

Minutes of the meeting of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**, held on Monday 27th April 2021.
The meeting took place remotely via Zoom.

<https://zoom.us/j/94958152958?pwd=MktiNGlrUFhaOVBTRjZoL2dKMUYdzO9>

Meeting ID: 949 5815 2958 Passcode: 052422

Please attend on mute and use chat space to flag your questions.

To Councillors: K Cassidy - Chairman, - E Flynn – Deputy Chairman, G Bryant, T McGuinness,
CA Heaphy, J Sayers, L Hinton, and A Sutcliffe

In attendance Mrs U Kilich Clerk to the Council

CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Annual Parish Report contains a summary of the activities of your Parish Council over the past 12 months. Despite the rigours and tribulations of Covid19 we have continued Parish Council business mostly on remote/computer platforms. Last year under government recommendations we were unable to hold our normal annual parish meeting (APM).

This is a meeting for the villagers to meet and question the Parish Councillors on council activities and issues close to the heart of the village. It is a platform for you to air your views and put forward your suggestions for future initiatives for the benefit of the village.

We have had a busy 2 years since our last APM in 2019, with Covid 19 having a big impact on us all and on the way the Parish Council was able to conduct its business. Our Clerk, Usha Kilich has been particularly busy as the remote nature of our working has added extra organisational burdens on her and sadly because of the “work at home” requirement it has not been possible for her to be as easily accessible to the parishioners. Hopefully this will change as restrictions are lifted and we hopefully return to normal, whatever the new “normal” might be. Usha is an experienced Clerk and is also the Clerk to Northchurch Parish Council for 8 years. As a part time employee, Usha will continue to serve both Northchurch and Chipperfield parish councils.

Significant changes have occurred in the make-up of the Council as Harry Laverack (previous Chairman) has left the village for pastures new, Wendy Bathurst has resigned from the Council for personal reasons and Andy Orchard has left our employment. We wish them all well in their new endeavours and thank them for their service and contributions whilst associated with Chipperfield Parish Council. We have, however, 2 new recruits to the Council, Anthony Sutcliffe and Luke Hinton and we welcome them on board and look forward to their more youthful contributions as they settle into the “council ways”.

Our current team comprises of.....

- Usha Kilich Parish Clerk
- Pete Sadler Parish Warden
- Cllr. Kevan Cassidy (Chairman)
- Cllr. Eamonn Flynn (Deputy Chairman)
- Cllr. Jooles Sayers
- Cllr. Carly-Anne Heaphy
- Cllr. Geoff Bryant (Chairman of CPC Planning Committee)
- Cllr. Tony McGuinness
- Cllr. Anthony Sutcliffe
- Cllr. Luke Hinton

Planning issues have loomed high on all our agendas since the 2019 APM and there has been a significant increase in housing development in the village with the loss of the Land Rover Garage and Garden Scene, These, together with forthcoming development on the “Royal Oak/Spice Village “carpark, in Alexander Road, Croft Lane and in Stoney Lane will bring an additional 40 plus dwellings to the village.

Another consequence of the Covid pandemic has been the increased foot (and dog) traffic on the common as people seek some sanctuary and solace in what little outdoor life we have been allowed. Unfortunately parking, dog poo and litter are result of such activity and Pete Sadler (the Parish Warden) has been performing an outstanding job in trying to keep on top of this ever increasing task. However, we all need to remain diligent in protecting our

environment and taking our litter home especially if the bins are full. We plan to replace some of the more rotten bins this year.

We, like all businesses, are affected and constrained by changing legislation and the Data Protection Act. As a result of more activities going paperless, the directives on accessibility to data and web sites there has been a significant make-over of the CPC web site and an increase in our visibility on social media with the launch of our Facebook page. This initiative has been led by Cllrs Hinton and Sayers.

We have a number of items we are looking to address shortly including the repair and installation of posts around the church car park, ecological review of the village ponds with a view to a planned maintenance schedule, improved signage in the centre of the village and replacement of damaged and failing bins on the common.

CLlr. Kevan Cassidy, Chairman

Finance:

The 2018/19 unaudited accounts presented at the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting were submitted for external audit and are pleased to report that the auditors approved the accounts promptly without adjustment. The accounts for year 2019/20 have also been approved and audited. Regarding this last financial year ending March 2021 the indications are we will have fulfilled all our budget commitments and achieved a small surplus for the year whilst maintaining our targeted level of reserves. With the increased workload, indicated above, and a further reduction of funding from Dacorum since 2019, we have focussed on making further savings and improving internal system efficiency. To this end, amongst other things, we have moved to online banking that has reduced significant time in the monthly accounting process.

