

CHESTFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, 23 MARCH 2009

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN CHESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

This has been a significant year for the Parish Council in that it was awarded Quality Parish status. This was in recognition of the high standards achieved and maintained by the Parish Council and it would not be possible without the support of numerous volunteers. The award was presented to the Parish Council by the Lord Mayor, Carolyn Parry on 29th September 2008.

We were sad to see the departure of Cllrs Pearl Freeman and David Fitzpatrick who will be much missed, and I thank them for their contribution to the work of the Parish Council. I also had the pleasure of welcoming two new members, Cllrs Gerry Bright and John Page, both of whom have not wasted any time in becoming involved in our workload.

Speedwatch

Cllr Peter Goldsack is the co-ordinator for our Speedwatch scheme, and our volunteers have been in action throughout the year endeavouring to encourage drivers to keep to the speed limit whilst driving through Chestfield. This small, but dedicated, team are always looking for additional volunteers. So if you have two or more hours a month you could dedicate to this work, please contact Cllr Peter Goldsack (Telephone 792893)

Our volunteers have been joined as and when possible by PC Pope and PCSO Harriott, who have stopped several drivers and spoken to them about their speed. It is unfortunate that many of those stopped are local residents. We are grateful to PC Pope and PCSO Harriott for their assistance and support with the scheme. I would like to especially thank Brian Pain for his assistance with the maintenance and care of the Speedwatch equipment.

Our new Traffic Calming Sign is in operation in Chestfield Road and reminds drivers to keep to the speed limit of 30 mph.

Kent Association of Local Councils

The Parish Council is a member of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). Cllr Len Claisse and I attend quarterly area meetings as well as the Annual General Meeting. The organisation provides a platform for town and parish councils to jointly make representations to other organisations to amend policies. Last year our Parish, concerned about speeding traffic in the village, sought to reduce the speed at which the Kent Police would take action arising from Speedwatch observations. This was discussed at the local KALC meetings and a motion was put to the AGM, which was subsequently passed. KALC, representing 312 town and parish councils throughout Kent, were instrumental in changing the policy on Speedwatch. I believe this demonstrates the power of local councils working together.

Environment

Throughout the year Cllr Katherine Caloudis has been working with the Managers of McDonalds and Sainsbury's to reduce the level of litter around these businesses. She has been successful in obtaining additional litter bins and installing warning signs regarding the dropping of litter. Once again we must thank our local police for patrolling these areas and enforcing the no litter campaign. Members of staff from McDonalds and Sainsbury's have also been seen picking up litter and we are very pleased to have their cooperation.

Cllr Caloudis has also arranged for extra dog litter bins to be provided in Primrose Way.

The failure to cut the grass and weeds on the A2990 Thanet Way made the approach to Chestfield unsightly and prevented litter collection. Cllr Caloudis through perseverance

managed to persuade the local authority to take the necessary action. What an improvement that has made.

Policing, Security and Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr Sue Shillam has continued in her role as our representative on the Police Parish Forum and the Partners and Community Together (PACT), to ensure good communication between the police and residents. She has also ensured that our local police work towards addressing the priorities within Chestfield. Cllr Shillam has spent many hours attending meetings and we are most grateful to her for her efforts on our behalf.

The Parish Council continues to support the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and details are posted on our website (www.chestfieldpc.kentparishes.gov.uk) as well as articles appearing in our quarterly Parish magazine.

PCSO Mark Harriott has worked in the village for about two years and I hope many of you will have either met or at least seen him, during his patrol of streets. He was responsible this year for organising the visit of the Crime Prevention bus. PC Steve Pope, together with PCSO Harriott, hold surgeries in the meeting room at Chestfield Golf Club, which we hope our parishioners find helpful. Details appear on our website and are announced at the monthly Parish council meeting.

I am sorry to announce that PCSO Harriott is moving to another part of the Whitstable police area and I would like to thank him for all of the work he has done in Chestfield. I am sure you will want to join with me in wishing Mark every success in his new area. His replacement is PCSO Abi Ellis, who will introduce herself later in the meeting.

