# CHENIES PARISH COUNCIL

## Chairman's Report to Annual Parish Meeting - 2023

This report to the Annual Parish Meeting covers the past year. It will be posted on the Parish Council web site in the next few days. There is a legal requirement for the Parish Council to present an annual report to parishioners after the financial year end in April.

It is very sad to record the recent death of Nigel Ince and we extend our deepest sympathy to his family. Nigel moved into the village in 1964 and served on our Parish Council for many years including a period as chairman.

Your Parish Council held six meetings during the year, meeting in person as required by the Government. Meetings are usually held at 8.00pm on the first Wednesday every other month normally in the Sun Room at the rear of The Baptist Chapel – check the PC web site for the date of the next meeting. 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.

There were no Parish Council elections in 2022: Councillors are elected for a 4-year term with the next election due in 2025. The council comprises myself, Charles Macleod Matthews, David Le Neve Foster, Sue Smith and Molly Newton.

I was elected as chairman and Charles Macleod Matthews as vice chairman at our annual meeting last May. In order to reduce the workload on the Chairman, the Officer roles are reviewed and potentially reallocated each year with each Councillor taking "first call" for a specific area. Current roles are :-

- David Le Neve Foster – planning
- Molly Newton – roads and highways
- Sue Smith – Community Board and Village Forum
- Charles Macleod Matthews – footpaths, trees and the environment
- Martin Walker – website

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

### Local Government

The new Buckinghamshire Council was established in 2020. Sixteen Community Boards are now established as are local groupings of parish and town councils known as Village Forums. Chenies is part of the Chesham and Villages Board area.

### Maintenance

The grass cutting contract with Chesham Town Council covering the Green and Greensward as well as occasional maintenance of the verge along Claypits Lane has been in place for three years now and appears to run well. The contract has been renewed for the current year.

We supported the Red Lion's use of the Greensward for additional outside seating. No request has been made for it to continue this year – the PC could only support such a request provided that it was with the agreement of local residents and that no on-going precedent was set.

### Footpaths

We have installed 4 new seats around the village. One on the Greensward, paid for by the Village Society; One in Placehouse Copse in memory of Sir John Quinton and two, plus a bench, on Holloway Lane which has been paid for by Peter Lloyd, a past resident of the village.

Some of our footpaths are not in the best state of repair – for example flooding by Mill Farm, felling of trees in Mount Wood and Turvey Lane woods. But please do report any problems to HERE and also let us know via email to cheniesparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk.

A feasibility study into the plan announced in 2020 for a footpath to be created on the east side of Village Road from opposite the Cricket Club entrance to the A404 was conducted last Summer. As yet we have not progressed it further but it is on the Council's to do list.

## Trees

During the year, we inspected all the trees for which the PC is responsible – along the Greensward and the Green. Each one was inspected, documented and photographed into an on-line mapping application. Following this we submitted a plan for trimming and thinning branches which was approved and implemented. We hope you are pleased with the results.

However, this also revealed that there are two trees which, whilst not requiring immediate action, are not in the best of health. One is on the Green – it did not need any trimming so will be left and monitored. The other is on the Manor Drive near the school - we were unable to safely do the planned work on it. Whilst we could have had it trimmed, we would still have to pay for its eventual removal. So our intention is to seek its removal and replacement at the end of the summer and also to plant an additional tree to match it on the opposite side of the drive.

A hornbeam bas been planted on the Green to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee last year; also funded by Peter Lloyd. Although it will require watering for a few years if it is dry, it is thought that hornbeams will be more resilient to drought caused by climate change.

## Highways

We note that the condition of the road between the Cricket Club and A404 has been reported to Bucks CC. We will be chasing them on this should it not be scheduled for repair.

The flooding on the A404 between the garden centre and Claypits Lane is not considered potentially dangerous by Buckinghamshire Highways and is therefore not seen by them as a priority.

Please report any highway issues via Fixmystreet at https://fixmystreet.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

## Traffic Calming

The MVAS Camera is now back in operation and we are recording the data it gathers.

The Community Speed Watch team have been in operation regularly. They are always looking for more volunteers to assist – please speak to Molly Newton.

## Planning

We continue to consider all planning applications in the parish and comment on these to the planning department for the Chiltern Area of Buckinghamshire Council. Your Council is very anxious to preserve the look and feel of the very special environment we enjoy in Chenies whilst fully accepting the need for our housing stock to be maintained and enhanced in line with modern day requirements. We do comment or object when we feel that a particular application adversely affects this especially in the Conservation Area. It is frustrating for residents and for your Council when the Planners do not always agree.

Most of the village is a Conservation Area and the countryside around it is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt. This places additional restrictions on all development. We urge you to seek advice before commencing any works.

Most of you will be aware of the Chicken Farm development which was constructed without planning permission. When the owner submitted plans, the PC objected to then and Bucks CC rejected them. An

enforcement notice was issued and the applicant has appealed. We await further developments. Additionally an enforcement notice has been issued by Bucks regarding the use of accommodation on site.

The Village Pump House, a listed building, is in need of repair and renovation. Planning permission and approval from the Bedford Estates has been obtained and works will be undertaken during the summer.

The Bedford Arms have submitted a plan for alterations to the building. They are mostly internal and they have confirmed that the previous plan for additional rooms will not be pursued. They have also confirmed that there will be no changes to the use of the grass orchard area.

The defibrillator will be relocated to the front of the annex building which will mean that you will not need to contact their night porter to gain access to it out-of-hours.

## The Precept

For the third year running, the parish council decided not to increase the precept for the coming financial year and thus it will remain at £8,240. This has actually resulted in a 5.6% decrease in the Chenies Parish component of your Council Tax Bill because the precept is divided across all the properties in the Parish.

## Best Kept Village Competition

After a two year break, the competition was re-launched last year and Chenies was awarded a Certificate of Merit. We will be entering this year's competition and judging takes place between 1st June and 14th July.

There will be a village clear-up on Monday 8th May as our contribution to “The Big Help Out”. More information to follow on the PC website, CVS email and Facebook.

## The Village Pond

A working party of around a dozen villagers cleared the pond which is by the Cricket Club. Thanks to Jo & Jason Sutherland for organising this. As you will see, it is now filling with water following the clearance of the drains which allow water to flow from the road into it. We expect it will need on-going maintenance to keep it in peak condition.

## Electricity Supply Network

UK Power Networks have completed the undergrounding works for most of the electricity supply in the valley and the installation of new substations. The new cabling is currently being tested before the existing network is finally switched off and dismantled.

## Website

The Parish Council has a web site – its address is https://cheniesparishcouncil.gov.uk/ . Please take a look!

Its primary purpose is for the publication of all the information which councils must now provide including Agenda, Minutes, Accounts and policies. Here you also will find details about your councillors, their responsibilities and contact details. We add news items as they become available – this report will be published there in the next few days.

Martin Walker
Chairman, Chenies Parish Council
April 2023