

MINUTES OF CHIEVELEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

For the Electors of Chieveley, Curridge, Oare and part of Snelsmore

In Chieveley Village Hall on Tuesday 11th April 2023 at 8pm

1. Welcome

Cllr. Mike Belcher welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided health and safety guidance.

2. To approve the Minutes of the last Parish Meeting on 12th April 2022

The Minutes of the last Annual Meeting were agreed to be a true representation of the meeting

3. Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report, Cllr. Mike Belcher

Cllr. Mike Belcher gave the following report:

Before I begin my annual report, there are some important points that I would like to make:

- *The first is that the Parish of Chieveley comprises the villages of Chieveley, Curridge, Oare and part of Snelsmore and that all Councillors support the community of the whole Parish. The second is that Councillors are committed volunteers and give a considerable amount of their time, skills and effort freely for the benefit of the community.*
- *The third is that members of the public are welcome to attend Parish Council meetings, agendas for which are posted on noticeboards around the Parish. At these meetings, 10 minutes is available for members of the public to ask questions or make representations on items on the agenda or raise issues of local concern. Finally, all discussions, resolutions and financial information is available in the meeting minutes posted on the village website mychieveley.co.uk.*

The Council year May 2022 to April 2023

As already mentioned, all financial information can be found in the minutes of council meetings. Each year the Parish Council applies to West Berkshire District Council (WBC) for a precept that forms part of your council tax bill for the forthcoming year. I am sure that you will be pleased to note that we are working well within budget and, as with last year, Chieveley Parish Council did not increase its budget request and this part of your tax bill shows a decrease in percentage terms.

It should be noted that the Parish Council operates within strict statutory guidelines and continues to review and where necessary revise codes, policies, operational documents, and procedures. This work is ongoing.

Parish Councils are a statutory consultee for a number of Central Government and District Council consultations. Therefore, a significant part of the Council's responsibility is as a statutory consultee to WBC in its role as local planning authority. In the year starting May 2022, the Parish Council considered 51 planning applications and submitted objections to 15 of those.

When considering planning applications, the Parish Council is guided by clear guidelines and in particular the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the AONB, WBC Local Plan and the Housing Site Allocation Development Plan Document (HSADPD). These policy considerations have been of great significance in protecting the AONB against unwelcome developments and will play a very important role in protecting against future threats of inappropriate development within the AONB.

A more sweeping and long-term planning issue is WBC's Local Plan. This plan maps out the housing needs of West Berkshire for the period to 2037.

The Parish Council was invited to comment on this Plan and on the whole, welcomed it, as it looked to strengthen AONB considerations in planning policy. However, in part 2 of the plan there was a proposal for 15 dwellings on Glebe Land opposite the Downland Surgery in East Lane. Being classed as a service village and accepting that new housing brings benefit and new vitality, 15 houses does not seem unreasonable in a plan extending to 2037. After full consideration however, the Parish Council resolved to object to this proposal and in February, the Parish Council made a comprehensive submission detailing several concerns about this proposed development and the plan in general.

It should be noted that at the February Parish Council meeting several members of the community attended and the public question time was extended to allow comments, observations, and concerns to be fully aired. This session provided very valuable points to be raised and included into the Council's debate.

Briefly, the main headings of our objection centred on the following key points:

- Serious road safety issues, particularly sight lines either end of East Lane and the already high volume of traffic to and from the surgery.*
- The number of access points from any development would also be of great concern.*
- The plans included a footpath fronting the development and we failed to see how this could be accomplished without substantial loss to the existing hedgerows and natural habitat.*
- Discussions have taken place in the past for a burial ground on this land, and we seek reassurance that if this happens, any development will not prevent access.*

If the site is developed, there would be a need for a Public Right of Way from the development to the Recreation Ground. Finally, we are concerned that whilst the proposal states "up to 15 houses" density regulations show a potential for between 16 to 22 and we look for reassurance that 15 would be the maximum if the proposal goes through. In the past year several other important issues for the community have been the subject of careful monitoring and discussion for the parish council.

