

Chairman's Report 11/09/2017

Welcome back to our Councillors and I hope you have all had an enjoyable summer break. I would like to make a special welcome to Deborah Conway-Read, our new councillor as this is her first meeting. We need to consider along with Deborah which Working Groups are in need of further help.

DIGITAL MAPPING

We are planning to purchase the digital receiver in September so that we can start the digital mapping process. This has been fully budgeted and I am hopeful that we can start this process by late September.

WORKING GROUPS

I would encourage the Working Group chairs to start the discussion process with your groups with regard to your budgets for the year ahead. It is most important that we start this process early.

Please remember that we are meeting at 7pm at the Burial Ground for our annual review with the focus being on the Woodland areas beside the Burial Ground and the Burial Ground improvements over the past year. Clive will be leading us through this process in conjunction with the new Woodland Plan.

Thanks

Ray Hartley

Chairman

Chesham Bois Parish Council

Council Meeting 11th Sept 2017

Clerk's Report & Correspondence

Bank Account Signatories

The bank mandates for the Unity Trust Bank and the National Savings and Investments Bank have been updated. The Cambridge Building Society account has not yet been updated as further information is required.

Requirement to Register for VAT

HMRC have responded to Council's letter requesting guidance on the need to register for VAT. They have confirmed that given the small value and infrequent nature of our vatable supplies there is not a need to register at this time. The value of vatable supplies will need to be monitored and need to register at a future date considered.

Insurance Cover

Aon, our current insurance providers, have notified Council that they will not be providing renewal cover next year as they are leaving the 'Local Council's' market. These changes will not have an impact on our existing insurance policy. They have recommended BHIB Ltd insurance brokers, who are approved by NALC to deal with next year's renewal process.

Training

Cllr Deborah Conway Read will attend Councillor Induction Training on 19th October.

Magazines in the Office

The Autumn issues of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Journal and The Chiltern Society's Magazine are available in the office.

Correspondence

- Letter from Berks Bucks & Oxford Wildlife Trust thanking Council for the donation of a small plastic boat which they will keep on their College Lake nature reserve near Tring. The boat will be used to ferry staff and volunteers along with tools to the islands they manage for breeding birds such as Lapwing and Redshank.
- Email from Chiltern District Council containing a link to the recently agreed Community & Wellbeing Plan 2017-20 <http://www.chiltern.gov.uk/ChilternCommunityandWellbeingPlan>
- Email from the The Chilterns Conservation Board requesting nominations for the appointment of Parish Member to their Board due to a casual vacancy. **Action: Council to consider the request to submit a nomination. (papers attached)**

1. Update on Current Work

Common – a fallen tree on the Common near South Road, which blocked a footpath, has been cleared. Similarly a large fallen branch at the junction of Great Bois Wood and the Amersham Road has been cleared.

Manor Drive- There has been renewed concern from residents of Manor Drive about leaning trees over their front gardens (we removed 4 trees in front of Nos 2 and 3, Manor Drive some months ago); after a site visit with John Morris we are seeking permission from CDC to remove a further 2 cherry trees in front of Nos 6 and 7, Manor Drive and to trim branches from other trees.

2. Management Plan for the Common and Woodlands

John Morris has produced a third draft of the Management Plan, which he ran through with the CWWG on 30th Aug 2017 and some amendments were agreed. There is still some work to do on the timing of implementation but I would like the Council to approve the Vision statement with which we preface the plan, together with the Objectives and Management Strategy which are designed to deliver that vision (copy attached, together with a map of Management Operations). Note that there is no priority order in the list of objectives. It is important that we engage the various stakeholders and especially the public in our vision as soon as possible.

I met Mark Vallance, Reserves Manager for the Berks, Bucks, Oxon Wildlife Trust, on site in the meadow in the field beside the Woodland Burial Ground and he was very impressed with the variety of fauna and flora that we already have there. He is going to advise us on a management strategy to foster a wider spread of wildflowers on what is a natural chalk grassland site and he recommended that it was both unnecessary and unwise to be trying to add new species.

3. Burial Ground Maintenance

The new maintenance contractors have still to trim the hedges across the whole Burial Ground and cut the hay in the meadow. We have to continually chase them for information and work schedules and will be conducting a serious review of their reliability at the end of the season.

