

Council Meeting 8th March 2021: Clerk's Report & Correspondence

Parish Council Elections: Thursday 6 May 2021

The Notice of Election will be published on 22nd March and this is when the first nomination forms can be submitted. The closing date for nominations is 4pm on Thursday 8th April.

Candidate Packs have been sent to the office and are available for collection. Candidates are entitled to a free copy of the electoral register for their parish these will be available from 22nd March. The Clerk can provide elector numbers for proposers and seconders prior to this date.

Nominations papers must be submitted by hand to the Deputy Returning Officer at King George V House in Amersham. Parish Clerks may hand deliver nomination papers to the on behalf of candidates if required.

A Candidate & Agents Briefing has been arranged for Wednesday 17th March at 4pm via Microsoft Teams. The briefing will provide information on the election timetable, nomination process and count arrangements. A link to join the meeting will be sent to all Councillors.

A notice of Uncontested Election or a Statement of Persons Nominated will be available to view on the Buck's Council website no later than 4pm on Friday 9th April.

The appointment of councillors become effective on the 4th day after the election (10th May). Successful candidates may not act as councillors until they have signed a declaration of acceptance of office.

Pre-Election or 'Purdah' Period: This begins on the Notice of Election date (22nd March) and ends at the end of the polling day (6th May). During this period Council should be mindful not to publicise controversial issues or report views or proposals in such a way that identifies individual councillors or group of councillors. This includes in newsletters, publications, website and social media. Any quotes made during this period should come from the Clerk.

Action: To note the contents of SLCC's advice note on 'Election 'Purdah' and NALC's advice note 'Code of Recommended practice on Local Authority Publicity'.

Appointment of an Internal Auditor

I have been looking to instruct an alternative Internal Auditor as it is good practice to change internal auditors every 3-4 years. Most other parish/town councils in Buckinghamshire use our current auditor or the one other public body internal auditor. I have contacted this other company who are unable to take on new business at this time but have added us to a waiting list. BMKALC have recommended a number of clerks who carry out internal audits. Three have responded and the cost is approximately £200 to carry out the work. I will forward their quotes for Council's consideration. I have also contacted a local accounting firm for a quote but had not had a response.

Action: To Appoint an Internal Auditor

Reschedule the 10th May 2021 Annual Council Meeting

Given the election timetable outlined above I recommend that the Annual Council Meeting be rescheduled to 17th May to allow for the possibility of a contested election.

Action: To reschedule Annual Council Meeting to either 17th or 24th May 2021.

Cancel or Reschedule the 17th May 2021 Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled for 17th May which is the date that some but not all the current Covid restrictions are to be lifted.

Action: Council are to consider either rescheduling the meeting to Monday 24th May or cancelling the meeting.

NALC Foundation Award

Confirmation was received this month from BMKALC that Council's application for the NALC Foundation Award had been successful. Council will receive official confirmation from NALC and be given access to the award's logo which can be used on Council's stationery, website and social media platforms.

Action: To note.

Burial Ground Business Rates Valuation

It was noted in November 2019 that the burial ground was not on the non-domestic rating list held by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The VOA were contacted and the registration process commenced. Earlier this month a number of invoices were received from Bucks Council for backdated business rates as follows:

2017/2018	£11,999.50
2018/2019:	£12,360.00
2019/2020:	£12,643.25
2020/2021:	£12,849.25
Total:	£49,852.00

A copy of the Valuation Report from the VOA and information on the appeals process has already been forwarded to the Finance Working Group for their consideration and will be forwarded to Council with this report.

I have emailed the business rates department of Bucks Council and have asked if:

- a) the business rates relief currently received for the office could be transferred to the burial ground and if it can be backdated; and
- b) if a repayment scheme for the backdated rates could be arranged over a few years.

The current invoices need to be paid even if an appeal is ongoing. If an appeal is successful, all overpayments will be returned.

The 2021/22 budget includes £10,000 for burial ground business rates.

Action: Council to agree a course of action.

Remote Council and Committee Meetings

Local councils have the powers to hold public meetings remotely until 6th May 2021.

NALC is working with a number of national bodies to press the government to extend these regulations beyond this date however at this time government has no plans to extend.

