

PLANNING

The Planning Committee decides formal responses on behalf of the Parish Council to Buckinghamshire Council, which is the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in respect of planning applications within the parish.

The Parish Council is a Statutory Consultee on local planning matters and does not make decisions about planning applications.

The role of CBPC in planning matters is to represent local views and provide local knowledge to the LPA. CBPC is supportive of steps to share information and raise

awareness of any planning applications.

How does CBPC form a view on any planning application? Given its role in representing the views of residents in the Parish, CBPC often has to balance opposing opinions expressed by local residents. It requires careful balancing and any decision formed by CBPC needs to be based on valid land use planning grounds.

The weight to be attached to any representation depends on the significance of the impacts and on the number of residents affected by those impacts. For example, a proposal might result in substantial local harm affecting a small number of residents, but

this needs to be balanced against wider benefits (but perhaps more modest) across a larger number of residents. CBPC welcomes receiving representations from residents but residents should also submit representations to the LPA directly as they are the decision maker.

Recently, the CBPC had to determine its response to proposals for the re-development of the parish centre. It was determined that, whilst the principle of providing new facilities on the site was to be supported, there was simply too much development proposed within that application, which would lead to unacceptable impacts and harm to the Conservation

Area and the amenity of nearby residents. The applicant submitted an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate after its planning application was refused by the LPA and the Parish Council lodged an objection to the appeal, recommending that it be refused as submitted. The appeal has been refused.

*Simon Staite,
Chair of Planning Committee*



Chesham Bois Parish Council

Annual Review 2021 / 22

INTRODUCTION

Chesham Bois Parish Council has seen a lot of changes and challenges since the elections last May. Several new councillors were elected in place of some previous councillors and two more resigned shortly after the elections resulting in a need to co-opt two new members from several applicants.

In August 2021 our Parish Clerk, Samantha Payne, gave notice as she was moving to take on more responsibilities at a larger parish council. We wish her well in her new role. We created a Recruitment Working Group to search for a replacement. I am very grateful to my fellow members of that Group – Cllrs Heath, Winrow and Staite – for all their assistance. We received a number of applications for the role and interviewed three strong candidates. The council unanimously decided to offer the post to Annette Dealey, who joined us in October 2021 and who has recently been confirmed in post following a successful probationary period. She has been a great help to all councillors and we are lucky to have her support. Rising costs are worrying many people this year and we have worked hard through the budget planning process in the winter to keep the necessary increase in our council tax precept to a minimum for Chesham Bois residents.

The Parish Council structure includes a Planning Committee and several Working Groups covering Finance, Common and Woodlands, Burial Ground Management, Environment and Sustainability, Transport and Village Community. Councillors volunteer a lot of their time outside the Parish Council meetings and I thank all councillors who involve themselves in these activities, both in 'invisible' maintenance tasks and in creating community events. We all benefit from their work to protect and maintain our beautiful village. Their reports appear below.

This summer, the village fete returns on the Saturday 11th June, the week after the Jubilee Bank Holiday. We hope to welcome many of you there to continue the celebrations of Her Majesty The Queen's 70 years on the throne.

Deborah Conway Read, Chair, Chesham Bois Parish Council

COMMON AND WOODLANDS

The Parish Council owns Chesham Bois Common and part of Bois Wood. We also look after a further section of Bois Wood and Tenterden Spinney on long leases from The Woodland Trust.

We are continuing the programme of work as recommended and approved by the Forestry Commission and Chiltern District Council as listed in our 10-Year Management Plan, details of which can be found on our website.

A comprehensive safety check is carried out on all our trees alongside roads, paths and properties every 18 months,

alternating between trees being in full leaf and after leaf fall. The latest survey was done in June 2021 with all the high priority work being completed by March 2022. Most of the work had been completed by the time storms Eunice and Franklin arrived but we still lost a few more large trees.

We are scheduling the next safety survey for December 2022 and will be checking for ash dieback this summer, followed by selective replanting in the autumn/winter.

Some of the larger sections of timber are being made into rustic benches to replace some of those near the Brick Pond which are in poor condition.

FINANCE

Chesham Bois Parish Council had an income of about £173k in 2021/22 (prior year £151k) and derives its income from the Precept, Burial Ground and some small grants. The Precept, (part of council tax)), accounted for 63% of the income this year.