4. Burial Ground – Other Points

Bench in Burial Ground: The Working Group has approved a request from a relative for the installation of a teak bench with a memorial plaque in the Original Burial Ground. It is about half way up and will be situated by the hedge on the railway side.

Apiary: To seek the Council's approval for a proposal by The Chalfont Beekeepers' Society for an apiary to be established in the meadow field (see attached).

Chesham Bois Common and Woods – Management Plan

Vision

To improve the public amenity of the Common and other woodlands for formal and informal recreation.

To ensure the safety of the woodlands by removing deteriorating and dangerous trees, where necessary.

To improve the health and resilience of these mature broadleaved woodlands by diversifying the age and species structure, which includes oak, ash, sycamore, beech and wild cherry.

To continue to encourage biodiversity and protect wildlife.

To protect the Common's aesthetic appeal.

To conserve the ancient semi-natural woodland of Bois Wood and make this wood more accessible to visitors.

To work within the financial constraints of the Parish and to seek other sources of funding wherever possible. To cover costs where possible by the sale of timber and firewood in a sensitive and sustainable manner.

Objectives and Management Strategy

1. To create more diverse and resilient woodland in terms of structure, ages and species by thinning and selective felling. Use a continuous cover approach where possible to thin out trees and develop regeneration. Strategy - to rejuvenate the wood using natural regeneration as far as possible, while retaining the common and woods as a landscape feature. There is already good regeneration present in places. The intention is that, through sustainable thinning regimes the woodlands will be enhanced by increasing light levels. This will encourage regeneration and the subsequent development of structural diversity.
2. To ensure the safety of trees, especially those along the roadsides and boundaries with neighbouring properties where the risks are highest, through the timely management of hazardous trees. Strategy - safety of roadside and boundary trees through tagging, monitoring and remedial works as required, by thinning to develop the strength and stability of remaining trees, and including tree surgery where necessary on roadside and other trees covered by TPO or in Conservation Area.
3. To enhance the ecological value through management of veteran trees, deadwood habitats and open spaces such as rides and glades. Strategy - Retain suitable standing and fallen dead wood where it is safe to do so. Identify and retain old and veteran trees for their habitat value. Create small temporary glades and open space (under 0.1ha). Manage the central track on the common as a wider ride, with coppiced edges, especially coppice sycamore on southern edge of ride. Muddy centre of ride currently about 5 metres wide, coppice southern edge back further 5 metres in scallops. Let more light on to grassland on common by selective felling of trees on southern side to develop a lower edge and prevent encroachment on to mown area. Retain bramble and other low cover in places as valuable habitat.

4. To diversify the tree species composition by natural regeneration and supplementary planting. Strategy - to add greater resilience to the woodland in the face of problems such as pests and diseases such as Ash dieback and climate change by selective felling where necessary and supplementary planting eg of wild cherry, wild service tree and small leaved lime.
5. Use of woodland as a sustainable timber and wood fuel resource as a means of reducing the costs of maintaining these sites. Strategy - thinning and selective felling to produce a limited amount of timber and firewood which could be sold in order to reduce the cost of work. Timber stacking and loading areas to be carefully sited.
6. To maintain the character of these sites which also provide a valuable screen from roads and neighbouring properties. Strategy - small scale forestry interventions, spread over a number of years to reduce the impact of change on the local environment.
7. To manage areas of ash at risk of ash dieback (Chalara). Strategy - this disease has already been seen in natural regenerated saplings on the common. Part of the Common has a lot of mature ash, which may need to be selectively felled if disease weakens these trees.
8. To limit the impact of deer on regeneration and ground vegetation. Strategy - Muntjac and Roe are regularly seen. Use suitable tree guards to protect any planting, deer are likely to be disturbed by dog walkers, traffic etc. Leave scattered branches in places to protect natural regeneration from deer browsing by offering some cover.
9. To control invasive plant species such as holly and laurel. Strategy - control will need to be selective to improve the habitat as these evergreen shrubs also provide a valuable barrier and screen and therefore should be retained in places near roads and houses.
10. To allow, encourage and manage public access to these areas. Strategy - to welcome public use of the common and woods for visits and informal recreation. Maintain a suitable network of paths and open areas by cutting or mowing when and where necessary.
11. To enable Forest Schools and other groups to use areas safely for educational purposes. Strategy - the Parish Council want to encourage the use of these areas by Forest Schools, scouts & guide groups etc for educational purposes and maintain the areas they use in a safe condition by regular inspection and timely work.