Grants:

We continued to maintain our policy of awarding grants aimed at the development of youth in the village and supporting the village amenities and have awarded the following grants.

The Village Hall	£2250
Youth Football Club	£2400
Friends of St Pauls School	£1750
St Pauls Church	£1000
Cricket Club (£500 contingent on fireworks)	£1500
British Legion	£100
Total	£9000

CLlr. Kevan Cassidy, Chairman

Highways:

As we have grown to expect, the end of the financial year resulted in a flurry of road repairs and resurfacing. It is in all our interests to get the work carried out, but there was much frustration with the amount of simultaneous road closures affecting the village. There are still works to be carried, particularly on Windmill Hill and Bucks Hill once budgets permit.

In the past weeks, our second Speed Indicator Device (SID), or "smiley Face" as they are better known, was installed at the entrance to The Common from Bucks Hill. This was funded by a grant from The Road Safety Fund. The plan is to reduce vehicle speeds entering the Common from Bucks Hill, in the same way that the first SID on Tower Hill has assisted in slowing vehicles entering the Spice Village crossroads.

Over the years, this crossroads has been an accident black spot. Most incidents are caused by drivers unfamiliar with the village, who overshoot the junction from the Chapel Croft entrance. We asked Herts Highways to carry out a comprehensive survey on the crossroads, to look at possible solutions. They attended over several days at different times to establish whether speed was an issue. The extensive data produced, proved that speed was not the cause. When there are cars parked on The Street, that slowed traffic even further. The Chapel Croft entrance does not fit the criteria for a SID, and the crossroads are unsuitable for a roundabout or rumble strips. There is ample signage at the junction, so the road markings have been reinstated to make them more visible. We will be monitoring the situation.

It is important that any road issues are reported to Dacorum via their website

<https://webapps.dacorum.gov.uk/search/?q=fault%20reporting>

CLlr. Tony McGuinness

Police and Neighbourhood Watch:

Chipperfield is deemed a low crime village. Due to our staying at home over the current crisis, it will not be a surprise to learn that the stats have plummeted. Our biggest concern over past years has been home burglaries, which appear to be the lowest recorded in 2020.

BURGLARY DWELLING	BURGLARY NON-DWELLING	THEFT OF MOTOR VEHICLE	THEFT FROM A MOTOR VEHICLE	CRIMINAL DAMAGE	DRUGS	STREET ASSAULT	OTHER CRIMES	TOTAL
2	4	0	2	8	3	0	33	52

However, over the year other issues have needed attention. There has been an increase in drug dealing in the car parks surrounding The Common. With the assistance of our police, residents early warning and logistical preventative measures, this problem has subsided.

The well documented increase in dognapping has been a worry for our many dog loving residents. PC Karl Diggins is fully aware of the issue and there has been a greater presence in areas vulnerable to this crime.

It has been a quiet year for the Chipperfield Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page. By joining you will be kept abreast of issues, and by messaging the admin, you can be added to the early warning WhatsApp group, which has proved invaluable in the past.

Cllr. Tony McGuinness

Planning 2020-2021:

Planning Applications are determined by the local planning authority which in our case is Dacorum Borough Council. Under national planning law, planning authorities are obliged to consult with parish and town councils and to take their views and opinions into account during the determination process. Dacorum operates under a set of national planning rules which are amended frequently such that the planning rules today are quite different from those of 10+ years ago. Indeed, they are different to 1 year ago.

The first Covid lockdown in Spring 20 saw a reduced number of planning applications however later in 2020 there was a rebound such that the year total was higher. Unlike 19/20, in which 34 new dwellings were granted, there were fewer major applications for multiple dwellings. 9 new dwellings were granted on the former nursery site in Stoney Lane, Tower Hill.

We have continued to encourage engagement with applicants prior to application, in line with government planning guidance, which gives us the opportunity to modify or moderate applications prior to a formal application being submitted. Most developers respond positively to such engagement.

52 applications were determined in Chipperfield:

- Grant in respect of works to trees 11
- Grant of Planning Application 28
- Refusal of Planning Application 13

Your Parish Council continues to seek improved outcomes for the benefit of the community wherever possible by encouraging modification to proposed schemes. The support of our ward borough councillors is appreciated.

The most difficult subject is that of parking provision. Dacorum's parking policy, as defined in their district plan, is totally inadequate for a car-dependent community like Chipperfield. We continue to push for 1 parking space per bedroom subject to minimum of 2 spaces.

There is one planning appeal presently in progress:

- Land to rear of Spice Village – scheme for 7 dwellings (grant exists for 6)

During the year, the Parish Council carried out a Housing Needs Survey to determine the need for affordable dwellings in the village. The results of the Survey will be announced during Spring 21.