During the year, the Parish Council spent £166k; this was allocated as follows:

- The Council employs part-time staff at a cost of around £27k. Councillors are unpaid volunteers.
- We run a small office and this cost around £17k. This includes a charge from Buckinghamshire council for counting at the Parish Council election.
- The Council owns and looks after 18 hectares of local forest and land. In 21/22, the Council spent £42k on common and woodland maintenance. £35k of this was for emergency tree work to deal with trees made unsafe by the weather.
- We have a legal obligation to provide and look after a burial ground; this year, we spent £32k on the burial ground. Of this £10k is for the non-domestic rates that Buckinghamshire charge us on the burial ground.
- The Council looks after the streetlights in the village, cuts the grass on some verges and provides some speed signs to help slow traffic. The Council spent £8k in the year, of which £4k was on cutting the grass verges.
- We spent around £3k on several community events such as the Christmas Lights & Carols, Theatre on the Jubilee Field, Litter Picks and local communications.
- The Council is trying to run itself and manage its land in a more sustainable manner. To this end we spend £230 on biodiversity surveys and promotion.

The difference between our income and expenditure is transferred to reserves, which are used to cover longer term liabilities and unexpected events. At the end of the financial year, our reserves totalled £120k – a breakdown of these can be found on our website together with full details of the accounts for the year.

Rob Heath, Vice-Chair of Council & Chair of Finance Working Group

We have engaged a consultant land adviser who works with Berks., Bucks. & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and its Head of Ecology to draw up a restoration and maintenance management plan for the historic Brick Pond. We have already had an initial site visit and a brief survey

report and expect the overall plan to be completed by the end of June 2022. There will be a Great Crested Newt eDNA survey by the end of May 2022 and Botanical and invertebrate surveys completed by end of July 2022.

*Jill Harris,
Chair of Working Group*



Here is a brief list of who does what:

CHESHAM BOIS PARISH COUNCIL

- Ownership and management of land including Chesham Bois Common and Tenterden Spinney.
- Managing and maintaining the burial grounds within Chesham Bois.
- Maintenance of highway verges on behalf of Bucks Council.
- Ownership and maintenance of street lighting on minor roads.
- Reviewing and commenting on planning applications.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

- Education
- Fire
- Highways - maintenance, traffic management and lighting
- Libraries
- Recreation, Arts and Museums
- Social Services
- Strategic Planning
- Trading Standards
- Transport
- Waste Disposal Collection of Council tax and rates
- Environmental Health
- Local Plans
- Planning Applications
- Public Conveniences
- Tourism
- Car Parks
- Waste Collection, Recycling



This report will be made available on the Parish Council website and copies with large font text can be provided on request.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Email: clerk@cheshamboispc.org.uk
Telephone: 01494 432585

The Parish Office is open to the public
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

FOLLOW US:

Twitter: [@CheshamBoisPari](https://twitter.com/CheshamBoisPari)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/CheshamBoisPC
www.cheshamboispc.org.uk



ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

The remit of the Environment and Sustainability Working Group is to work towards protecting and enhancing the wide range of biodiversity in Chesham Bois, with a focus on managing the natural habitats, which allow a variety of species to thrive. Chesham Bois is widely recognised as a quiet oasis of green spaces, including woodland areas between the busy towns of Amersham and Chesham, and the village centre benefits from being a designated Conservation Area. The Parish Council has a significant role to play in protecting the local environment being, most probably, the largest landowner and manager of green space. We work with established local and national groups, such as The Chiltern Society and the Woodland Trust. Specific areas which require pro-active environmental management include:

- The Common - approximately 40 acres of amenity woodlands, historic Bricky Pond,

footpaths and two large open areas;

- The chalk meadow - approximately 6 acres located adjacent to Chesham Bois Burial Ground which is a rare category of land, typical of the Chilterns area. The meadow is designated as a Local Wildlife Site by Buckinghamshire Council;
- Parts of Bois Wood and Tenterden Spinney - managed by the council and incorporated in a 10 Year Woodland Management Plan registered with the Forestry Commission; and
- Grass road verges - the most recent area of focus.

These areas and the variety of species that they support are threatened by a number of factors including climate change, invasive diseases such as ash-die back, littering, traffic, pollution and property development which can damage both wildlife habitats and corridors.

We have supported the Transport Working Group to review the mowing schedule for roadside verges to improve biodiversity and end the use of glyphosate weed killer and we are

working with the Village Community Working Group to make the next summer fete as 'eco-friendly' as possible.