NALC have in the meantime issued guidance on what a council can do to reduce risk to councillors, staff and public attending face to face meetings which include.

- Providing hand sanitiser to those entering the meeting room and making sure hand sanitiser is readily available in the room itself.
- Staggering arrival and exit times for staff, councillors and members of the public.
- Placing seating at least 2-metres apart.
- Ensuring everyone wears face masks.
- Holding paperless meetings.
- If papers are provided, people should be discouraged from sharing with others and asked to take the papers with them at the end of the meeting to minimise how many people handle the papers.
- Arranging seating so people are not facing each other directly.
- Choosing a venue with good ventilation, including opening windows and doors where possible.
- Choosing a large enough venue to allow distancing.
- If the venue has an NHS QR code to support test and trace then all attendees should register using that app, for those without access to the app they should register attendance in line with the venue's test and trace procedure.

As the council office is not large enough to meet the requirements above I have therefore been sourcing alternative venues.

Action: To note.

FINANCE WORKING GROUP

Accountability

The Working Group reports to Council.

Purpose

1. Conducting the financial business of the Council in accordance with the Councils Financial Regulations, legislative requirements and guidelines.
2. Considering the financial implications of any matters raised by Council, committees and working groups.
3. **Banking & Investment Arrangements**
 - i. Reviewing the Council's banking arrangements.
 - ii. Ensuring all payments are signed by two members and are approved by Full Council.
 - iii. Approving online payments of items previously approved by the Council.
 - iv. Reviewing investments and loan conditions.
 - v. No member shall approve payments for more than two months in a row unless agreed by Council due to Councillor absence/sickness.
 - vi. All members of the Finance Working Group must be approved signatories.
4. **Accounts**
 - i. Monitoring all income and expenditure during the financial year and where appropriate recommending action to be taken.
 - ii. Producing each year a financial report to be made available to residents and the public.
 - iii. Verifying at least once in each quarter bank reconciliations produced by the Clerk signing the reconciliations and the original bank statements as evidence of verification.
 - iv. Reviewing the Council's accounting practices and systems.
5. **Annual Budget**
 - i. Preparing the Council's annual budget for approval for the November Council meeting.
 - ii. Recommending a precept to Council.
 - iii. Ensuring the budget is directly linked to the tasks identified in the Council's Action Plan and the management of the Council's assets and responsibilities.
6. **Reserves**
 - i. Ensuring that all reserves are managed in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.
 - ii. Considering the forward planning and provision of earmarked reserves for the replacement of equipment, vehicles, buildings and specific items of expenditure required in the future in order to lessen the precept burden in any one year.
7. **Internal and External Audits**
 - i. Receiving and reviewing both Internal and External Audit Reports and arranging for the implementation of any recommendations.
8. **Insurance**
 - i. Ensuring the Council is adequately insured, and that this is reviewed appropriately, and recommendations made.
 - ii. Instigating insurance claims being made.
9. **Asset Register**
 - i. Checking any equipment or items held on the asset register yearly (usually February) and reviewing value in coordination with the Clerk.

10. **Financial Regulations**

- i. Reviewing annually the Financial Regulations, ensuring they are observed and making appropriate recommendations to Council.

Membership

- Membership shall comprise of at least 3 Councillors plus the Chair of Council and have a maximum of 5 members.
- The Chair shall be appointed by Council. Subsequent appointments will be made at the next available Council meeting following the post becoming vacant.
- Co-opted members may join the Working Group if authorised by Council.
- The Clerk as RFO shall attend meetings as required.
- Quorate: Minimum of 2 Councillors at each meeting.
- The Working Group must meet at least three times a year, but one must be held in October to set the budget recommendations and one in April to review the end of year accounts. Ad-hoc at all other times.
- All members of Council are to be informed of any meetings of the Working Group; and are able to attend and ask for any relevant Working Group documentation.

Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed each year at the Annual Council Meeting.

