

CHAIRS REPORT PARISH MEETING 2018.

In the past year the Parish Council has continued with its work on behalf of the community of Little Waltham.

Last year we co-opted 3 new councillors, which brought us up to a full complement of 9 councillors.

Following-on from the Parking Survey last year, two initiatives developed. The community told us that they were concerned about the speed of traffic through the village and whilst the majority were not in favour of parking restrictions, two “hot-spots” were identified, namely the area around the school and the area around the doctors surgery.

After an appeal, volunteers came forward who agreed to be trained in the use of a speed gun so that we could further monitor and hopefully deter speeding through the village. Volunteers have already been out twice with a gun that is shared with Great Leighs. However The Parish Council has approved the purchase of a speed gun for the sole use of LW which will allow for greater flexibility.

With respect to parking, we have been working closely with the school about the issues of parking when dropping-off and picking up children at the start and end of the day. We installed new flower tubs in the area and we have engaged with the school in asking them to encourage the use of the public car park. The school have adopted the 3PR Scheme which through the children encourages parents to park safely and to utilise the car park and walk to the school. It is early days but it seems to be making a difference. We are grateful to the school for their co-operation in dealing with the important issue.

As far as the surgery is concerned, this is a more complex situation. The majority of the parking on Brook Hill during the day is related to the surgery. Allied to that the surgery recently applied to increase the size of the surgery but adding additional consulting rooms. A number of local residents objected on the grounds of the parking issues. It was a difficult issue for the Parish Council. On the one hand we identified the issues in relation to parking, and on the other we are also aware of the fact that the surgery is an important amenity, especially in a village where there are a number of older residents. We discussed the issues with the City Council (who were also concerned about the situation), in the end we agreed to support the application. The conditions are that the surgery do all they can to encourage their patients to park in the car park and that the surgery pay for some minor parking restrictions. These are that there be a small area of double-yellow lines outside the Memorial Hall, to enable in effect a passing place, and also some double yellow lines around the corners of Chapel Drive and Sorrell Close.

All our allotments are now full, and we have applied for a grant from Tesco under their Community Scheme for money to improve the allotments behind the playing fields. We have also instituted regular meetings with the allotment holders.

We have started a Parish Newsletter which will be published on a quarterly basis. We hope that the newsletter will be self-financing by selling advertisements. I would like to thank in

particular Tony Campen for all this work in selling the advertising space and Suzanne our clerk for arranging the contributions and the logistics. Initial feedback has been very positive, and supportive of the initiative.

We have applied to re-purpose the telephone box in The Street. We have Listed Building consent to re-purpose it to house a defibrillator. We have applied for lottery funding to enable us to buy the defibrillator.

A lot of our time is taken up with planning applications. Most of these applications are uncontroversial, however where they are not we have made our views clear and where necessary we have attended Planning Committee Meetings of the City Council to present our viewpoint.

In the past year there have been several which have concerned us. Firstly the Marriage Mill site. The City Council refused permission for the site near Boreham Airfield. The applicants appealed to a Planning Inspector and I attended the hearing to put forward the view of the Parish Council, which was in support of the City Councils refusal. We opposed this and the previous applications because of the amount of heavy traffic that it would generate on a 24/7 basis, the bight on the countryside and the loss of amenity for the residents of this area and the fact that the roads in this area are not wide enough for such heavy lorries. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful as the Planning Inspector found in favour of applicant.

Channels Golf Club applied to amend the Section 106 notice which required them to provide and 18 hole golf course as part of the original planning permission for the Channels Development. The owners of the golf course have said that running the golf course is no longer economic and asked for the Section 106 notice be removed allowing them to sell this land for more housing. We have strongly opposed this. Sport England challenged a lot of the assumptions made in the Channels document with regard to the provision of golf in the area. The City Council commissioned its own independent study which supported the view of Sport England that there was a demand for golf and that the course should not be closed. In recent months we understand that the application has been withdrawn, therefore golf continues at the Channels course on a pay and play format.

The latest iteration of the Local Plan was published in January with an early March deadline for submissions. We held two special meetings (one was poorly attendee because of the weather) to hear the views of the Parish with regard to the proposals. Two areas that had previously been identified within the Little Waltham Parish were also in the most recent plan. The one change was that the area off Blasford Hill was now to be 600 and not as previously planned 800 houses. The site of 3,000 houses off Essex Regiment Way close to the park and ride remained.

The main issue about these developments is that there is not the supporting infrastructure to support them. Essex Regiment Way is at close to capacity at the moment - the proposed 3,000 houses will be in addition to the current Channels development, and further developments at Great Leighs. The long-awaited NE By-Pass is still a dotted line on a map, however the City Council are now suggesting that a form of by-pass (a two-way road not a dual carriageway) will be by built by the developers of the site for the 3,000 houses. This road will bear no relation to what the NE By-pass was originally specified as.

We combined with other parishes in the area to instruct consultants to assist us with our responses to the Local Plan and we again made a detailed submission on behalf of the parish. We appreciate that houses have to be built somewhere but we believe that the City Council's decision to concentrate the housing in this area is flawed. There are other areas - nearer the A12 corridor that we think are better suited for these developments and we have put these ideas forward.

The next stage is for the City Council to submit the plan to the Secretary of State, which they hope to do in the summer. An independent examination of the plan will be held in the Autumn.

A lot of the work of the Parish Council goes on due to the commitment of my fellow councillors and I would like to thank them for all their help and work over the past year.

I would also like to thank the other organisations on behalf of the Parish Council who do so much to help the village and the community.

Thanks are also due to our County Councillor John Aldridge and City Councillors James Raven and Barry Knight who between them attend the majority of our meetings and are always willing to assist us and help to fight our corner.

The work of the Parish Council is supported by our Clerk Suzanne and on behalf of the Parish council I would like to thank Suzanne for all her help and assistance over the past year.