Cllr. Geoff Bryant

Open Spaces:

As we all know, we are lucky to live in such a beautiful place. If this was not obvious before, then the last year has shown us this. Many of us have probably even found a part of Chipperfield that we did not know existed before, and it has been lovely to see so many of us enjoying what we have on our doorstep.

Understandably, this also means we have seen a lot more visitors using the space for activities such as walking, running, bike riding, dog walking and horse riding.

This naturally has an impact on our footpaths, green spaces, and sadly we have seen an increase in dog fouling and litter as well as horses not using the designated or permitted bridle ways.

This was not just limited to Chipperfield, other green spaces across Dacorum also experienced similar trends. The Green Clean and Safe team, continued to keep on top of the waste bins and when we alerted them, they quickly came to address any concerns.

It is also worth noting, that we are lucky to have several villagers who regularly pick up litter, and this makes a huge difference to helping keep the litter down. So, thank you for your support.

Peter Sadler also regularly keeps on top of the litter, and if anyone sees an area of concern; please inform the Clerk, and we will work to resolve any issues quickly.

We are aware that some of the bins need replacing and possibly repositioned, this is a project that is currently being worked on.

Finally, we should all be proud that we kept our Green Flag award for 2020, being one of the six that it was awarded to In Dacorum. The Green Flag Award® scheme recognises and rewards professionally managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world)

Thank you to everyone who helps us retain this award.

Cllr. Carly-Anne Heaphy

Car parks:

After lots of previous conversations with Dacorum BC, we were pleasantly surprised when the pot holed Queen Street carpark was resurfaced.

The Common car park has had some wooden posts installed by Dacorum to stop some antisocial behaviour. The Common car park is also in need of some repair, and we will continue to flag the issue to Dacorum. Although, we are not the only ones shouting about needing money for resurfacing!

Wooden posts to protect the grass verges have been put in place at various locations. We continue to work on this project to maintain the grass verges. Additional matching posts are required around the church car park to replace the low rail barriers and these are currently being planned and costed.

Moving forward and as things start to look more positive, we will continue to work with Luke Johnson at Dacorum and local groups, (Friends of Chipperfield Common) on any key issues. This at some stage, will include looking at the maintenance and ecology of the village ponds including Apostle Pond about which we will engage with the community.

Cllr. Carly-Anne Heaphy

Allotments:

We have seen a great demand for our allotments since the start of the pandemic. The health benefits, and extra time that many of us have had has been put to good work on the plots!

Throughout 2020 we had a waiting list for a plot, and lots of existing and new plot holders have really transformed their plots. There is a WhatsApp group to help with communication and offering advice to newer plot holders.

As always, Peter Sadler is helping to maintain the allotments. Pete has been helped out over the past year by the Sunnyside Trust who have been working on the allotment and various tasks around the village, so thank you to them too. The rent remained the same for 2020. With the option to take on a 1/2 plot at a reduced rate. It is great to see all the hard work and hopefully everyone will see the fruits of their labour soon.

Cllr. Carly-Anne Heaphy

Youth & Education:

It goes without saying, that it has been a year that we will never forget! St Paul's school remained open throughout year and provided online learning to those unable to attend school.

We are extremely grateful to all the staff; the head teacher, teachers, teaching assistants, catering, support staff, office staff, caretaker, who all went above and beyond to keep the school going. So, thank you.

In mid-November 2020, St Paul's School PTA organised a 'Virtual Christmas Fair' to raise funds for the school. Over £700 was raised with multiple vendors provided time slots across the weekend via social media.

Similarly, in Chipperfield preschool, Juliette and her staff have continued to provide a safe environment for the younger generation of the village. Again, we are extremely grateful and incredibly lucky to have these facilities for childcare in our little village.

Cllr. Carly-Anne Heaphy

Communications:

During 2020 CPC recognised that communications with Parishioners did not necessarily reach all of the community. Historically, communication has mainly been via the village noticeboards and Chipperfield News. It was felt that alongside improvements to the website an online presence would be beneficial so we can reach a different audience. The Parish Web Site has recently been upgraded to be in compliance with data protection and accessibility rules and in February 2021 the official CPC Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ChipperfieldParishCouncil>) was launched to offer communication to users of that social media platform. Since launching the FB page has provided residents and visitors a chance to be updated with important issues or news in a 'real-time' forum, as well as a feature where we have introduced the Parish Councillors. Communication with the community will be an ongoing project and CPC would be pleased to hear from you about how you feel things can be improved. CPC are aware of the issues around the village of poor internet connectivity but this is an issue that is beyond our influence and we can only suggest villagers lobby their providers and OpenReach for an improvement in the level of service.

ClIrs. Hinton & Sayers

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