

CHEVERELL MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-1015

INTRODUCTION

What an interesting year it has been. Our main focus has been the planning application to build 25 houses on land opposite Garston, followed by an appeal when planning permission was refused by Wiltshire Council.

We said goodbye to two councillors this year, Mr Chris Hall in September 2014 and Mr Paul Stevens in March 2015. The Parish Council would like to extend their gratitude for the invaluable work and support that both councillors provided during their term of office. We are pleased that Chris is continuing with the very successful Neighbourhood Speedwatch Team to whom we extend our grateful thanks.

We welcomed Councillor Alan Thompson onto the council in February 2015. There are another two vacancies and if you feel you could contribute to the affairs of the village, please speak to the Parish Clerk, Anita Whittle after the meeting.

We also have a team of volunteers who give up their own time to do a sterling job in keeping all of our grounds around the Pavilion in good order- thank you, Rob Hayward, Jeremy Davies and Tim Roberts-Phare.

BUILDING APPEAL

The planning application by Gladman Developments to build 25 houses in a field opposite Garston was appealed against and the hearing was heard in February 2015. It was a long process

lasting six days. The council made representation to support Wiltshire Council in their defence of the decision to turn the application down. Many of you supported us in our efforts to convince the planning inspector that the site was unsuitable for development. When this Annual Report was published there was no information about whether or not we had been successful. One thing that became clear in the process was that although the Wiltshire Core Strategy was approved and adopted by Wiltshire Council it seems not to provide a guarantee that villages like ours will be protected by the policies found within it. Therefore, we have agreed to join forces with Little Cheverell and possibly Erlestoke to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. If you would like to be involved in this process please give you name and contact details to the clerk after the meeting.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

Over the past year, we have pursued a strategy agreed with Cllr. Philip Whitehead (Wiltshire Council) to further reduce HGV traffic and improve safety in the village.

The results have been disappointing. Many ideas (e.g. traffic calming at north and south village entrances) have been rejected often on grounds of Department for Transport rules. Consultation with residents on two measures that were allowed revealed convincing opposition to an on-carriageway footpath, which was therefore dropped. Finally, instead of new signage to reduce HGV traffic through the village, we now have large, inappropriate signs in and around Great Cheverell to keep lorries off minor lanes.

Our successes were: the removal of two of the new HGV signs; surveying freight companies regularly using the High Street and getting Wiltshire Council to write to them to avoid this route where possible; an informal crossing point by Bartletts; a strong case for a 30 mph speed limit on much of The Green

WEBSITE

Our website is now fully functional and we publish all minutes and agendas on it as well as relevant information for parishioners.

<http://www.greatcheverell.org/>

We are happy to publish information about your club or event please send information to Councillor Stephanie Davies.

FINANCE

The council's financial year opened with a balance of £38066.77 carried forward from 2013/14. This includes £24500.00 in a two year investment account and a further £8000.00 which is funds that can only be spent on capital projects not the day to day running of the council.

The precept for 2014/15 was £8044.24 plus a Housing Subsidy grant from Wiltshire Council of £366.49. Total £8410.73. Other income totalling £1800.19 was received made up of various monies including a VAT return of £1115.34.

The councils expenditure totalled £8843.34, a slight over spend of £108.34 against budget due to the clerks hours being raised from 6 per week to 7 and a number of extra hours worked by the clerk to bring the councils policies up to date.

Separate from the budgeted expenditure, the council awarded various grants from its capital projects monies as follows: £1000 to the village hall, £1096.79 towards the purchase of the new catering bar-b-q, £1825.00 to the Pavilion for lighting and sound equipment, £198.00 for the new sign to the church, £809.10 for 20 new folding tables for use at village events and £716.54 for a new village marquee.

The carry forward for 2014/15 is £33788.92, a reduction on 13/14 end of year balance due to awarding the grants to various village organisations.

The precept for 2015/16 is £8521.88 plus the reduced housing subsidy grant from Wiltshire Council of £267.54. Total £8789.42. The rise of approximately £1.95 per household is to cover the reduction of the housing subsidy grant of £98.95 and the increased over all running costs of the council. The council does make every effort to keep its costs to the bare minimum but unfortunately outside cost increases mean it has had to raise the precept for financial year 2015/16.

These accounts have been audited by the councils internal auditor and a balance sheet is available tonight if you would like one.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

We continue to have problems with dog fouling especially in Green Lane. We would urge all dog owners to either use the bins provided or to take their “poop” bags home with them.

Our small team of volunteers continue to keep the playing fields looking clean and tidy for which we are very grateful. The lawn mower is showing its age and funds for a new one have been identified.

We have just had a Village Clean Up day and thanks to all the people who attended and gave support in keeping our village clean and tidy.

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 well utilised by children from all around. It is maintained to the required standards. We are always looking ideas, to improve and add to the playground. Any ideas please contact Councillor Jane 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 to 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

Rob Hayward (Vice Chair)

Ann Lumb

Alan Thompson

Clerk: Anita Whittle: parishcouncil@greatcheverell.org

Finally from me, this will be my last report to you. After 10 years I have decided to stand down from parish council life. It has been an honour and a privilege to have served the village but it is time

for some new ideas and enthusiasm. I would like to extend my thanks to all councillors past and present, with whom I have had the pleasure of working with and I would like to thank you the parishioners for all your support during those 10 years.

Lynda Wearn