2021 Membership: Cllr Rob Heath Chair
 Cllr Ray Hartley
 Cllr David King
 Cllr Cathy Woolveridge

CHESHAM BOIS PARISH COUNCIL

Balance Sheet at 28 Feb 2021

Actual YTD

Assets

CURRENT ASSETS	
Debtors	£6,875.00
Vat to be Claimed	£4,703.40
Total	£11,578.40
MONIES HELD	
Unity Current Account	£2,730.35
Unity Deposit Account	£61,745.83
National Savings Account	£100,000.00
Other monies in hand	£1.79
Total	£164,477.97
Total Assets	£176,056.37

Liabilities

MONIES OWED SHORT TERM	
Creditors	£3,718.96
Payroll Taxation	£862.42
Wages	£0.00
Total	£4,581.38
Total Liabilities	£4,581.38

Assets less Liabilities £171,474.99

REPRESENTED BY:

Reserves		Spent YTD	Remaining
General Reserves	£33,205.08	£6,952.50	£26,252.58
Burial Ground Reserve	£25,500.00	£0.00	£25,500.00
Common & Woodlands Reserve: 10 year Management Plan	£27,597.00	£6,565.00	£21,032.00
Streetlighting Reserve	£11,784.00	£9,761.80	£2,022.20
Devolved Services Reserve	£2,634.50	£1,630.00	£1,004.50
LAF 50% Match Funding	£3,000.00	£0.00	£3,000.00
Replacement Office	£30,000.00	£0.00	£30,000.00
Total Reserves	£133,720.58	£24,909.30	£108,811.28

Income & Expenditure Account

£62,663.71

£171,474.99

Chesham Bois Parish Council: Income & Expenditure at 28 Feb 2021

	Annual Budget	Current Period	Current YTD	Budget Remaining
INCOME				
Precept	£83,650.18	£0.00	£83,650.18	£0.00
Interest Received	£1,300.00	£0.85	£886.70	£413.30
Burial Ground Plots	£18,000.00	£3,200.00	£32,750.00	£14,750.00
Burial Ground Memorials	£4,000.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
Burial Ground Other income	£10,000.00	£1,666.00	£13,433.00	-£3,433.00
Wayleaves Income	£790.00		£700.00	£90.00
Devolution Contribution	£2,734.82	£0.00	£2,734.90	-£0.08
Licence Income	£5,200.00	£2,600.00	£5,600.00	-£400.00
Fete Income		£0.00	£30.00	
Misc. Income	£100.00	£0.00	£0.00	£100.00
Total Income	£125,775.00	£7,466.85	£141,784.78	£16,009.78
EXPENDITURE				
SALARIES, PAYE & NI				
Clerk Salary	£21,650.00	£1,764.98	£19,414.76	£2,235.24
Employers National Insurance	£1,565.00	£142.55	£1,568.04	-£3.04
Employers Pension Scheme	£4,960.00	£430.66	£4,737.23	£222.77
Total	£28,175.00	£2,338.19	£25,720.03	£2,454.97
ADMINISTRATION				
Photocopier Costs	£650.00	£30.00	£395.56	£254.44
Stationery & Office Supplies	£300.00	£0.00	£320.23	-£20.23
Telephone & Broadband	£450.00	£36.56	£414.67	£35.33
Postage	£100.00	£0.00	£80.48	£19.52
Office Rent	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	£0.00
Office Electricity	£740.00	£0.00	£385.93	£354.07
Wages - Cleaning	£300.00	£25.00	£275.00	£25.00
Equipment & Software	£900.00	£0.00	£646.35	£253.65
Training - Clerk	£250.00	£0.00	£695.55	-£445.55
Training - Councillors	£320.00	£0.00	£281.00	£39.00
Subscriptions	£1,200.00	£243.00	£1,033.79	£166.21
Insurance	£1,600.00	£0.00	£1,589.01	£10.99
Website	£400.00	£112.59	£212.59	£187.41
APM/Elections/Public Meetings	£4,800.00	£14.39	£143.90	£4,656.10
Audit & Accountancy Fees & Bank Charges	£1,200.00	£25.00	£1,085.00	£115.00
Advertising	£200.00	£0.00	£0.00	£200.00
Clerk/Cllr/Sundry Expenses	£100.00	£0.00	£2.00	£98.00
Total	£13,910.00	£486.54	£7,961.06	£5,948.94
BURIAL GROUND				
Burial Ground Maintenance	£14,000.00	£653.77	£7,657.70	£6,342.30
Water	£60.00	£0.00	£57.29	£2.71
Electricity	£180.00	£0.00	£329.16	-£149.16
Sexton Costs/Wages	£4,200.00	£276.67	£3,807.12	£392.88

