

## Great Chesterford Parish Council

### Annual Parish Meeting

#### Held on Wednesday 22nd May at 8pm in Chesterfords Community Centre

##### Present

Neil Gregory, David Hall, Penny McCullough, Mike Mitchell, Tom Newcombe, Julie Redfern, Rachel Thackray and Sharon Tricerri.

Amanda Lindsell and 44 members of the public.

##### Chairman`s Introduction

Chairman Neil Gregory welcomed everyone and individually introduced Councillors to the meeting.

##### Good Neighbours In The Community

John Starr and Sue Hayden detailed the Good Neighbours project in Great Chesterford commencing 11th June for one month. They aim to knock on every door in Great Chesterford to increase community involvement and discover how residents feel about their neighbourhood, identify assets and link people up. An explanatory letter will be distributed in the broadsheet, and on Facebook and feedback will be shared with the community to build on existing strengths. The High Sheriff will attend on launch day at a "drinks with links" event after school (11th June). Volunteers are welcomed and training will be given Tuesday 28th May at 2pm and 7pm in the Church rooms. Door-knockers will travel in pairs, will wear identifying lanyards and will not enter any houses.

##### William Brown, Chair Hinxton Parish Council

William detailed Wellcome`s revised proposal to their proposed expansion of the Genome Campus, which is widely opposed by nine neighbouring Parish Councils and noted that the Smithson Hill, Wellcome Trust, Huawei and other proposals are all on the horizon, and all contrary to the recently agreed South Cambs Local Plan.

William went on to clarify that the general consensus between the Parish Councils is that the work carried out by the Wellcome Trust on the site is wonderful and should be permitted to grow, the issue is the pace of the growth. The proposals treble the size of the site in 10 years, introduces buildings to lease to guest companies and builds accommodation for 1,500 people. This is unacceptable given the current infrastructure and inadequate transport systems, and these and other issues have been highlighted to SCDC. The Wellcome response detailed a 4m height reduction of the buildings to 16m and trivial mitigation to widen the McDonalds roundabout and add traffic lights there and also at J10 of the M11. The response does not justify the need to lease the land out to so many other companies or the need for 1500 houses. The parish councils continue to try to get Wellcome to consider the issues and suggest the new R4U administration work with South Cambs DC to consider necessary adaptation of the road links, and will continue to co-operate with neighbouring councils on this and other issues.

##### Nursery

Cllr Mike Mitchell noted the Council`s sincere thanks to County Cllr Ray Gooding who has provided enormous practical support in trying to resolve this matter.

Mike provided a background of the situation, including - 2016 - s106 settlement between UDC and land owner - land transferred to GCPC with a covenant that the land must be used for educational purposes. Expressions of interest were received and independently vetted. Play To Learn offered person A providing childcare facilities and expertise, and person B business and admin support. Once appointed PTL applied for government funding, which was delivered through Essex County Council, who entered into a funding agreement with PTL. A lease and heads of term were agreed and PTL requested GCPC introduce Chesterford

Montessori Ltd as delivery vehicle/contracting party. PTL and CML interlinked by persons A and B. CML entered into the build contract and work commenced in 2018. Towards the end of 2018 the relationship between persons A and B broke down and ownership and directorship was separated. In Aug/Sept 2018 there was an archaeological issue on site caused by the then project manager of CML. ECC intervened, work was stopped and a considerable sum was spent resolving the archaeological find. These works are not complete and could cost a further £10-45K, which will not be funded by GCPC. As a result of breach of planning and breakdown in communication the PC terminated the contract with CML and PTL and the site was taken under control by the PC and fencing established. In parallel GCPC have been in lengthy dialogue with ECC on a weekly basis regarding the funding agreement between PTL and the Department For Education. ECC have agreed the breach to the funding agreement they had with PTL and have terminated the agreement. With the DFE's agreement ECC and GCPC are now working together to secure future funding, possibly further S106 funds, to enable GCPC to secure a childcare provider, but this will take time. The Council are acutely aware that they are dealing with public money and will continue to exercise due diligence moving forward to ensure history is not repeated. It is unlikely that there will be an operating nursery until 2020. A member of the public requested what period the bodies found originated from. The Council confirmed that the bodies are of Roman origin. The Council were asked whether other educational establishments would be considered for use of the building. The Council explained that the building is currently a shell, but that all matters will be considered in due course, whilst noting that the current funding sources are for nursery places.

