

GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Notes from the Annual Village Meeting of the Parish of Great Chesterford held on Thursday 18 May, 2023

Present; Parish Councillors Amanda Cooper, Penny McCullough, Mike Mitchell, Tom Newcombe (Chair), Julie Redfern, Rachel Thackray and Sharon Tricerri. Kate Stacey (Clerk) and 39 members of the public.

Tom Newcombe welcomed residents to the meeting and introduced Councillors and each outlined their responsibilities.

Planning update – Tom Newcombe

TN reminded residents that the PC was a consultee on planning issues and as such made no decisions regarding planning applications, but forwarded recommendations and comments to Uttlesford District Council. Residents could also feed their own comments directly to UDC.

TN noted that dealing with the recycled aggregate site at Boro Farm was an Essex County Council responsibility as it fell under the area of 'Minerals and Waste'. The various planning applications which had been refused were now at an appeal stage.

TN reported that UDC still did not have a Local Plan in place and still did not have a 5 year land supply which meant that more houses could be built in the Uttlesford area with no Plan to guide locations.

TN noted that the two London Road development sites in Chesterford were underway. JR noted that the same local developer was working on both sites and was proving helpful. The site on the East side of the road had been planned for 134 houses, but this had now been reduced to 111. More details were likely to be confirmed in September. JR would arrange a meeting with the developer and residents to discuss issues arising from the build in due course. JR noted that although the PC had recommended against the two developments there was the advantage of a substantial amount of 'S106 funding' to mitigate the negatives.

TN reported that the PC had also submitted representations against the planning proposal for 350 houses at Stumps Cross/Icknield Fields. This land had been identified as for protection against development in the Chesterford's Local Plan. TN noted that the Highways Department and Environmental Agency were not supportive and TN encouraged residents to submit their own representations as it was not too late for this. The case officer for the application could be emailed (Lindsay Trevillian; ltrevillian@uttlesford.gov.uk).

Neighbourhood Plan update – Rachel Thackray

RT gave an update on the Neighbourhood plan which was now in place for Great and Little Chesterford. UDC had adopted the plan and would therefore be obliged to

take account of it when assessing planning applications. RT thanked everyone who had helped to form the plan.

Open spaces and Recreation Ground – Mike Mitchell and Sharon Tricceri

MM reported on the various maintenance projects that had taken place over the last period and that CCTV would shortly be installed at the Recreation Ground as well as new lighting at the multisports area. The pitches were slowly being refurbished with financial support from local girls football team SWPSG. MM noted that the skate park required refurbishment and was hoping that a grant might be found for this expensive undertaking.

ST reported that a number of trees had been lost to storms and disease over the last period but that three oak trees had recently been planted to commemorate the two jubilees and the life of Queen Elizabeth II. Ten small trees had also been received and a Coronation tree would be planted in due course. ST also reported that a 'human sundial' would be installed into the Village Orchard shortly under the direction of Eddie Hatfield. If there was anything left in the budget for the installation this would be spent on benches. A ROSPA inspection of the play areas would be undertaken before the school summer holidays. Funding was being sought for the play area at Pilgrim's Close. There was a gap where a rotten tree had to be felled and what could be put in the space would be a project for next year.

New open spaces at Hammond Garden and Ratcliff Garden – Rachel Thackray

RT reported that two areas at Pilgrim Close were to be redeveloped for use as community areas with seating and planting to encourage wildlife and children's interest in gardening.

Scout Hut update – Tom Newcombe

TN reported that a planning application for a Scout Hut extension had been approved and Andrew Taylor was now seeking funding for the build which would include a storage facility for the Parish Council.

Nursery update – Mike Mitchell

MM reported that there had been a huge amount of work in the background to restarting the Nursery initiative which had been obliged to stall for various significant reasons outlined at earlier meetings. The PC was now at a position where a Nursery provider had been found, funding was in place and the building was being re surveyed to ascertain the best route forward. It was helpful that the new Nursery provider would have input into the layout of the building.

Stef Montgomery from Blossom Barn Nurseries (the new Nursery provider) gave a presentation

In summary Blossom Barn Nurseries already run two nurseries, one in Stansted and another in Takeley. The setting at Takeley which opened in September 2021 has been rated as 'outstanding' by OFSTED. The setting at Great Chesterford is planned to have 3 rooms to take 56 children with 22 staff and would be open for 51 weeks a year (so that it would not compete with the current 'term time only' Nursery in the Village). Attendance would be for a minimum of two days per week. Fees were to be confirmed but it was likely that they would be similar to those at the

Takeley setting. It was planned that the opening hours would be from 7.30am to 6.30pm. It was hoped that the building would be open in around 18 months.

More information about Blossom Barn Nursery can be found here;
blossombarnnursery.co.uk

For enquiries or to join the waiting list please contact Lauren (Nursery Owner);
lauren@blossombarnnursery.co.uk.

Community events (Steam-up, Coronation, Easter and Christmas) – Julie Redfern

JR thanked residents for their input into the very successful Village Community Events.

The next Steam Up had been scheduled for 30 September 2023; anyone who would like to help out or take part with a stall etc should contact Paul Rutter (paul@ruttersuk.com). Anyone who would like to volunteer to help out with Ratcliff or Hammond Gardens on 3 September or 1 October should contact Rachel Thackray (Rachel.thackray.gcpc@gmail.com). The Seniors Christmas Lunch was scheduled for 10 December.

Questions

A resident suggested that given the inability of the relevant councils to close the aggregate site in good time shouldn't residents take a stand and protest at the site. TN felt that this was not something the PC could act on, but residents might discuss.

There was a query about the new developments on London Road; it was confirmed that both would be within Great Chesterford once the second boundary change had been effected.

A resident asked whether the PC was to meet with the developer of the London Road site. Cllr Redfern noted that she would try and arrange a meeting in June with the developer and residents in due course, particularly with reference to the development of the related cycle path.

A resident expressed concern regarding speeding in and around the village. It was reported that the PC had asked for the speed limit on Jackson's Lane to be reduced to 20 mph as per the rest of the Village; unfortunately this request had been rejected by Essex County Council due to a police request. The PC had also requested that the speed limit on Walden Road was reduced; this request had also been rejected as the route is frequently used by emergency vehicles. It was noted that if the Stumps Cross development for 350 homes went forward it was likely that a reduced speed limit would probably be put in place alongside a roundabout. A resident suggested speed cameras as speeding was an issue on the road; it was noted that this would need to be taken up by Essex Highways.

A resident asked whether flooding had been considered in relation to the proposed Stumps Cross development; it was reported that the development plans included a number of water management systems.

Chairman's Recognitions of Service to the Community - presented by Tom Newcombe

TN noted that the PC usually had one Chairman's award, but this year the PC had a number of residents to particularly thank for their contribution to the community. These were; Brian Barker, Simon de Grey, Eddie and Carol Hatfield, Hannah Helliar, Aubrey Howe, Pam Maskell, Frank and Jenny Palmer, Paul Rutter, Kate Stacey.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm and was followed by drinks.