CHENIES PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2020

The Council met six times during the year. Meetings are held at 8.00pm usually on the first Wednesday every other month in the Sun Room at the rear of The Baptist Chapel . Meetings are open to all and the first item on the agenda is the democratic quarter hour which gives parishioners the opportunity to raise any issues of concern.

I was elected chairman and Charles Macleod Matthews as vice chairman at our annual meeting last May and Martin Walker, Gill Leaper and David Martin have continued to serve as councillors. On your behalf I would like to thank them for their work. Councillors are elected for a four year term however last year's elections were postponed for a year because Buckinghamshire Council, the new Unitary Authority, was due to come into being on 1st April 2020. And now as I write we are all in lockdown due to the Covid-19 virus and all elections have been postponed for a further year to May 2021. By this time your parish councillors will have served a six year term.

Paul Messenger has served as clerk since 1st April 2019 and I would like to thank him on behalf of the parish for having stepped forward and for his time and work over the past year.

Local Government

On 1st April 2020 Buckinghamshire excluding Milton Keynes became a Unitary Authority. The new Council is called Buckinghamshire Council and the four District Councils no longer exist. We are waiting for information on the formation of Local Hubs which will be points of contact for the new council – our nearest will be at the former District Council office in Amersham and another in Chesham. One of our councillors will represent the parish as a member of one of the sixteen Community Boards. Chenies will be in the Chess Valley region including Latimer, Ley Hill, Chesham and villages beyond. The Boards will influence local decision making and each will have a budget.

Maintenance

Amersham Town Council's Grounds Staff have continued to cut the grass on the village green, greensward and the verge opposite houses along Claypits Lane to the A404. Whilst we have been very pleased with their work they wanted a substantial increase to continue and as a result we have moved the contract to Chesham Town Council's team for the coming year and will carefully monitor performance.

The trees on the green have been inspected and a decision taken to crown lift and prune all of them to make it easier for people to walk beneath, to give headroom for grass cutting machinery and indeed to let in more daylight to encourage grass growth. Permission has been obtained from the Bedford Estates and Planning Permission has been applied for. Estimates for the work are being sought.

Footpaths

As last year and the year before none of the footpath repairs to signs etc have been carried out by Bucks County Council. Keeping footpaths clear is the responsibility of landowners and we have continued to liaise with them as needs have arisen. We were pleased to see substantial work carried out to cut back the hedgerow alongside the river by the new owners of Mill Farm Barns.

The approach to the concrete bridge across the River Chess at Sarratt Bottom is a continuing cause for concern due to deep mud in wet weather. The Chiltern Society are helping us to find a solution and Bucks County Council Rights of Way are talking to the owners of the land.

We regard our public footpaths as valuable assets especially at this difficult time. If anyone has a path maintenance or access difficulty to report they should contact the County Rights of Way Team and also let us know.

Highways

The flooding at the top of Village Road remains on the list at Highways but has not yet been judged a priority. The flooding on the A404 before the garden centre has received attention but a more permanent solution is still needed.

The Claypits Lane/Village Green re-surfacing carried out last year, although welcome, was unsuccessful and the contractor was called back to redo the work. We hope this will now last.

Planning

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.

The final draft Chiltern & South Bucks Local Plan is currently waiting for government approval. If approved it will become part of an overall plan for Buckinghamshire which will need to be developed by the new council

The Precept

The parish council increased the precept by £240 (3%) from £8,000 to £8,240 for the financial year to 31 March 2021.

Best Kept Village Competition

I am very pleased to report that we received a Certificate of Merit for our village last year. We decided to enter again for the coming year but sadly due to Covid-19 the competition has now been cancelled. We believe we all benefit from the tidy and well presented appearance of our village and hope this can be maintained.

Traffic Calming

The MVAS Camera has been put to good use and is moved between two positions with each able to be directed in two directions. A third position opposite the Red Lion was also approved but could not be used due to a sign post not being upright. This took more than a year to have corrected. This position has now been tried but in practice can easily be screened by parked vehicles and a new position may be called for.

As reported last year The Feasibility Study Report was circulated to the village along with a survey to see what support there might be for the options bearing in mind the likely costs. Unfortunately only 35% of the households canvassed responded and the Parish Council did not feel it had sufficient support from the community as a whole to warrant taking further action especially bearing in mind the high costs involved.