#### Highways, Parking, Speeding and Cycle Paths

Cllr Penny McCullough confirmed that the speed gun has been operational 5 times this month, with 23 caught speeding in 1 hour on 15/05, 12 on 12/5, 39 on 18/4. Many vehicles were exceeding 35mph, some were exceeding 50mph and the school bus was clocked on one occasion. The council continues to work towards the purchase of a tru-cam gun, which can be used in pre-determined places in the village and are extremely grateful to the Officers for attending weekly to help collate supportive figures. Penny confirmed that there have been no further reports of the bus getting stuck following installation of yellow lines on the High Street. The Council acknowledges that not all residents support the lines and there have been incidences of parking on them, but there is a Facebook page to log data which can then be reviewed by GCPC.

#### Allotments, Open Spaces and Community Orchard

Cllr Sharon Tricerri confirmed that all 20 allotments are fully occupied, and there is a waiting list despite some sharing their plots to help reduce the list and maximise involvement. Thanks were extended to Eddie Hatfield for all his practical help with weed killing, organising deliveries, requesting grants and chairing the Allotment Association.

Sharon detailed the orchard's rapid expansion from 24 to 100 trees and detailed grants recently received from Affinity Water and Wellcome Trust which will enable signs and labels to be purchased for each tree, alongside a sundial for the centre of the site and seats and benches for relaxing.

Feedback regarding the field has confirmed that residents like it left as a field for everyone to enjoy and thanks were extended to Simon De Gray for his work cutting the grass and providing a never ending supply of manure for the allotments.

Sharon confirmed plans to establish wildflower areas around the perimeter of the field to encourage bees and other wildlife to the area.

The installation of new gates, bollards and trees along the boundary of the Recreation Ground are all part of a continue plan to prevent unauthorised vehicular access to the Rec. The latest ROSPA inspection was favourable but did highlight dog fouling near the children's play areas near the skate park. GCPC reminds dog owners to behave responsibly and dispose of their dog waste appropriately. Although requests have been received requesting more play equipment, the Council unfortunately has no budget available for this. Thanks were extended to Aubrey Howe who takes care of the maintenance in the parish, is always working

and goes way beyond the call of duty.

### Planning Matters

Cllr Tom Newcombe detailed the role of the Council with regard to planning, confirming that they are a statutory consultee with no decision making power, but have a right to comment. Uttlesford District Council are the Local Planning Authority. Tom went on to detail;

77 planning applications submitted in GC in the last year, 1 of which was withdrawn and 7 refused.

12 applications were received to discharge conditions, 16 approved, 7 refused.

24 applications to carry out tree works, 14 approved, 3 refused.

20 extensions/alteration, 26 approved, 4 refused

2 agricultural

6 listed buildings

4 retrospective

9 applications for new developments ( for 14 dwellings), 3 approved, 2 refused.

Tom gave further details regarding the following proposed developments;

Bartholomew Close - approved 21/12/17 despite PC objections to parking standards, access and construction traffic impacts.

London Road - outline application for up to 76 dwellings submitted March 2019. GCPC objected on sustainability, lack of facilities, village separation, safety, open space, visual impact, rat running, noise, access and air quality.

Genome Campus - application submitted to SCDC December 2018, outline 150,000 sqm employment R &D, 1500 residential dwellings, nursery, hotel, cafes, bars, conference facility and retail. GCPC objected due to conflict with Local Plan, conflict with NUGV and Agri-Tech, lack of need, loss of bio-diversity, loss of agricultural land, visual impact, rat running, impact on road network, public transport, lack of inclusivity and facilities.

Agri-Tech, Smithson Hill - Refused SCDC March 2018 - outline 112,000 sqm employment R &D. Appeal public inquiry 11 June 2019. GCPC objected to application on conflict with Local Plan, lack of need, loss of bio-diversity, loss of agricultural land, visual impact, impact on road network and public transport.

Tom provided visual representation on a map of the area firstly highlighting the proposed NUGV which is clearly larger than Saffron Walden, and then a map detailing the NUGV, Agri-tech and Genome Campus proposals swamping the significantly smaller local parishes of Great Chesterford, ickleton, Hinxtton and Duxford.