Planning

The Parish Council is very mindful of the fact that we live in a most desirable area and to this end thanks must go to the Planning Councillors, Len Claisse, John Page and Gerry Bright, for the time and effort they give to the many planning applications we receive – 55 this year – to ensure that Chestfield remains a place of which to be proud. You will observe the team has been enlarged to take account of the increasing workload.

I must not forget the valuable work done by our tree warden Cllr Caloudis, who helps to ensure Chestfield remains an attractive village.

Amenities and Activities

Cllr Linda Wickings and her husband John are continuing to run the Chestfield Youth Club at the W I Hall, and the very successful Chestfield Table Tennis Club now meets on alternate Thursdays at Burnan Road, Swalecliffe. It was a tribute to the Table Tennis Club that they collected 16 awards at the District League Presentation Night last summer. The Parish Council have made two financial contributions to the Youth Club this year in order to purchase much needed equipment, and I am pleased to report that the number of young people attending has increased. Thanks must be given to Linda and John, and their band of volunteer helpers, for their continued efforts and very hard work on behalf of all their members. Linda is going to speak briefly about the Youth Club later this evening.

Once again the Parish Christmas Dinner was organised by Mrs Joan Saunders, with help from Mrs Jean Major, Mrs Judy Packwood and Cllr Sue Shillam. Thank you for an excellent evening. Thank you to Cllr Sue Shillam for organising the Christmas Carols, together with those who assisted her.

The Christmas lights competition was also part of our Christmas activities and I thank all of the Parish Councillors who acted as judges. Also thanks to all those, including past winners, for making such an attractive scene.

Parish Magazine

Cllr Peter Goldsack continues to be the Editor of the Parish Magazine, and he receives our grateful thanks for taking on the daunting task of ensuring the magazine is of interest to all parishioners and that its contents are varied. He has sourced a variety of interesting articles, puzzles and important information and I am delighted he has done an excellent job. Also thank you to the many volunteers who distribute the magazine to every household in the parish.

Communications

The Parish Council continues to operate a website, the address of which appears on the front of the Parish Magazine. We are truly thankful to Cllr Mick Shorter, who set up the site and continually monitors and updates it. Please look at the site for information about Parish Council activities. Also this year Cllr Shorter set up a new email account which has proved to be more reliable than its predecessor and he has sorted out various computer issues which most of us struggle to comprehend.

Cllr Sue Shillam designed and launched the Welcome Pack available to all new residents.

Highways and Drainage

Cllr Gerry Bright has recently taken over the responsibility for highways and drainage matters. He has maintained effective communication with Highways staff, drawing their attention to potholes in the road and defective street lighting. Cllr Bright is also involved with proposals to install a second interactive speed sign at the north end of the village as well as other initiatives to reduce speeding.

The extension to the car park at Radfall Recreation Ground is nearing completion and will go some way towards alleviating parking problems at weekends.

Footpaths (Public Rights of Way)

A big thank you to Cllr Claisse and his small, but willing, band of volunteers, who continue to keep our public rights of way clear. New gates were installed on the Maydowns Road footpath and the Parish Council supported the Grasmere Pasture Action Group in the creation of two new footpaths on Grasmere Pasture.

Parish Clerk

No Parish Council can operate effectively without the expertise of a good Parish Clerk and with this in mind I would like to thank our clerk, Linda Livingstone, for her guidance and all the hard work she has done during the past year.

Summary

There are other achievements, which I have not mentioned in the interest of brevity, and also numerous meetings have been attended by Parish Councillors to represent the concerns of Chestfield. I thank all Parish Councillors for their help in “Serving the Local Community”. They all give up their time gladly and freely to make Chestfield the pleasant place it is.

If you really want to know what your Parish Councillors are doing on your behalf, then please come to the Parish Council meetings, which are held every month with the exception of August.

Bob Brown
Chairman, Chestfield Parish Council