Over the past couple of years, the Newbury Showground has been the subject of much debate. Initially, it was reported that the showground was up for sale to developers to turn into a distribution centre, the reason given being financial difficulties in maintaining the Newbury show and the showground. This proposed sale was a wholly unwelcome and horrifying prospect for the surrounding area. Following a change of the board of the Newbury and District Agricultural Society (NADAS), the owners of the showground, the new board set about sorting out the financial issues and have so far reported significant inroads into making NADAS financially viable. However, to fully realise the potential income and therefore secure the future of the showground the NADAS board are seeking limited relaxation of the S106 agreement which limits the use of the showground and protects the local community from excess noise, light pollution and traffic problems. In close consultation with the Parish Council and local community, NADAS have outlined the key areas of the limitations that they would like to see relaxed which centre principally on the use of the Barn during the current closed period December through March. It is clear that

with other restrictions still in place, this would have limited impact and the parish council is supportive of the main areas of relaxation to help the financial viability of the showground.

Traffic and road safety has always been at the forefront of concerns from the public and a new group, the Speed Awareness Group has recently been set up, superseding the Traffic and Road Safety group. This initiative links with Police and District council initiatives and has several members of the public as members. If anyone would like to join this group, they would be most welcome and should contact Kim, the parish clerk for more information.

The Parish Council has always considered the Chieveley Recreation Centre as a valuable community asset and continues, through the grants process, to support the maintenance of the grounds, the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and the children's playground which as most of you will know is due to be replaced in the very near future. More on this from one of our guest speakers later.

In Curridge, the parish council continues to support the Curridge playground and the Curridge residents' association. Oare pond continues to be supported by Council funding.

There is also a small grants award system in place to offer support for various other groups and societies within the local community. Currently, these include: Gardening Club; Chieveley Scouts; Chieveley Pre-School; the Parochial Church Council; and a contribution to WBC's Library Service.

As part of ongoing community support, the parish council also operates several working groups including the Recreation Centre liaison group, Public rights of way, Parish plan review, Public relations, website and media, Speed awareness, Burial ground, and Showground liaison.

We are also represented at various community groups: as a Trustee of the Chieveley Recreation Centre; a Trustee of Curridge playground; and the Downland Medical Practice Patient Participation Group.

All the above enable the Parish Council to help the local community as well as monitoring and acting on concerns and considerations of the public. Finally, I repeat again that all details of Council meetings can be found on the website mychieveley.co.uk, which is run voluntarily by Andrew Singleton, to whom we extend our thanks for his valuable work.

To conclude my report, I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for all their hard work and considerable efforts over the last year. Also, many thanks to Kim Lloyd, our Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for her continued highly efficient and committed hard work. As the saying goes, without these, all of this would not be possible.

4. Speed Awareness Group: Mr Alan Hall, SAG lead

Mr Alan Hall explained the reasons for the SAG:

- The known dangers of speed, serious injury and death
- Some people will constantly and regularly drive at speed irrespective of speed limits and road conditions.
- A recent police radar check in Curridge Road concluded that in a 30mph limit recorded 25 vehicles travelling at over 35 in the space of 43 minutes.

Many residents in Chieveley Parish suffer from speeding vehicles and this group has been formed with the support of the parish council to improve the safety and quality of life for everyone.

He explained that there were various options but that Community Speedwatch would have the greatest impact. Other actions included speed indicators (green smiley/red sad faces).

Community Speedwatch, a National Scheme Campaign, that was fully supported by Thames Valley Police. In Thames Valley area there were 225 groups operating local campaigns but all required police approval, for example where the speed checks should be carried.

The local group select locations where speeding was a known problem (usually as a result of residents' complaints). The locations and placing of 'Community Speedwatch' signs must be approved. Signage is a key part of the campaign, and once in place, vehicle speeds at a given location can be recorded using a speed gun supplied by the Police. Three operatives would be needed for each location. Information would be logged onto a central computer to build a library of statistics.