Memorial Safety	£1,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
Chapel Maintenance	£1,000.00	£0.00	£80.00	£920.00
Advertising & Marketing	£4,000.00	£235.00	£2,391.70	£1,608.30
General Costs	£300.00	£0.00	£34.00	£266.00
Total	£24,740.00	£1,165.44	£14,356.97	£10,383.03
Burial Grd Reserves Expenditure Funded Reserve		£0.00	£0.00	
COMMON & WOODLANDS				
Ground Maintenance	£4,500.00	£315.85	£3,808.50	£691.50
Pond Maintenance	£2,500.00	£0.00	£1,511.95	£988.05
Consultancy & Tree Inspections	£2,000.00	£0.00	£487.00	£1,513.00
Emergency Treework	£20,000.00	£1,180.00	£5,471.58	£14,528.42
Dog Bin Maintenance	£2,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,000.00
Management Plan	£6,000.00	£0.00	£6,059.75	-£59.75
Chiltern Society Work	£1,500.00	£252.00	£972.00	£528.00
Sundry Expenses	£300.00	£118.68	£188.68	£111.32
C&W Capital Fund	£1,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
Total	£39,800.00	£1,866.53	£18,499.46	£21,300.54
C&W Expenditure Funded Reserve		£0.00	£6,565.00	
TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS				
Streetlights Maintenance	£1,000.00	£65.00	£725.00	£275.00
Streetlights Electricity	£3,400.00	£238.20	£2,511.76	£888.24
General Costs	£650.00	£0.00	£335.00	£315.00
Devolved Services	£5,000.00	£517.00	£4,653.00	£347.00
MVAS Maintenance	£1,000.00	£0.00	£1,150.00	-£150.00
MVAS Capital Fund	£1,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
Streetlight Capital Fund	£2,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,000.00
Total	£14,050.00	£820.20	£9,374.76	£4,675.24
Transport Expenditure Funded Reserve		£0.00	£9,761.80	
Devolved Services Funded Reserve			£1,630.00	
VILLAGE COMMUNITY				
Events	£2,000.00	£0.00	£2,417.05	-£417.05
Village Fete	£1,500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,500.00
Communications	£600.00	£0.00	£741.74	-£141.74
Community Grants	£1,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
Total	£5,100.00	£0.00	£3,158.79	£1,941.21
General Reserves Expenditure Funded Reserve		£0.00	£6,952.50	
GRANTS				
S137		£0.00	£50.00	
Total	£0.00	£0.00	£50.00	
Total Expenditure	£125,775.00	£6,676.90	£104,030.37	
NET SURPLUS(DEFICIT) Before Reserve Transfer	£0.00	£789.95	£37,754.41	
Reserve Transfers		£0.00	£24,909.30	
NET SURPLUS(DEFICIT) After Reserve Transfer		£789.95	£62,663.71	

1. Management Plan for the Common and Woodlands

We have planted about a dozen new young native trees in key areas such as behind the war memorial, where the soakaway was installed on South Road and where trees were removed in Chestnut Lane.

The tree planting in Bois Wood has now been completed as described in the management plan. Altogether approximately 450 saplings have been planted in this area.

2. Burial Ground Maintenance

We are still awaiting quotes from two contractors for repair of the track in the New Formal Burial Ground.

The tap at the top of the woodland burial ground has not yet been removed. Grass cutting has started this month.

3. Common Maintenance

We have received a request from the resident of Woodside, North Road (cottages opposite the cricket pitch entrance) to install wooden posts to protect the common near their property. A design of post was submitted (below); however, the working group considered that plain posts to match those already along North Road would be more suitable. The resident is prepared to bear the installation costs. Council is asked to consider this request.



Tenterden Spinney fence repairs and Bois Lane iron railing repairs are still outstanding. The section 38 application for the bund along Chestnut Lane is also pending.