CHALFONTS BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1121231

Proposal to Chesham Bois Parish Council for an Apiary at the Chesham Bois Burial Ground

Introduction

Chalfonts Beekeepers' Society was established in 1976 as a charity to advance the education of its members and the public in the craft of beekeeping. We are affiliated to Bucks County Beekeepers Association and to the British Beekeepers Association. Currently we have over 200 members. The membership comes from the areas around the Chalfonts villages, as the name implies, and a substantial proportion are based in Amersham, Chesham and Chesham Bois.

In addition to beecraft we also aim to educate the beekeepers and the public in understanding honey bee biology and behaviour, understanding of environmental issues, the role and importance of pollinators in the food chain, the role of trees and plants that are important to bees and other insects.

To further our education aims the Society runs a Taster Course each year for those who may be interested in taking up beekeeping to find out more about what's involved; this leads on to our Beginners Course, which over 8 sessions teaches new beginners the basics, including husbandry sessions at the club's teaching apiary. We have a club apiary where we introduce the beginners to the bees and the participants have experience of handling the bees before they get their own hives and colonies of bees.

We would like to offer more advanced courses, such as Queen Rearing, but have been unable to accomplish this at the current apiary as the bees are inspected too frequently by the beginners to allow the colonies to build up. We are searching for another apiary site where we could keep beehives in a quiet, sunny location, accessible by car, with plenty of forage available and where we could have a secure shed for storing equipment.

Proposal

The Chalfonts Beekeepers' Society proposes that part of the field next to Chesham Bois Burial ground should be used as an apiary.

- Works to be undertaken

We would like to erect a fence and a screen to demarcate the space. It is envisioned that we would plant hawthorn whips to encourage a natural hedge to grow beside the fence and eventually replace the screen.

We would propose cutting a path through the hedge to the proposed apiary site; clearing the area of nettles and over growth, erecting the fence and screen and clearing an area outside the shed.

- Storage of equipment

If the large shed is available we would like to use part of the space inside for storing our equipment. Roughly we need double the amount of equipment for every hive where we keep bees and this needs to be stored under cover. We would be prepared to undertake any refurbishment of the shed that is needed to keep it in good order.

- Frequency of visits

The hives would be managed by a team of our members living locally and we would envision running advanced training courses there over the summer months. There would be space outside the shed to offer a theory class prior to looking at the bees and putting the theory into practice.

Visits to the hives would in general be weekly over the summer months to check on the progress of the colony and health of the bees. If we were to run a training course over the May – July period there could be an additional weekly visit, most likely to be in the evening or at weekends. All visits would be arranged beforehand with the Burial Ground management to ensure that there would not be a clash with any funerals.

- The field

The field is large and the apiary would not cover it all. We have amongst our members experienced gardeners, both amateur and professional, who would be able to offer advice and to support the Parish Council's efforts to create a meadow in the field.

Alternatively, another idea could be to plant an orchard of apples and pear species, which once established would provide an income for the council and offer the opportunity to have Open Orchard Days for the public.

- Public safety

Although the apiary would be visible to the public path and to any walkers going by, the fence would provide a secure barrier. Signs would be erected to explain the apiary to the public. The bee hives would be sited far enough away from the paths so that bees would not be flying where there are walkers.

As members of the British Beekeepers Society our club apiaries and all our members have public liability insurance.

- Remuneration

Chalfonts Beekeepers' Society proposes to pay a quarterly fee of £10 as a gesture of good will. We would also propose to undertake the cost of any works in clearing and fencing the area at our own expense. All the bees and bee equipment belong to Chalfonts Beekeepers' Society. Honey from the hives could be made available at a discounted price to sell under the Chesham Bois Parish Council label, if that were of interest; possibly at the Chalfonts Beekeepers' Stall at the Village Fete – an event that our club supports every year that it takes place.

