm

A bridge session at Gerrards Cross Memorial Centre is designed to act as a gateway to the exciting world of club bridge for novice players. Perhaps you've only played rubber bridge at home, or you don't think you are experienced enough to join a duplicate bridge club. This session could be your answer. The friendly directing team will help you with mechanics such as scoring and moving and will be happy to answer your questions about bidding and play. Cost is £5 per head, to include tea, biscuits and hand records. Why not go along. You don't need a partner. Garden Room, Gerrards Cross Memorial Centre, East Common Tuesdays 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. Contact Tess Templeton 01753 885004

CAREERS Springboard is a self-help group and regular participation in the Monday evening meetings should help to stimulate your job search skills. The meetings also provide the opportunity for you to share your views and problems with others. Volunteers are available to give personal advice. The Monday meetings take place 7.15 for 7.30pm at St Andrews United Reformed Church Hall, Packhorse Road, Gerrards Cross. To know more, see their comprehensive website www.careersspringboard.info. Forthcoming meeting information: June 2nd - Networking, June 9th-

Telephone Networking Practise, June 16th - Using Technology to support your job search., June 23rd - Interviews Part 1., June 30th - Interviews Part 2, July 7th - Break out Groups, July 14th - It's a job to find a job, July 21st - Action Planning for the summer break.

A new programme for the autumn will be published in August for meetings starting on Monday 1st September 2008.

DO YOU have a little spare-time and skills to offer as a volunteer with a local charity or community group? Voluntary Action has over 300 local groups registered with them to help them find volunteers. To find an opportunity to suit your needs, call Joy Johns on 01895 837545 or see www.voluntaryaction.org

TITHE BARN, on the other side of the bridge across the A413, has rooms to let, if you are looking for a venue for Parties, group meetings or one-off bookings for activities etc. It is very competitive price-wise, for example weekdays and weekends are £8 per hour or £10 per hour after 6pm. Telephone 01753 883712 to book or for more information.

AS THE warm weather continues, it is worth reminding you to be vigilant with your own security. Keep doors locked when you are in another part of the house and make sure accessible windows are not left open. This advice also applies when you are working or enjoying your garden. It doesn't take long for a criminal to enter an insecure door or window, take easily accessible items, such as handbags, mobile phones and keys and then possibly take your vehicle from outside your house. Remember, burglars don't need brains, they just need opportunities. Reducing the opportunity for crime, reduces your risk of being a victim of burglary and theft.