In a 30-mph area, drivers travelling at 36mph and above would receive a letter from the chief constable. In a 40-mph area, drivers travelling at 47mph and above would be recorded. If a driver and car was recorded on three occasions, the driver would receive a visit from the local police. Speedwatch was intended to be an educational project for those who constantly ignored the speed legal limit.

There were only seven members of Speedwatch group so more volunteers are needed. Anyone interested in join the group was advised to contact the Parish Clerk

5. Chieveley's New Playground: Mr Mark Hutchison, Project Leader of the Chieveley Playground

Mr Hutchison gave the following report.

If you play the National Lottery, pay rates to West Berkshire Council, or attended Chieveley Fireworks back in 2021 - Thank you! All three have contributed to the £150,000 we have raised from 10 charities/organisations and 42 individual donations. Thank you all.

A special thanks to Chieveley Parish Council for all their generosity in funding and support and practical help in making this project happen. The result will be an exceptional playground that Chieveley will be truly proud of and that will benefit generations of children.

The design has incorporated feedback from 185 school children and 85 views gathered via Survey Monkey. The new playground is going on the site of the current one and will have capacity for over 70 people at one time and contain a considerable amount of equipment for disabled youngsters. . Consequently, and inevitably, there will be a period when there will be no playground open at Chieveley but we think it will be worth the wait. The project has tried to use and recycle materials whenever possible. We intend to recycle the woodchips for two local charities as well as some equipment and fencing.

Request for help

We would really like to add a few bells and whistles to the playground with a few extra features. To achieve this, we are looking for a further few thousand pounds. It is not too late to donate. If you feel able to give whatever amount, it would be hugely appreciated in any of the following ways:

- *Via our PayPal Donate Account.
https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=SRGQKS6LC53BS*
- *Electronic payment via BACS Transfer to Chieveley Recreation Centre, Sort Code 30 95 89, Account Number 00211554 Please use the reference Playground.*
- *By cheque or cash
Cheques (made payable to Chieveley Recreation Centre) or Cash
to Mark Hutchison, Project Leader, Mulberry House, East Lane, Chieveley, RG20 8UZ
We will be in touch regarding the reclaiming of Gift Aid after you have made your donation.*

This project would not have been possible without the demanding work and patience of the New Playground Committee: Greg Cima – Grants; Nicole Coulson and Gail Davis – Design; Lesley Derry from the Parish Council; Allin Miles - Technical and Site Manager; and David Cook – Finance.

Plans can be found on the link below on the Chieveley Village Hall website: www.chieveleyvillagehall.org

Thank you to everyone for your support so far. Now the final push!

*Mark Hutchison - Project Leader of the Chieveley Playground Project E: mark@hutch.me M: **07973 553239***

6. Chieveley Primary School, Mr Gus Marriott, Headteacher to Chieveley Primary School

Mr Marriott thanked the Parish Council for last year's grant, which was used to purchase the new climbing frame that was installed in June 2022 and well-received by the school children. He also thanked the Parish Council for this year's grant, which would be used to develop a sensory garden on the site of the old climbing frame. It would be named the 'Coronation Garden' to link the national celebration of King Charles III with the School's development.

Mr Marriott suggested that the School Gates could be used by the Speed Awareness Group as a site for a speed gun.

7. King Charles III Coronation Event: Simon Halliday, organiser

Mr Halliday provided an update on the arrangements for the Coronation event on Saturday 6th May at 7pm in the Recreation Ground. Up-to-date details would be published on the Village website (www.mychieveley.co.uk).

8. An opportunity for Parish residents on the Electoral Roll for Chieveley Parish to ask a question or raise a concern that relates to their local community.

Nothing was raised

9. Date of the next Chieveley Annual Parish Meeting is to be confirmed