Grateful thanks were extended to Tom for all his work in Planning.

### Local and Neighbourhood Plans

Cllr David Hall detailed Uttlesford District Council's propose development of 5,000 houses up Park Road and Field Farm on a 1,000 acre site. 1,925 houses are to be delivered by 2033. UDC first published its draft Local Plan in Regulation 18 in July 2017, and confirmed these proposals by Regulation 19 a year later. The PC has vigorously challenged both texts, supported in each case by reports from transport, landscape and archaeological consultants.

Following rejection in 2014 by the Planning Inspector of UDC's previous Local Plan, and a public consultation in 2015, in early 2016 UDC published its assessment of sites submitted in response to its Call for Sites - the NUGC site being one of those put forward by the landowners. FACT: in response to UDC, the PC submitted in April 2016 a detailed rejection of its preliminary assessment of the site, and requested that UDC disclose the transport, landscape and historic settlement assessments on which it had based its views as to suitability. Despite 3 requests, UDC did not bother to respond.

In October 2016 UDC told the local press that it had selected two settlement sites at Braintree and Little Easton. UDC then paused its Local Plan decision making process altogether, but weeks later informed South Cambs District Council that Great Chesterford had come forward for selection even though no transport modelling had yet been undertaken. The PC set out its objections to the possible selection of the site at a number of the Planning Policy Working Group meetings, and confirmed its detailed concerns by letter dated

5th June 2017 ahead of adoption of Regulation 18. FACT: despite repeated requests, UDC has never made any substantive response to the PC's objections to NUGC.

Between the close of the Regulation 18 consultation and adoption of the Regulation 19 Plan, the PC attended 5 meetings at UDC's request at which it was told how the settlement plans were to be delivered, not whether selection was sensible, sound or reasonable. FACT: despite the PC's requests at the meetings that UDC's transport consultants should meet with ours to sort out the considerable differences of approach between the two, at no time did UDC or its consultants discuss with the PC any of its transport criticisms.

In order to protect the interests of the Village in the event that, contrary to its wishes, NUGC proceeds, in early 2018 the PC identified a number of Red Lines designed to protect the integrity of the Village, including, in particular, the absolute need for access onto the A11 from the north end of the NUGC site, the need for a buffer zone of at least 1.5 kilometres between the edge of the Village and the new Settlement, and the necessity for improved rail access and parking facilities at local stations. FACT: whilst, thanks to the considerable efforts of Julie Redfern as District Councillor in getting some of our requirements built in to Policy SP7 that will govern NUGC, to-date the substance of the PC's concerns remain unmet.

UDC is required by law to support its Local Plan proposals with a Sustainability Appraisal. Following closure of the Regulation 19 consultation last August, UDC, having appointed new consultants, was told that its Sustainability Appraisal did not meet required legal standards. It was told that there were: - defects in the objectivity of the assessment of its chosen spatial strategy and the alternatives to it; - defects in the clarity of the descriptions of those spacial strategy alternatives and the reasons for selecting them; and - defects in selection of the three proposed Garden Communities now brought forward for assessment. FACT: only a matter of weeks later, the self-same consultants produced a completely rewritten Sustainability Appraisal which essentially confirms that the Local Plan is nevertheless sound, and that it has been positively prepared consistent with legal requirements. Whilst not actually saying so in the robust response that the PC delivered in February to UDC in reply, I doubt that even St Paul himself would have been subject to such a rapid conversion of views. It is against this highly unsatisfactory backcloth that the Inspectors' Examination of the Local Plan commences at the beginning of July. The PC will be represented on your behalf at the hearings by an experienced planning law barrister as well as by its Consultants, and we are meeting with all of them this coming Friday to discuss presentation of the PC's case. Stage 1 of the Examination in July will be solely concerned with legal and procedural matters. These include UDC's Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring local authorities (in particular with South Cambs), the appropriateness of UDC's determination of objective housing needs and its selected spatial strategy, strategic infrastructure issues and Stansted Airport, and, finally, the three proposed Garden Communities. Ahead of the hearings, the Inspectors have requested UDC to respond to no less than 93 preliminary issues in relation to these topics, and you can be assured that the PC will be providing its own input. Stage 2, if it gets that far in relation to NUGC, will then consider development management type policies and the actual site allocations that are proposed. In conclusion, what might be the outcome of these two stages of examination? There are 3 possibilities: The Inspectors could conclude that the submitted Plan - is sound; or alternatively - is not sound, but that it could be made sound by changes following additional work. In this case, such modifications can only be recommended by the Inspectors if they are necessary to resolve problems that would otherwise make the submitted Plan unsound or not legally compliant. Because they would materially alter the Plan or its policies, such modifications would require further consultation by UDC, and possibly even preparation of a further Sustainability Appraisal; or - the third possibility is that the Inspectors conclude the Plan is not sound, and could not be made sound by any changes. Following the Stage 1 hearings, the Inspectors will then set out how they plan to go forward for the next phase of the examination should it proceed to Stage 2. From this brief summary you will appreciate that not only has a considerable amount of work already been undertaken by the PC, but that much more in all likelihood lies ahead. There is therefore a further FACT I need to bring to your attention. I have informed members of the PC that once we have a definitive determination from the Inspectors of their views on the NUGC proposal, I shall at that time be retiring from the Parish Council. Given the numerous issues that are now having to be addressed, it is essential that more help is available to assist with what lies ahead. It was evident from the display of