Another key aspect of our activity is to raise awareness of local environmental issues and seek the support of local residents in our endeavours. In the Spring of 2022, we set up a photograph competition for pupils of schools in Chesham Bois to record any aspect of the natural world that captured their imagination. The best photos will be on display at the Jubilee Fete. Going forward, we will be promoting opportunities for people of all ages to participate in surveys of the chalk meadow and woodland areas, in particular. Meanwhile, if you have any suggestions for improving local biodiversity and protecting the environment, please contact our Parish Clerk.

*Lesley Winrow,
Chair of Working Group*

TRANSPORT

As a Working Group, we are here to listen to residents' views and to ensure that the Parish Council represents these views to Buckinghamshire Council and others. The Parish Council's prime role in respect of roads and transport is as a statutory consultee for documents issued by Buckinghamshire Council.

Problems and defects with roads and pavements

should be reported direct to Buckinghamshire Council and the best way is to use the 'FixMyStreet' website for Buckinghamshire: 'fixmystreet.buckscc.gov.uk'

The Parish Council's direct responsibilities include all street lighting in Chesham Bois, except for those lights on the A416 and the two lights on the zebra crossing in Bois Lane which Bucks. Council provided and maintains.

The Parish Council has participated in the Bucks. Council devolved services scheme since 2016 and receives funding of £2,734 p.a. for grass cutting, weed control, footpaths and rights of way, siding out and street furniture cleaning and maintenance. This scheme has worked well having given the Council the flexibility to respond quickly to local needs. Grass verges used to be cut 12 times a year between April and October but it has recently been agreed to reduce the number of cuts to 6 times a year in certain areas and twice a year in the following locations:

- A416 Amersham Road, both sides from Bois Avenue to the second exit of Clifton Road.
- Woodside Avenue & Bois Lane outside 58 to 68 and from Green Lane and junction with Stubbs End Wood
- St Leonard's Road, both sides including cul de sacs
- Bois Lane, west side near the electricity substation &

traffic lights at railway bridge.

This initiative involves working with the Environment and Sustainability Working Group and we are aiming to improve biodiversity on the land for which we are responsible.

Also, we have stopped the use of glyphosate weedkiller. Any weeds discovered on footpaths will be now be cut back rather than sprayed. We will monitor the verges through the growing season and would welcome feedback from residents that we can take into consideration when planning for next year.

We are looking to resume a Community Speed Watch Programme in the area and we will be looking for volunteers to come forward and receive training provided by the police. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Parish Clerk Annette Dealey, clerk@cheshamboispc.org.uk.

On a more light-hearted note, the residents of Milton Lawns and The Farthings may have noticed that the lamppost at the entrance to Milton Lawns disappeared recently. I can reassure residents that the lamppost was removed by UK Power Networks due to emergency work and is being stored safely pending its return to its original site.

*Paul Eckersall,
Chair of Working Group*

VILLAGE COMMUNITY

In 2021 village community events were still affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the decision was taken once again to postpone the biggest event, the biennial Village Fete and the RAF flyover. However, we are delighted that the fete is going ahead this year on 11 June 2022 – four years after it was last held! As on previous occasions, it will feature music, entertainment and a wide assortment of stalls selling food, drink and local crafts. It will bring together local residents and friends to enjoy the common and woodland. The Council aims to make this popular event as environmentally sustainable as possible and we always try to ensure that everyone has a fantastic time.

Despite the pandemic, different community events could be arranged at short notice and were still able to go ahead in 2021. The highlight, which proved extremely popular with all ages, was the HandleBard's energetic, bicycle-powered production of Shakespeare's Macbeth in June. This free event was held on the common on a lovely summer evening. The weather was also kind when the Summer Picnic took place in July, with great entertainment provided by a local group, Bad Dads. This informal event provides a perfect opportunity for families and friends to gather and socialise in the unique surroundings of the Chesham Bois Common.

In 2021 the Spring and Autumn Common Clear Ups went ahead and as always were well attended. The 2022 Spring Clear Up was held

in April and more than 20 bags of litter were collected by volunteers including our local Brownie troop. It is a constant challenge to keep the common and woodlands free of litter, not helped by the abundant magpies who scavenge in the bins and pull out any food packaging. We would always love to see more volunteers help with keeping the common and village clear of litter. Litter pickers can be provided by the Parish Council.

The Beating of the Bounds walk went ahead in 2021, after being cancelled the previous year. This annual walk of the Parish boundaries takes place on Rogation Sunday, which this year falls on 22 May. We are delighted to be able to offer tea and cakes afterwards in the Parish Centre.