4. Heatherton School proposal

I held a zoom meeting with Heatherton School to cover their development of an outdoor education area on the common. A draft list of terms and conditions was discussed and largely agreed by the school; however, there are some aspects of insurance, both ours and theirs, that need to be checked and we need to agree a mechanism for booking other users of the facility. Once this has been done we can instruct solicitors to draw up a licence agreement.

Cllr C Thomas



Council Meeting 8th March 2021

Burial Grounds Management Working Group Report

Progress Against Defined Objectives

Objective for Working Group	Details of Latest Progress
Improving Burial Ground Profile	<p>Ongoing. Clerk will approach Beautiful Burial Ground organisation to request CBBG be added to the map on their “Burial Grounds to Inspire” page. These map lists 27+ grounds around the country that are examples of how to manage for biodiversity, especially those that are doing great work managing species rich grassland.</p>
Evaluating Impact of Advertising and marketing initiatives to inform future decisions	<p>Ongoing WG agreed in July 2020 an initial allocation of the annual budget which covers both national and regional online advertising, together with local print media. The strategy will be reviewed in July 2021.</p> <p>Sales were of 2 burial plots, 1 Family plot and 1 ashes plot in the formal burial grounds, and 1 plot in the Woodland, all for Non-Residents. The sources of information quoted by purchasers were local knowledge, local funeral director (who had been to our Open Day) and local print media.</p>
Developing plans for future Burial Ground Events	<p>Ongoing Planning of events will be dependent upon the prevalent social distancing guidelines.</p> <p>The Wildlife identification day for the Meadow, organised with the Beautiful Burial Ground, is planned for June 2021. The WG has also provided for an Open Day in September. This item will also include longer term planning for the Burial Ground centenary in 2024, as plans develop.</p>
<p>Review Fees and Charges as appropriate. ICCM best practice is that fees and charges are formally reviewed every 3-5 years. WG should also review informally annually alongside budget setting exercise.</p>	<p>Complete for 2020/21.</p>
<p>Burial Ground Administration: Updating electronic and paper database to reflect best practice and to enable smooth link with data from the digital mapping of the burial ground.</p>	<p>Ongoing An amendment to the structure of the database, to split out some data to better sit alongside the eventual digital map, is required; 25 out of the total 27 sections of this work, which include resolving any anomalies between the database and the underlying paper record, have now been completed.</p> <p>Following initial site marking by the Clerk and Sexton, a surveyor from Pear has made a first visit to map the three Burial Grounds. The locations of plots (both empty and filled), trees and assets such as benches will all be mapped. A first draft of the map is expected from Pear shortly which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original Formal: map to take account of the anomalies found.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Formal: Updated map to include new grid references to be more consistent with the format used in the Original Formal, together with proposed plots for additional memorial benches. • Woodland Burial: Updated map which will include new grid references (underpinned by physical grid markers which are to be sourced and sunk at regular intervals), to support the new numbering system agreed. This work will also enable the identification and mapping of appropriate memorial bench plots. <p>Clerk has identified three providers of cemetery management software which as part of the offer will liaise with Pear to link the data to the map. Their charge to do this is part of the software set up fee. Clerk is taking advice on best practice, from others that already operate similar systems, and will seek quotes for WG consideration.</p> <p>The survey work revealed the need to upgrade the metal detector used to confirm the presence of burial discs in the Woodland Burial Ground. Expert advice has been sourced to establish an appropriate specification. The Clerk is also working to confirm a local supplier for the specialist metal grid markers which are required.</p> <p>Once the mapping and database work is complete, the Clerk will be able to reissue grants for those plots in the New Formal and Woodland Burial Ground that require renumbering.</p> <p>Summary maps of the Grounds will be available online once complete, in line with best practice. A list of names of those buried to end November 2020, with plot numbers, is already available on the website. Once their work updating the existing database is complete, it is planned that our volunteer will transcribe details of headstone inscriptions that were collected by the Chesham Bois One Place study from the paper record into the database. This may subsequently be supplemented by photographs of each headstone. It is intended that this eventually will be searchable publicly online, enriching our offering to support heritage and local history as a community amenity.</p>
<p>Evaluate Land Usage and Future Land Needs</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>Improving the Site Amenities</p>	<p>Ongoing The following items are being taken forward (in collaboration with CWBGMWG):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors are being chased for repair of the guttering and downpipe at the front left wall of the Chapel, and the continuing problems with damp caused by a leak in the roof. Once repaired, the damp will need 12 months to dry before redecoration. There will also be some minor repointing and repair to the external wooden pillars. • The diseased box hedging in the Garden of Remembrance will be replaced, with RHS recommended species. Our maintenance contractor is preparing a quote. • A contractor has been instructed to complete capping of the tap at the top of Burial Ground. Information signs will be placed when complete. • Low maintenance, long lasting scheme by improving planting and seating near entrance/toilet/Chapel area – see details below • Plan (including providing appropriate reserves) for the upgrading and improvement of the access tracks in the Original and New Formal Burial Ground. Cllr Thomas is exploring possible specifications and costs for the track in the New Formal, and he is identifying suitable contractors for this work. This is a time critical