banners put up during the recent District Council election that many feel strongly about what is proposed, and I do urge you to contribute your time and effort to assist the Parish Council in fighting the case on behalf of the Village, and to assist it at such a critical time.

Chairman Neil Gregory thanked David for dedicating so much of his time applying his considerable knowledge to challenge this proposal.

Cllr Rachel Thackray and Cllr Fiona Wilkinson (from Little Chesterford Parish Council) detailed The Chesterfords Neighbourhood Plan which covers Great and Little Chesterford and must be consistent with wider planning policies such as the NPPF and UDC's Local Plan. The NP can be used to shape the way the villages develop and is our chance to make the rules to preserve and enhance what we value. The NP Group have restarted work this year and are building on works already completed, including GC Village Plan, LC Village Survey, Village walks and consultants reports on Landscape and Historic environment. The NPG have drafted a vision for The Chesterfords, what they want to achieve and how planning policy can achieve it. Coloured cards were distributed to residents to hold up to indicate their approval or other regarding the vision statement, draft objectives and draft policies using a traffic light system.

**Vision Statement** Great and Little Chesterford will have each grown organically and proportionally and continue to be attractive places to live for those seeking a sense of community and place, retaining their separate and distinctive characteristics and identities.

The Chesterfords recognise and accept ongoing change, and will continue to support change that retains our shared resources, rural feel and inclusive, welcoming community.

#### **Recreation and Education**

Draft Objective - Retain and protect the individuality and distinctive characteristics of the three main settlements.

(Villages of Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford, hamlet of Springwell) .

Draft Policies - Define settlement separation gaps to prevent coalescence between Gt Chesterford, Little Chesterford, Springwell and any future settlements .

Development must not materially affect defined locally important views eg along Cam valley, into Lt C historic centre from bridge etc .

Development must follow existing development patterns – linear in Lt C and nucleated in Gt C. Backfill will not be supported in Lt C. Development in Springwell will not be supported as this is not a sustainable location .

Protect and enhance the site and setting of important historic sites and wildlife habitats.

#### **Getting Around**

Draft Objectives - Promote safe and sustainable transport (public, walking, cycling) .

Promote pedestrian use of railway station.

Promote safe pedestrian access to village services and between villages .

Promote and enhance cycling routes south to SW and north towards Cambridge.

Promote road safety for all in village streets.

Draft Policies- Developments to east of B1383 to contribute to safe pedestrian crossing(s) over road to station.

Housing development with access onto B1383 to contribute to cycle/footpath and bridge across Cam at Horse River Green.

Designate land for Cambs/SW cycle path.

All development outside Gt C development limits to contribute to traffic calming measures to prevent rat running.

#### **Village and Landscape Characteristics**

Draft Objective - Retain and protect the individuality and distinctive characteristics of the three main settlements (Villages of Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford, hamlet of Springwell)

Draft Policies - Define settlement separation gaps to prevent coalescence between Gt Chesterford, Little Chesterford, Springwell and any future settlements.

