Chenies Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting 2026

The Parish Council is required to publish an annual report for parishioners following the end of the financial year and provide a platform for parishioners to raise any parish matters. This report covers the period **2025–2026**.

Council Meetings

The Parish Council held six meetings during the year, all of which were held in person in line with government requirements. Meetings take place bi-monthly at the Baptist Chapel. Dates, agendas and minutes are available on the Parish Council website. We very much encourage parishioners to attend the meetings, with a view to increased community involvement and understanding. The first 15 minutes are reserved for public participation, allowing villagers to raise issues directly with councillors.

Councillor **Carl Jackson**, our representative on Buckinghamshire Council, attends regularly and continues to be approachable and supportive.

Council Members and Responsibilities

The current Council consists of:

Molly Newton-Chair – Highways, Speedwatch and general matters
Charles MacCleod-Matthews (Vice-Chair) – Footpaths, trees and the environment
Jackie Sandom – Best Kept Village Competition and Community Board
Paddy Smith and **Darrell Lewis** – Planning and Conservation

All councillors are happy to assist residents with local matters.

We were saddened to lose Martin Walker and David Le Neve Foster who stepped down last year, both of whom served the Council for many years. We thank them for their dedication and significant contributions to the parish.

Paul Messenger has served as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer since April 2019. The Council thanks him for his continued professionalism, experience and commitment.

Community Board

Since April 2025, following local government reorganisation, Chenies has been part of the South East Bucks Community Board. Jackie Sandom attends and has been extremely active in representing Chenies interests. As a result the Community Board are part funding a project for an Information Board on the Greensward opposite the Bedford Arms. This board will provide educational content about the Heritage of Chenies & the River Chess, highlighting its ecological importance & information on wildlife to be found on walks. A map indicating routes from Chenies to River Chess is included with a QR code to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council would like to thank Paul Jennings for his very helpful contribution to its design. As part of this project Jackie is also looking at improving footpath signage in the village.

The Community Board will be providing Chenies with a Little Libraries box, this will run as a book exchange, ”take a book/share a book” scheme. We are finalising a location for this and will be looking for a volunteer to manage it.

The Community Board may also be able to offer financial support for the proposed Youth Group being set up by Chenies Baptist Church. This is currently work in progress.

Parish Matters

Maintenance

As part of our lease (£1 annually) with the Bedford Estate we are responsible for maintenance of the Green. A new grass-cutting contractor has been appointed after a period of difficulty. Amersham Town Council now undertakes cutting of the Greensward and green areas. The new contract starts this month at a cost of £2,982 + vat per annum – which is pretty much the same as the previous 2 years.

As a Parish Council we elect to cut the Greensward to keep the village looking tidy, we could ask Bucks Council to undertake this, but it would only be cut twice annually.

A big thank you goes out to Donato Cinicola who continues to assist with maintenance matters around the village. This year he has refurbished the Village Sign on the Green.

Footpaths

Footpaths and Bridlepaths across the parish are generally in reasonable condition, with some improvements completed during the year by Chiltern Society volunteers Please report any problems via the Buckinghamshire Council portal and email the Clerk at **clerk@cheniesparishcouncil.gov.uk**

Some of our footpath signage is rather worn and as part of the Community Board information project Jackie Sandom is currently looking at improving footpath signage in the village for routes to the River Chess.

Trees

The Council continues to monitor all trees for which it is responsible, including those on the Greensward and the Green. We have an interactive map which identifies the trees and their condition.

Highways

The Parish Council meets face-to-face with the Local Area Technician from Buckinghamshire Council to raise ongoing highway concerns. White lining has been added at the Bedford Close footpath junction, with potholes and gullies reported regularly.

For Bucks to undertake any works, issues must be reported via *Fix My Street* so please report any highway issues, fly tipping, graffiti via:
https://fixmystreet.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Molly Newton is currently working with Highways to identify potential approved contractors to undertake repair work on the edging stones on the Green and up Claypits Lane. Three quotes have been sought, and we still await one before discussing further with the Parish Council. It may well be that there is insufficient funding within the Parish Council reserves and so we may seek to look at alternative funding , possibly via the Village Community Fund, but this work is very much ‘in progress’.

Traffic Calming

The MVAS speed camera is kindly charged regularly by Gill Leaper (many thanks Gill) and data is recorded.

Community Speed Watch sessions continue outside the Court House, one of only two permitted sites in the village.