Remembrance Sunday, with the laying of wreaths and St Leonard's service at the War Memorial, was extremely well attended in 2021 with many villagers there to pay their respects. Last year we were honoured to have Kim Speller from Amersham Concert Brass play the Last Post at dawn and dusk.

Finally, the Christmas Lights and Carols continues to be an important date in the village calendar. Last year this

event was particularly well supported by local schools, Chesham Bois, Chestnut Lane and Dr Challoner's. There was just about enough mulled wine, mince pies and Quality Street chocolates to go around!

All these community events remind us what a friendly and welcoming place Chesham Bois is.

*John Bailey,
Chair of Working Group*

Dates for 2022

Sun 22 May
Beating the Bounds Walk
2.00 pm Starting from Parish Centre

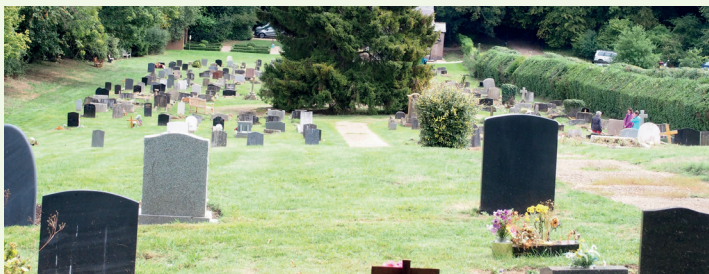
Sat 11 June
Jubilee Village Fete
11.30 am until 4.00 pm on Common

Sat 16th July
Picnic & Music
4.00 pm on Common

Sat 8th Oct
Autumn Common Clear Up
10.00 am Parish Centre

Sun 13th Nov
Remembrance Day Service
11.45 am War Memorial

Fri 2nd Dec
Christmas Lights and Carols
4.00 pm War Memorial



BURIAL GROUND

The Burial Ground, with its adjoining chalk grassland meadow, is a valuable asset for Chesham Bois. It offers formal and natural burials for both residents and those living outside the parish, in a stunning rural setting. As in previous years, the aims this year have been to continue the programme of improvements to the Burial Ground and its environment, to further improve the digital Burial records systems, and to increase awareness of residents and the wider community of the Burial Ground and its services.

In June 2021 the organisation Caring for God's Acre led a wildflower and grasses identification event in the Burial Grounds, delayed as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic from 2020. The event was well attended by local residents and took place on a glorious summer day, demonstrating the wide variety of native species growing in the chalkland habitat.

In September 2021, the Burial Grounds and chapel were opened to the public as part of the National Heritage Weeks scheme. Refreshments were available and visitors could find out about buying plots for themselves or their loved ones. Alison Bailey of Amersham Museum led two guided walks around the Burial Grounds, speaking about some of the more interesting and illustrious residents. The Memorial Book, which was started in 2019, continues to be an important focus for those using the chapel for quiet reflection.

During the autumn, a new seating area was created next to the chapel, facing up the formal Burial Ground. This has proved to be a very pleasant place to rest and contemplate the beauty of the environment. A new shrubbery was also created as part of this project and the parking area

inside the Burial Ground gates was also edged with kerbs, giving it more definition and creating a more ordered atmosphere.

At the beginning of January 2022, we learnt that the Chesham Bois Woodland Burial Ground was a runner up in the People's Awards from the Natural Death Centre and the Association of Natural Burial Grounds. We are the first municipal Burial Ground to be recognised in this way and it is a confirmation that we are providing a good service, as these awards are based on feedback from families after burials in the Woodland Burial Ground.

During the winter months, memorial safety checks have been taking place. These checks need to be conducted every five years. A small number of unsafe memorials have been identified, mostly amongst the oldest graves, and these will be made safe as soon as possible.

In March 2022, the Burial Ground Management Working Group spent a Saturday morning tidying up the Memorial Garden. The box hedging around each of the flower beds was sadly found to be affected by disease and various options are being considered for new planting.

A decision was made in April 2022 to introduce a new fee band for people from outside the former Chiltern District Council area to purchase plots. The Parish Council wish to ensure that local residents are given priority to purchase spaces in the Burial Grounds and a tiered fee structure is in place to support that objective.

The Burial Grounds are a beautiful asset for Chesham Bois, as a place of tranquillity and reflection for visitors. The Council is very proud of this environment and look forward to continue serving our community through this service.

Cathy Baldwin, Chair of Working Group

