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## **CHEVERELL MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2013 - 2014**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As usual it has been a busy and interesting year for the Council.

We said goodbye to our clerk Val Noviss who retired after 5 years with the Council. We would like to extend a huge thank you to Val for all her work and support. Our new Clerk, Anita Whittle was appointed in January and we welcome Anita to the Council

With increasing pressure being placed on Parish Councils because of the cuts in local government funding and services we have developed stronger relationships with some Wiltshire Council departments. The maintenance of our drains and rights of way has been particularly successful, with a maintenance team tackling the drain issues and a promise of completing pothole work in the near future.

Wiltshire Council is responsible for maintaining the road surface and keeping the drains clear throughout the village. A new contact has been established at Wiltshire Council, and known issues are now being addressed. If you see any new potholes or blocked drains, please notify the Clerk or Cllr. Chris Hall.

We have a strong relationship with Wiltshire Police who have been very supportive in helping to implement our 20mph limit.

We have had a public consultation about a potential new housing development opposite Garston which was subsequently refused by Wiltshire Council. We also consulted with village residents about how we can effectively use our reserves. Thank you to all who responded with some excellent ideas. The ones that the Parish Council could implement have been considered and to date we have given grants to both the church and the school. Other ideas are being pursued and we are awaiting additional information.

It remains to thank everyone for their contribution to the running of the village and most especially to our teams of volunteers who take part in the Speedwatch scheme and ground maintenance. Thank you to Tom Fanshawe, Claire Franklin, Cllr. Chris Hall, Helen Hall, Dick Hazleton, Brenda Nock, Mike Nock, Hazel Simons, Derek Stamp, Gary Stamp and Alan Thompson for their contribution to Speedwatch, and to Cllr. Rob Hayward, Tim Roberts-Fare and Jeremy Davies who give up time to keep the village looking good.

## **TRAFFIC ISSUES**

The Parish Council has now agreed a strategy with Cllr. Philip Whitehead (Portfolio Holder for Highways, Wiltshire Council) to further reduce HGV traffic (over- and under-height vehicles) through Great Cheverell and surrounding villages. The plan involves new signage, communication with key freight companies

and possible street design changes to help deter repeated HGV use of the High Street; increase safety for vulnerable road users; and to protect and preserve this Conservation Area.

A permanent, mandatory 20 mph speed limit came into force in the village in September 2013. This legal change was followed by a publicity campaign.

A Community Speedwatch (CSW) Group was established in the village in December 2013, in conjunction with Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Police. It has had some success in slowing traffic down, especially outside the School. However, more volunteers would enable the Group to be more active - please contact Cllr. Chris Hall if you can help.

## **WEBSITE**

The Cheverell Magna Parish Council website has been updated (twice) during the last year to bring it up to date with current technology and it can now boast that it is a 'responsive website' - which translates as being able to render on all devices from computers, tablets and mobile phones. The website provides information regarding the Parish Council, local businesses and a brief history but is largely article based in the *News* section to show the diverse range of interests and issues that reflects Great Cheverell today. If any parishioners wish to submit information for inclusion please contact Cllr Stephanie Davies or The Clerk, Anita Whittle (details on the website) [www.greatcheverell.org](http://www.greatcheverell.org).

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Following an appeal by the Parish Council the village was re-designated a “small” village in Wiltshire Council’s Core Strategy. This means that under current policy development in the village should be restricted to infill. Thus, it was deemed that a Neighbourhood Plan for Great Cheverell would be unnecessary. However, following the application by Gladman Developments for a development of 20 houses opposite Garston this decision has been reconsidered and we propose during 2014 to follow the scoping process for a Neighbourhood Plan before making a final decision. There will be a consultation process and it should give a clear indication of what the village needs in terms of development.

## **FINANCE**

The Parish Council regrets that, due to unforeseeable circumstances, the 2013/14 Accounts, which are normally available for this meeting, will not be available. They will, however, be completed in accordance with the Statutory deadline of 30 June..

In compliance with a recommendation from the Auditors to reduce reserves the Council undertook a survey of parishioners to identify possible schemes of benefit to the village. This resulted in a number of grants being made to groups within the Parish, namely the church and school to date.

The Parish Precept has increased by about 4% for 2014/15, which is less than £2 per year per household. This is largely due to a change in Grant treatment on Housing Benefits, which is

outside our control. The Parish Council continues to scrutinise its budget carefully to deliver cost-effective services.

## **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

2013/2014 was an extremely tough year for the maintenance of the playing field and surrounding grassland due to the very wet weather. The field was under water for much of the winter but with better weather we will try to get the field back to good shape. However, this hard work is hampered by inconsiderate parking on the field by parents when collecting children from school. Also, there is an ongoing issue with rubbish being placed in the playground bin. This bin is emptied by volunteers so the Council would urge all parents to take the contents of their child's school bag and lunch box home with them. The bin installed for dog waste has eased the fouling on the field but not entirely erased it so dog owners please bag it and bin it.

The Council believes that keeping our village clean and tidy is the responsibility of everyone. If we all just picked up one piece of litter or emptied the overflowing bin in the play area, mowed round the tree outside our door or trimmed the paths near where we lived the whole village would benefit. As always we owe a big thank you to our team of volunteers who give up their time to keep our village looking beautiful.

## **PLAYGROUND**

The Playground continues to be a great source of enjoyment for all ages. The Playground is inspected each month by Cllr. Jane Andrew, and the Council is grateful to everyone who reports any

maintenance issues as safety is a priority. Any suggestions for additional equipment should be referred to the Clerk or Cllr. Andrew.

## **COUNCIL MEETINGS AND COUNCILLORS**

Council meetings are normally held on the first Monday of the month (except where there is a Bank Holiday) at 7.30pm in the New Pavilion. Villagers are always welcome to attend and are encouraged bring issues to the attention of the Council during the Open Forum before the formal meeting. Parishioners are also welcome to stay for the whole meeting if they wish. However, the formal meeting is a closed meeting, which the Chair has the authority to close if appropriate, to hear the views of Parishioners.

If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact the clerk or any councillor.

Jane Andrew

Stephanie Davies

Chris Hall

Rob Hayward (Vice Chair)

Ann Lumb

Paul Stevens

Lynda Wearn (Chair)

Clerk: Anita Whittle: [cheverellmagnapc@btinternet.com](mailto:cheverellmagnapc@btinternet.com)