Other benefits to CBPC: if members are interested visits to inspect the bees at first hand could be arranged.

Summary

We hope the proposal to establish an apiary in the field next to the Burial Ground is of interest to the Parish Council. If there is any further information or explanation that is needed we would be happy to attend a meeting to discuss the proposal further.

Fiona Matheson

Secretary, Chalfonts Beekeepers' Society

Email: secretary@cbeesoc.co.uk

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Council Meeting 11th September 2017

Burial Grounds Management Working Group Report

Progress Against Defined Tasks

Ongoing Task for Working Group	Details of Latest Progress
Completion of transfer of information from historic documents held by the Parish relating to the ownership / contents of graves to the new electronic database	Records transfer complete from all written records to electronic form.
Updating electronic database to reflect best practice and to enable smooth link with data from the digital mapping of the burial ground. Eventually this will enable some information to be searchable by the general public online.	<p>Clerk has shared completed database with Pear to identify any issues with current data structure</p> <p>Cllr Hartley is taking forward the digital mapping of the burial ground.</p>
Agreeing a new numbering system for the New Formal and Woodland Burial Grounds to fit more logically with the database, and make it easier for future plots to be identified, sold and managed.	<p>Visit by Clerk and Councillors King and Thomas to Greenacres and Amersham burial grounds</p> <p>Visit by Clerk to Amersham Town admin</p> <p>Meeting of Working Group scheduled for 13th October will include discussion of this point</p>
Establishing a system, reflecting best practice, to ensure information on plot ownership is kept up to date in particular to ensure that owners can be easily contacted when memorial maintenance is required.	Visit by Clerk and Cllr Large to Chesham Town Council secured details of their Memorial licence scheme
Establishing a marketing plan for the Burial Ground	<p>Former Burial Grounds Working Group established a draft text for leaflet for Funeral Directors, discussed by Council in April 2017. A draft is being revised by Cllr Large and Clerk – but will need to fit with broader marketing plan established by the working group.</p> <p>Cllr Thomas has shared photos which might be suitable for new marketing material</p> <p>Items from previous reports that also require consideration by the Working Group are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of allocating portion of New Formal for Muslim burial • Selling Family or double width plots.

	The Working Group is meeting on 13 th October.
Preparation of new Regulations relating to the Burial Ground for agreement by main Council	Draft previously circulated in November. Clerk and Cllr Large are jointly working on Regulations, including updating them to reflect any new lessons from Clerk's training. The final version of the regulations will need to incorporate any reference to memorial licence scheme once established. This will be discussed at Working Group meeting.

Other items

Cllrs King and Thomas and the Parish Clerk attended a tour and meeting at Greenacres Woodland Burial on 5th July.

A key focus of the visit was the system used for plotting and numbering the graves so that they can be accurately described and recorded both for selling plots and for gravedigging. Greenacres uses physical plotting relative to marked trees and a fixed building, using stakes and string (with the angle from known points recorded). They also use a metallic marker at both head and foot of the grave. The Working Group needs to consider what might be usefully adopted by CB Burial Ground, that is practicable for Clerk and Sexton to be able to manage.

Some marketing tips were also raised that can feed into our consideration of our own marketing strategy:

- It was recommended that bland pictures of the Burial Grounds in general were not so useful as precise pictures which show off the USP of the offering.
- Greenacres also provide the opportunity for sponsorship of bird/insect boxes (£85/£45 is charged for each box for its lifetime, guaranteed for 3 years). As we do not allow markers or memorials within the woodland burial ground, this might be a scheme that would be of interest to clients, that could be added to our pricing structure, if these costs represent a profit against the fixing and maintenance of the box.

One member of the public requested that out-of-hours access to the Burial Ground be made easier for those with mobility problems. The Working Group will consider whether a padlock with an access code, shared with mourners, should be made available.

Action for Council

- Councillors are invited to note the report

Transport Working Group Report for 11 September 2017 Council Meeting

Portable Speed Sign (MVAS)

We have 3 MVAS signs operational in the parish

MVAS 1 is currently located in Bois lane facing down the hill between St Leonards and Holloway Lane.