	<p>project now that plots are being sold at the top of the hill, and as a significant expense BG reserves will need to continue to be built up, and any possible sources of grants explored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for recycling of green waste at the Burial Ground. A site behind the shed has been identified for the contractor to deposit grass cuttings which are not easily composted. Meanwhile a green recycling bin is being sourced from Buckinghamshire Council; this requires the Burial Ground to have an identifiable postcode and this is in progress.
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The latest amendments to Government regulations, and the associated advice from ICCM are regularly reviewed to ensure that BG operating arrangements are compliant and as helpful to mourners and visitors as possible.

Remodelling of Entrance Area to Provide New Seating and Formal Planting

One of the Working Group objectives for the year 2020-21 was to improve the amenities for our visitors and those mourners attending funerals by the addition of seating and a more formal planting plan with all-year interest. This is required to replace the rather scrubby area inside the Entrance by the Chapel which has been left following the felling of two diseased trees. Feedback from various Open Days from our visitors had suggested that additional seating near the car park for views up the hill, and a more “hospitable” formal feel to the entrance area would be very welcome. Previous budget rounds have noted that this is a project for which funds have been allocated in Burial Ground reserves.

Working Group has been researching with various local contractors over the past few months and has drawn together a sustainable design to achieve this, which will include the use of brick made raised beds which surround a seating area, together with a formalisation of the edges of the gravel car park with further flower beds. Using brick (which will be sourced, as the original Chapel in 1924, from a local brick company in line with us being a heritage site), will ensure longevity and easy maintenance of the scheme. The Working Group now has a recommended, costed scheme to put to full Parish Council for approval; the details of the quotes from two commercial contractors will be discussed later in the meeting.

Working Group understands from Cllr Harris that an application for match funding relating to this scheme would be welcomed by Amersham Community Board for consideration. It would appear to fit the criteria for funding as it can be clearly demonstrated that the Burial Ground is a valuable community asset, for which improved amenities would benefit a wider community than only those attending funerals. Examples of evidence for this wider benefit includes:

- Visitors to our Heritage Open Days are drawn from a wider demographic than only those visiting loved ones’ graves,
- We have recorded a steady uptake of our visitor leaflets covering the history and wildlife of the Burial Grounds, and have regular comments from tourists and family/military history experts on our dedicated Burial Ground Facebook page following their visits
- The Burial Ground is a significant landmark included in the Village Walk route, and lockdown in particular has demonstrated how regularly it is used by hikers and dogwalkers, as well as families for exercise.
- We are working further to expand the community’s knowledge and appreciation of this village asset by holding events such as the meadow wildlife identification event in association with the Beautiful Burial Grounds organisation (postponed from last June to next June), and by our work to improve the value of the online database for historical research.

Action for Council

- Councillors are invited to note the progress against objectives made.
- Councillors are requested to approve the submission of the Entrance Area Project as an application for match funding to the Amersham Community Board
- Councillors will be given the opportunity to consider the offerings of the two contractors which have quoted and provided designs for the Entrance Area project in the confidential section of the Council meeting. Working Group has recommended one scheme for adoption.