On a brighter note the Parish Council has been successful in obtaining funding for the HGV signage option in the Study to be undertaken and you may have noticed the new signs which have been erected at both entrances to the village off the A404. We hope this will lead to less lorry traffic through the village and we are

particularly grateful to our County Councillor, Noel Brown, who supported the project with funds from his communities budget.

Mindful of Road Safety and the fact we no longer have a bus service within the village we have started the process of applying for funding for a footpath to be created on the east side of Village Road from opposite the cricket Club entrance to the A404. The intention is to make it safer for pedestrians walking to and from school, to the bus stop or to the station and shops in Chorleywood.

At the same time we are looking into making life a little easier for residents either side of The Red Lion by placing access protection markings on the greensward edge of the road opposite some of the driveways to discourage parking, to make access easier and safer and to provide breaks in the line of parked cars for traffic moving in opposing directions to pass each other. Affected residents will be consulted before any such scheme is implemented.

Our Community Speedwatch volunteers have all received their training but have not yet been able to start having been frustrated by the need for local police to approve suitable locations for their camera. The intention to share equipment with Little Chalfont Parish Council did not work out and a new arrangement has been made with Chesham Bois and we hope to see them in action in the village as soon as circumstances allow. We would like to thank those who have offered their time for this project. It is not too late to join in if anyone else is interested to take part.

Broadband

Due to the tireless efforts of Gill Leaper over many months if not years we have been able to move to the top of the queue and will very soon have a fibre to premises service available for anyone wanting to subscribe. We have been told that BT will notify all households as soon as the new network is ready for use.

Coronavirus

These are difficult days for everyone and as a result there will be no Annual Parish Meeting this year. Local elections due to be held next month have been postponed until May 2021. Your existing councillors will therefore remain in office until then (subject to any resignation). This report and the annual accounts will be circulated and placed on the notice board. The parish council is still fully operational and if anyone has any queries, concerns or an issue they wish to raise please do make contact and we will try to help.

In the meantime take care and if you become aware of a neighbour who might welcome a helping hand then please let us know.

David Le Neve Foster
Chairman
cheniesparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk

May 2020

CHENIES PARISH COUNCIL: Receipts and Payments Account for year ending 31 March 2020

Date	No.	Description	Receipts	Payments Net	Payments VAT	Payments Total	Balance
		Balance per end of year accounts at 31 March 2019					**£9,209.07**
		Receipts:					
29 April 2019		Chiltern District Council 1st instalment of Precept	£4,000.00				
26 September 2019		Chiltern District Council 2nd instalment of Precept	£4,000.00				
			£8,000.00				**£8,000.00**
							£17,209.07
		Payments:					
02 May 2019	658	BMKALC annual subscription		£52.68	£0.00	£52.68	
08 May 2019	660	Entry fee for Best Kept Village competition		£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	
09 May 2019	659	Bucks County Council - Traffic Calming Match Funding		£1,327.67	£0.00	£1,327.67	
12 June 2019	661	David Le Neve Foster - Retirement Gift - Peter Waite		£65.75	£0.00	£65.75	
02 July 2019	662	Came & Co - Insurance		£409.80	£0.00	£409.80	
19 September 2019	666	D J Hall invoice for hedge cutting		£120.00	£24.00	£144.00	
20 September 2019	664	Affinity for Business Ltd for outside water tap		£12.33	£0.00	£12.33	
22 October 2019	665	Alison Wood Service Ltd - Internal Audit		£50.00	£0.00	£50.00	
02 December 2019	667	Chiltern Society annual subscription		£30.00	£0.00	£30.00	
15 January 2020	668	Amersham Town Council for grass-cutting		£1,891.01	£378.20	£2,269.21	
07 February 2020	669	Affinity for Business Ltd for outside water tap		£15.54	£0.00	£15.54	
13 February 2020	670	Bedford Estate Rent		£1.00	£0.00	£1.00	
31 March 2020	*671	Clerk's Salary		£1,500.00	£0.00	£1,500.00	
31 March 2020	*672	Clerk's Expenses		£216.00	£0.00	£216.00	
31 March 2020	*673	Ladywell Accountancy Services for payroll services		£35.00	£0.00	£35.00	
31 March 2020	*676	Chenies Baptist Chapel Donation for use of Room		£70.00	£0.00	£70.00	
				£5,821.78	**£402.20**	**£6,223.98**	-£6,223.98
		Balance					**£10,985.09**
		Balance at 31 March 2020 per Bank Statement dated 21 May 2020					**£12,806.09**
		Less uncleared items (*671, *672, *673, *676)					-£1,821.00
							£10,985.09