MVAS 2 & 3 are located on the Amersham Road outside the Beacon school – one on each side of the road.

Data for the 3 MVAS units is summarised below. Please note the different measurement periods for each MVAS

Bois Lane - There was 96% compliance with speeds below 34 mph from the 63,296 vehicles travelling up the hill from Chesham to Amersham during the period. This does mean that 2,503 vehicles travelled at speeds greater than 35 mph with 1 recording a speed of 65 to 60mph!

During the 7 week monitoring period a total of 271,334 vehicles travelled from Amersham to Chesham achieving 90.2% compliance with speeds below 34mph. 26,615 vehicles travelled at speeds greater than 35mph with 5,344 travelling at speeds above 40mph and one recording 65 to 69mph.

During the 27 Week monitoring period 1.255m vehicles travelled from Chesham to Amersham achieving 88% compliance with speeds below 34 mph. 140,636 vehicles travelled at speeds greater than 35 mph with 498 exceeding 60 mph.

All data has been sent to the local community police for their follow up. In April 2017 I requested the police to carry out enforcement activity on the main Amersham Road and wrote again to them in July requesting confirmation and results of any activity. I have not received a response and will continue try and get the police to engage.

I have also written to Thames Valley Police (TVP) regarding the feasibility of providing a permanent penalty speed camera on Amersham Road however they have confirmed that they do not have the funds available to provide the camera and they referred me to TfB.

Subsequently, I received a response from Sue Brown at TfB which I have copied below:

"Your enquiry has been passed to me for a response in relation to your request for a speed camera along the A416 Amersham Road.

A number of years ago Bucks County Council installed speed cameras across the county in locations that had a history of speed related killed or seriously injured collisions. These camera housings were funded by the Department of Transport. However since 2010 the government ceased to provide funding for more of these housings to be installed and alternative casualty reduction measures were required to be considered. The County Council has not installed any new housings in at least the last 10 years and the current fleet are now becoming obsolete as new digital camera technology replaces the old wet film technology. As a result we are not considering installing any new fixed camera housings.

For your information I have checked the collision history on this section of the A416 and although there has been 3 slight injury collisions in the last 3 years none of them were speed related"

This is a very disappointing response as it's my opinion that there is a real danger to school children, parents, residents and other road users due to excessive speeding. This feels like an accident waiting to happen. I intend to pursue this matter with Mark Shaw, cabinet member at Bucks CC with responsibility for transport.

Following a survey with the LAT on 4 July, 3 new MVAS locations in Copperkins Lane and one in Holloway Lane have been agreed. Existing 30 mph sign poles will be extended by TfB but at our cost. TfB finally provided an estimate last week although it was included as part of the traffic calming works which is not appropriate. I expect the cost to supply and fit 4 poles to be less than £1000. This will be progressed when we receive revised paper work.

I will be attending a TfB stakeholder conference on Tuesday 12 Sept which will feature a range of transport issues on the agenda including potholes, gullies, grass cutting, street lighting and winter planning.

MVAS 1 Bois Lane 12 June to 7 September 2017				
		Number of		
		Movements		
5 - 9 mph		3,091		4.88%
10 - 14 mph		5,828		9.21%
15 - 19 mph		11,964		18.90%
20 - 24 mph		16,226		25.64%
25 - 29 mph		16,266		25.70%
30 - 34 mph		7,418		11.72%
35 - 39 mph		1,917		3.03%
40 - 44 mph		449		0.71%
45 - 49 mph		110		0.17%
50 - 54 mph		18		0.03%
55 - 59 mph		8		0.01%
60 - 64 mph		0		0.00%
65 - 69 mph		1		0.00%
70 - 74 mph		0		0.00%
75 - 79 mph		0		0.00%
80 - 84 mph		0		0.00%
85 - 89 mph		0		0.00%
Total Movements		63,296		100.00%