Cllr Jane Large, March 2021

Village Community WG Report March 2021

At our VCWG meeting it was suggested that we hold our Commons Clear Up on the 17th April. There would be no refreshments on offer and we would be adhering to any lawful social distancing restrictions that may be in place. **We would like full council approval on this.**

I am waiting for responses from the theatre companies approached to hold an open-air event in the late summer and will keep council informed.

Please have a look at the attachment and the following detailed proposal for an event that would we like to run on a date to be agreed (possibly the day of the summer picnic - 17th July). It is aimed at our Primary school children and who may have been particularly affected by the lockdowns. **We would like council approval to develop the idea of this community event and anticipate costs to be in the region of £ 200 to £ 300.**

- VCWG would like to provide fun summer theatre workshops aimed at primary school children, in recognition of the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on this age group. Kickback Theatre Company has provided the attached pitch for suitable workshops which they propose to run on a voluntary basis. Each 2-hour workshop comprises some warmup exercises, a chance to use natural materials from the Common to make monster puppets, some practice in puppetry and learning how to develop a puppet's character, and the chance to perform to each other at the end.
- Precise numbers are yet to be determined. VCWG assume that groups of no more than 30/40 in a workshop would be reasonable, though the precise number will depend on the ratios required of helpers/children for the particular age group involved. Those children at KS1 should attend with family members, and parents stay. KS2 children may be able to attend unattended, dependent on appropriate safeguarding measures being in place. Further research is needed regarding the requirement for DBS checks, and knowledge of how long these take to process. VCWG propose that Parish Council would cover the costs of any DSB checks or other associated expenses.
- VCWG would hope to run the workshops during a weekend in July no later than the preferred date of 17th/18th July, compliant with any current Covid-restrictions. Date to be confirmed dependent on the availability of Kickback Theatre Company, but it is hoped that this can be the same weekend as the Village Picnic, which would follow on from the second workshop. Cllrs may be asked to volunteer as helpers to ensure appropriate numbers of adult ratio, and to support logistics.
- Once workshop details are fully confirmed, VCWG propose that Council invites children from four primary schools in the parish (Chesham Bois/Our Lady's/Chestnut Lane/Elangeni) in the first instance. Children from local uniformed youth groups could also be invited. Parents would be invited to return a consent form for the relevant workshop for the age group, and first come first served until places filled.

Environment and Sustainability Working Group: March 2021

Progress Against Objectives

Protect and enhance biodiversity including habitats and protected species.

- Contractors have been informed of the changes to the mowing regime. Some trial areas will now only be mown every other month, starting in April.

Survey Parish Council land and develop a plan to improve biodiversity and ecology.

- Fiona Everingham has agreed to try to arrange a training session for volunteers interested in surveying trail areas for the plants present. There are two volunteers at the moment.
- **ACTION:** Parish councillors are invited to join the training if it and when it happens, and also to suggest/recruit other volunteers.

Promote a sustainable environment in the parish.

- Cllr Conway Read attended a webinar on a Parish Carbon Footprint Tool , developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy in conjunction with Exeter University; and a webinar and follow-up workshop on the Bucks Local Nature Recovery Strategy. A report about the LNRS should be available soon, after responses from parishes and other interested groups have been analysed and taken into account.
- **ACTION:** ESWG to look at the carbon footprint tool to see if it gives any suggestions for how we can help the parish reduce its overall carbon footprint. <https://impact-tool.org.uk/about>
- **ACTION:** Councillors are invited to look at the results of the LNRS workshops here:

[LNRS Workshop 1: 12 Feb 2021](#)

[LNRS Workshop 2: 17 Feb 2021](#)

[LNRS Workshop 3: 22 Feb 2021](#)

Encourage the reduction of waste by promoting the message: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- Cllr Conway Read has been in contact with Sustainable Chesham and Sustainable Amersham to discuss the possibility of pooling resources to run Repair Cafes in rotation in Chesham Bois, Amersham and Chesham. All three groups are keen to do this. The Pioneer Hall have agreed in principle that we could use it as a venue, subject to other bookings.

Engage the community in green initiatives and improve environmental awareness.

See above.

Cllr. Deborah Conway Read, Chair March 2021