Development must not materially affect defined locally important views eg along Cam valley, into Lt C historic centre from bridge etc.

Development must follow existing development patterns – linear in Lt C and nucleated in Gt C. Backfill will not be supported in Lt C. Development in Springwell will not be supported as this is not a sustainable location.

Protect and enhance the site and setting of important historic sites and wildlife habitats.

### **Housing**

Draft Objective - Ensure that the Chesterfords continue to grow at an organic and sustainable rate, supporting viable and diverse communities.

Draft Policies - Support the creation of 10 % growth over the next 15 years across the communities (70 additional houses) in sites that will: Maintain the separation between the communities preserving their separate identities.

Provide easy access to facilities and public transport

Mitigate any adverse effects on residential and community interests through contributions to wider planning benefits. Meet the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan (and other planning policies).

The draft objectives and policies were well received in the main, with a large majority of green cards being shown. The Housing Policy and Objectives did receive a few red and amber cards.

Fiona thanked everyone for taking part and noted that the NPG can be contacted at [chesterfordsneighbourhoodplan@gmail.com](mailto:chesterfordsneighbourhoodplan@gmail.com)

The NPG will continue to refine the Plan and host community events before the formal consultation and referendum. More helpers are desperately needed and residents were asked to put themselves forward to help shape the future of The Chesterfords.

A member of the public asked if transport access to school should be included as a draft objective. Cllr Thackray explained that it had been considered but that they had been advised to exclude it, although all suggestions are welcomed.

District Cllr Anthony Gerard noted that the new administration at UDC wants to do more to assist parishes in achieving their N Plans, as they are vital to all communities.

Rachel and Fiona were thanked for their work moving the Neighbourhood Plan forward.

### District and County Councillor Reports

**Newport District Cllr Anthony Gerard** confirmed that the new council at UDC was formed 21/05/19 with 39 R4U Cllrs inaugurated. The new council have chosen to be inclusive and invited all members of all parties to join the cabinet, with only the Lib Dems choosing to remain as opposition. There are now 10 portfolios and District Cllr Gerard is responsible for Communities where he hopes to bring residents into the centre of the Council.

Recently elected **District Cllr Richard Pavitt** extended thanks to outgoing District Cllr Julie Redfern who has worked tirelessly for 12 years, particularly noting Julie`s work on Social Housing. Richard confirmed that UDC is now comprised of just over 70% of councillors not connected to party politics, probably as a result of disillusionment with Westminster politics. Richard acknowledged that the challenges facing UDC have not changed and there is no reason to anticipate changes to the national rules any time soon, however this is an opportunity to do things differently and win back trust. Richard thanked the public for trusting himself and Neil with their vote and encouraged residents to get in touch with any concerns.

**County Cllr John Moran** confirmed that he still believes that ECC do forget where Uttlesford is, and detailed his role as humbling, frustrating and rewarding. John detailed his work pushing for street light replacement with LED lighting, and also with the street lighting crisis where the company that provides the current bulbs has ceased producing them and some Councils are stockpiling bulbs, creating issues for other Councils. John detailed a new initiative from the Highway Cabinet and asked Councils to forward requests for footpath works and highlighted the Oxford-Cambridge Arc proposals that currently appear to be unlikely to impact Uttlesford, but would if the option was taken dramatically alter the land to the west of Uttlesford.

A member of the public asked when the dreadful potholes in East Street and Audley Road will be properly repaired and John confirmed that overnight repairs are due to start this month.

22.05.19 APM meeting

#### Chairman`s Award

Retiring Chairman Neil Gregory detailed the award given to Colonel Bob Tonkins ( earlier in the day as Bob is unavailable this evening) for his organisation of the magnificent WW1 commemoration in 2018.

A second Chairman`s award was then presented to the family of the late Alan Cattley, Parish Council Clerk who sadly passed away in March this year. Alan`s wife Janet thanked the Parish Council and Village for their support.

#### Q&A Session

The council were asked to provide a contact to share information to the broadsheet.

Recently elected Chairman Tom Newcombe led the thanks to retiring Chairman Neil Gregory for his 5 years as Chair and made reference to the sheer volume of work Neil has undertaken on the Council and Village`s behalf.

The meeting closed at 22.04 and refreshments were then served.