Over the past year:

1,900+ vehicle movements were monitored
147 vehicles exceeded the 36 mph, we cannot record those below that figure

This represents a reduction from the previous year and we believe that this is due to parking in the village which fortuitously causes cars to use Stony Lane as an alternative

More volunteers are urgently needed, particularly between 8am and 9am. If you can help, please contact Molly Newton.

River Chess

Although the Parish Council has no statutory responsibility for the River Chess, it remains an important agenda item. Thanks to the work of the River Chess Association the river is in much better health and now supports water voles, fish and otters. Paul Jennings (Chair of the River Chess Association) keeps the Parish Council updated.

Affinity Water will be installing a water pipe from Heronsgate to Bovingdon which will cross the Chess Valley down the side of Keepers Cottage and into fields in Chenies and up to Martin top Farm. Villagers from Chenies Bottom are keeping the Parish Council informed of this, to ensure that the work is carried out as sensitively as possible retaining the beauty of the valley.

Planning

The Council reviews all planning applications and submits comments to Buckinghamshire Council and this is a considerable part of our work. While recognising the need to maintain and enhance housing stock, the Council aims to protect the special character of Chenies and environs, particularly within the Conservation Area.

Most of the village is designated Conservation Area, and the surrounding countryside is National Landscape and Green Belt, which places additional restrictions on development. Villagers are reminded to seek advice from Buckinghamshire County Council prior to commencing any works at all to seek Certificates of Lawfulness, including for shed erection or tree cutting as permitted development within the conservation areas is restricted.

The unauthorised Chicken Farm development must be restored to its former condition by September 2026. The Parish Council and Bucks Council continue to monitor this.

Councillors Paddy Smith and Darrell Lewis are currently exploring a potential review of the Conservation Area, however this is at an initial stage.

Finances

The Parish Council reduced the annual precept from £8,825 to £6,500, thus reducing the impact on residents' council tax, as we have monies set aside from previous years to undertake work which has not progressed.

The Councils Responsible Financial Officer (Paul Messenger) ensures that the Parish Council returns the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) which is a statutory financial document. As Chenies has an annual turnover of less that £25,000 we follow the Transparency Code for smaller authorities.

Best Kept Village Competition

Jackie Sandom has taken on responsibility for the competition with enthusiasm. A village tidy-up will take place on **2 May at 10:30am on the Green**.

Following a Certificate of Merit last year, Jackle has introduced a popular Village Newsletter, (next edition in May) and sourced more planters and flowers. She has formed a small team with the CVS to help raise greater community involvement in the Best Kept Village competition this year. They are working closely with the village school to involve them as well, with a competition to design a poster to show how we care for our village.

Many thanks to Kerry and The Red Lion for their help in printing the Newsletters.

Village Pond

Volunteers continue to maintain the pond with a well-attended workday held in March, a further session is planned for October. The Council thanks all those involved for their ongoing efforts.

Telephone Box

The Council did not object to BT removing telephonic equipment from the phone box due to low usage. The box remains a listed structure but was not adopted by the Council and remains owned by BT. BT will remain responsible for its upkeep and maintenance.

Website

Martin Walker has trained all Councillors in how to use the website and we will be updating this over the coming year, reviewing material on it which will include a review of the Village Emergency Plan. We plan to add a link to the newly updated History Group Website as well as creating a Wildlife on the River Chess Section. Thanks to Sandy & Andy Homewood & Rachel Bishop for their hard work on this amazing project.

The Parish Council website https://cheniesparishcouncil.gov.uk contains agendas, minutes, accounts, policies, councillor details and news updates. This report will also be published there, and we very much encourage parishioners to look at it and send us photos of the Village for 'photo of the month' and make suggestions for improvement.

Community Safety

Following recent burglaries and attempted burglaries, Thames Valley Police attended a Parish Council meeting to provide advice to villagers. Mark Stepham and Chris Gohl have set up Chenies Residents Rapid Alert WhatsApp group to alert Villagers to current issues. To be included please let Mark have your mobile number if you haven't already done so

Public Transport

The 336 Bus service, which used to run between Watford and High Wycombe was removed from the village many years ago and from the A404 a couple of years ago. This issue has been raised by villagers via the Parish Council as there is no public transport whatsoever in the village. Councillor Carl Jackson is looking into this to see what, if anything, can be done.

Conclusion

Keeping Chenies a great place to live is a shared responsibility. Please report issues through the appropriate channels — if problems are not recorded, they cannot be addressed. We are an active and supportive Community and are fortunate to have so many villagers who love the village and who work on enhancing our environment. Please attend the Parish Council meetings to let us know your views or contact Councillors individually.

Molly Newton
Chair
Chenies Parish Council

17 April 2026