MVAS 2 Facing Amersham 7 July to 28 August 2017				
		Number of		
		Movements		
5 - 9 mph		2,713		1.00%
10 - 14 mph		2,062		0.76%
15 - 19 mph		7,649		2.82%
20 - 24 mph		37,875		13.96%
25 - 29 mph		115,847		42.70%
30 - 34 mph		78,572		28.96%
35 - 39 mph		21,272		7.84%
40 - 44 mph		4,029		1.48%
45 - 49 mph		873		0.32%
50 - 54 mph		280		0.10%
55 - 59 mph		117		0.04%
60 - 64 mph		35		0.01%
65 - 69 mph		10		0.00%
70 - 74 mph		0		0.00%
75 - 79 mph		0		0.00%
80 - 84 mph		0		0.00%
85 - 89 mph		0		0.00%
Total Movements		271,334		100.00%

MVAS 3 Facing Chesham 10 March to 7 September 2017					
		Number of			
		Movements			
5 - 9 mph		23,889		1.90%	
10 - 14 mph		31,894		2.54%	
15 - 19 mph		66,253		5.28%	
20 - 24 mph		191,475		15.26%	
25 - 29 mph		482,807		38.47%	
30 - 34 mph		317,947		25.34%	
35 - 39 mph		103,072		8.21%	
40 - 44 mph		26,964		2.15%	
45 - 49 mph		7125		0.57%	
50 - 54 mph		2166		0.17%	
55 - 59 mph		811		0.06%	
60 - 64 mph		282		0.02%	
65 - 69 mph		133		0.01%	
70 - 74 mph		52		0.00%	
75 - 79 mph		23		0.00%	
80 - 84 mph		6		0.00%	
85 - 89 mph		2		0.00%	
Total Movements		1,254,901		100.00%	

LAF

The next LAF meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 20 September at 19.00

We submitted a request for matched funding for 2018/19 for traffic calming measures on the Amersham Road by the 31 August deadline as agreed. The amount requested is c£1500 subject to receiving revised estimates from TfB. The work will encompass painting 'Dragons Teeth' markings on the road where the speed limit changes from 60mph to 30mph and changing the existing 30mph roundel signs to square yellow day glow with a 30mph roundel. We will also provide 2 new Chesham Bois signs stating 'Chesham Bois – Please drive carefully' to replace the existing signs on Amersham Road and Copperkins Lane.

Street Lighting

Sparkx have completed a substantial part of the replacement programme scheduled for the summer period and have received payment of £18,000. I will carry out an inspection of all lighting during the next month with Sparkx to ensure that all necessary work is completed before the winter period and to confirm the final phase of the replacement programme for 2018/19.

Nicola Wheatcroft of Chiltern District Council Planning Dept. confirmed on 25 August that CBPC do not require planning permission to install additional lighting in Milton Lawns as it's our statutory duty to provide street lighting in the parish. I will produce a proposal and estimate for additional lighting for the Council to consider in due course.

Cricket Club Dropped Kerb

No progress to report

Devolution

Cllr Woolveridge has inspected most of the footways in CB and taken photos for the transport group to review and agree the siding out requirements for walkways and made-up footpaths. The group will meet during the next week to agree work to be carried out by Tool Shed.

Other Activities/Actions

Obtain quotes for the new all-weather path through Tenterden Spinney.

Meet with the contractor who laid the new all-weather path near the cricket pitch to see if can be compacted to provide a more solid surface similar to that along the common in North Road.

Get a quote from TfB for the dropped kerb near the cricket pitch.

Review Tool Shed's activity during the summer as I am not particularly happy with the standard of grass cutting being achieved.

Cllr David King,

10 September 2017

CBPC Village Community Report: September 2017

Items to consider:

- 1: To agree the date of the 2018 Village Fete. Propose Saturday 9th June 2018. This is the date for Trooping the Colour and we will apply for a flyby if this date is acceptable.
- 2: Autumn Commons Clear Up. Posters made and put up around the village. Can we discuss opposition to CBPC flyers advertising the Picnic? Some residents objecting to how the flyers have been put up. Agree contact with local schools and local guides/ brownies/ scouts/ schools etc. to promote attendance.
- 3: Remembrance Day Parade. Allocation of labour regards collecting bollards/ sound system/ flyers on cars regarding parking / on the day marshalling duties.
- 4: To note the increase in CB burglaries over the summer. To discuss the need to promote awareness of local burglaries and anti-social behaviour and any other issues. Possibility of liaising with local neighbourhood watch group? How to report these issues. Either via the webpage or any other suggestions.
- 5: To report on the success of the village picnic we held this summer and areas to improve this event. Also should we agree to do this annually or bi-annually subject to agreement of CBPC.
- 6: Can we agree an evening date week commencing 18 September to talk about our ideas for the Village Community Committee
- 7: To discuss the possibility of purchasing a personalised gazebo for use during events. Quotes are attached.

John Bailey

MEDIA

Our Your Amersham council report was featured in the Aug edition. I am going to struggle to write much for the next edition unless, anyone suggests ideas.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook now has 95 likes. Posts now reach 800+ Facebook members.

Twitter account now has 114 followers.

FUTURE OF COMMUNICATIONS

A few of the recent survey returns cited a lack of communication in their feedback. Also, several residents and ex-councillors have criticised our communication with local residents. This can be divided into two areas: **A)** providing information and updating residents of events, issues and problems and, **B)** responding to residents when they contact the Council with complaints, suggestions or any other issues.

A) We communicate with residents by:

- a) Noticeboards
- b) Website
- c) Social media
- d) Local media – Your Amersham
- e) APM

Social Media

Social Media has successfully engaged younger members of the village, who do not tend to read the noticeboards and this is reflected in the increased attendances at the village events. Adding a post to Facebook & Twitter is simple. Facebook is probably our most effective form of communication. The post on the shop gazebo removal reached 2000 people and 23 readers commented.

Website

The website, however, has floundered; despite, the Council investing nearly £2k on its renewal. This is because we are not updating the site with new information and adding photos. This job is time consuming and requires writing text, loading photos and adding the links. The website is the window to the Council's work, services and events. How can we resurrect the website? We look for a web guru. Another councillor? Is it the responsibility of the Clerk? A local volunteer? Or, we pay a web content agency?

When the website was updated, we had big ideas of making it a community hub with links to community groups, sports clubs, etc. This would generate more traffic to the website. To take this forward we would need to find a webmaster.

Local Media

The local newspaper, The Bucks Examiner, has a skeleton staff who produce content for local websites and several weekly newspapers, from Ealing to Chesham. The circulation is dire and they have just scrapped their website, Get Bucks. Our best print media outlet is Your Amersham, which is delivered monthly to each household in CB. I resurrected Bois Own in the spring and will try to get another edition out in the autumn, but this will die, again. Unless, a volunteer can be found. Older residents are less likely to use social media or view

the website, so communicating with them is limited to the noticeboards. Several survey respondents bemoaned the lack of printed communication.

- B) Direct Communication** – when residents email the Clerk, can we create an automatic reply which says “thank you for your email.....we are dealing with your enquiry” ?
Can we ensure that all direct communication receives a response and an update from the Clerk or the relevant councillor?

Going Forward

Content

We are a small parish, so generating news is a challenge. We can do more. The top end of Bois Lane has been resurfaced. Did TfB inform us? If so, we could have published this info. Only prior to the monthly meeting does the Clerk notify the Council of correspondence. Can such notices be shared more frequently, so we can share the info with residents?

Webmaster

Do any other councillors have the ability and time to manage and increase the content of the website? If not, are we happy to appoint a responsible, local volunteer? If not or, one cannot be found, are we happy to pay an agency, if the cost is reasonable?

Open Evening

As well as the Annual Parish Meeting, the Council could organise a Social Open Evening, where villagers are invited to share a drink and voice any issues, so there is a forum for wider discussion twice a year.

PARISH QUESTIONNAIRE

We need to contact all the people who responded and left their email or phone number. I suggest the following format:

1. Thank you for completing the survey
2. We note your comments and we have acted on some of the issues raised.
3. If you have ticked one of the volunteer boxes, we will add you to the relevant contact list.
4. We will retain your contact details for future Parish Council news and events. Please let us know if you no longer wished to be contacted.

All the email addresses are in a mailshot ready to go out. 6 people left their phone number only, so we should make a courtesy call.

I will get a summary out on social media and the website, once the draw is made.

Cllr Buckingham