

Newsletter

SAVE OUR LIBRARY

Our library, along with others in Buckinghamshire, is under threat of closure. Two Public Meetings have been held to discuss its future but Bucks CC have now ratified their decision to only support the library as a 'Community Partnership' which will mean the library being run by villagers if it is to continue. Over the coming months we will also examine the whole 'Old School Site' to see what is best for the Village Centre, the library and also see if the doctor's surgery can be relocated.

A committee formed from interested people from the two public meetings are looking at ways of keeping the library open. For information, see the village web site under the Public Discussion Forum – Library, the Crendon Crier etc.

Over the coming months we will be looking at forming a charity so that outgoings can be minimised. We will also be looking for volunteers and for offers of help with equipment, consumables, maintenance etc. If you would like to help, please contact Richard Thurbon on 201659.

RT

VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGN (VAS)

Soon a VAS will be installed between the Telephone Exchange and Needlemakers on Chearsley Road monitoring the speed of vehicles entering the village. It is hoped that this will slow down traffic as it approaches the Chilton Road/Burts Lane junction and before the point used by children to cross the road on their way to school.

It follows a successful application for funding by the Parish Council which will be sharing the cost with Bucks County Council.

JUNE 2011; ISSUE 4

Your Council

Chairman

Sean Butler

Vice Chairman

Mike Le Brun

Chairman

Planning Committee

Mike Le Brun

Councillors

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Andrea Camden

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LONG CRENDON PAVILION

ATTRACTIVE ROOM FOR HIRE

- Suitable for parties and smaller groups.
- Meetings
- Reasonable rates are requested and disabled access is available.

Please contact Andrea Camden on
01844 208508 for bookings

Long Crendon Parish Council
Summarised Receipts and Payments for the year ended March 2011

	Actual Year to Date	Annual Budget	Variance Annual Total	% of Budget	Details and comments
Receipts					
Precept	95,000	95,000	0	100	
Rents and other income	3,555	2,623	932	136	filming and mast site rent
Allotment rentals	460	350	110	131	
Agency Services	400	1750	-1350	23	contribution to cleaning and trees.
Pavilion revenues(sports clubs & hire)	5,543	3,450	2,093	161	
Parish paths income	1050	1400	-350	75	
VAT Refunds	5540	7000	-1460	79	
Total receipts	111,548	111,573	-25		
Payments					
Staff Costs	13,134	12,680	-454	104	Salary, travel and rental allowance
Admin Expenses	7,704	12,950	5,246	59	Main costs are Audit fees, insurance, donations, newsletter and telephone. Underspent on audit fee, contingency and elections costs.
Allotment costs	1,175	1,430	255	82	Mainly grass cutting.
Open Spaces Grass Cutting	10866	11250	384	97	
Open Spaces - Trees	491	5500	5009	9	Works mostly completed at end of previous year
Open Space-Contracts(litter, grass etc)-	5498	5280	-218	104	
Bin Emptying-Dogs	2018	2704	686	75	Done by AVDC
Maintain Gates, fences and walls	1204	3000	1796	40	Projects still to be completed
Bins - maintenance	0	240	240	0	
Bus Shelter Maintenance	0	200	200	0	
War Memorial Maintenance	1115	720	-395	155	
Road Safety projects	0	7000	7000	0	Projects dependent on County Council, not yet delivered.
Other general maintenance costs	4107	7100	2993	58	Lesser costs than anticipated.
Pavilion costs	5,353	7,550	2,197	71	Gas, electricity, cleaning and maintenance.
Parish Paths ROW Clearance	725	1500	775	48	Reduced costs
Street Lights	6,108	6,360	252	96	electricity, maintenance and repairs.
Purchase of Village Assets	3,322	16,400	13,078	20	Purchased VAS, Bench, Salt bins. Not spent £15k on play equipment
Capital and Interest on Loans	17,434	17,670	236	99	
VAT on Payments	5628	7200	1572	78	Lower expenditure and tax rate.
Total Payments	85,882	126,734	40,852		
Net income over expenditure(-)	-25,664	15,162	40,826		

NOTE The unspent budgets of £15k for play equipment and £ 7k for road safety are carried forward to 2011/12 to be funded from the reserve.

ANNUAL REPORT

I would like to begin by thanking our hard working councillors for their un-stinting commitment to the parish council and the community as a whole during the past year. I take this opportunity to thank the retiring councillors Mrs Val Gilbert and Mr Adrian Tighe for their collective years of service to the council. We shall miss their input and wise counsel, but we wish them well for the future.



Welcome also to our two new council members Mr. Richard Thurbon and Mr. Guy Walker who have been working on various projects as advisors.

The forthcoming Newsletter will report on all the items of business and will be delivered to every home in the village.

I wish to comment on a few items which aroused considerable discussion and dissent in our normally tranquil village life namely:-

- The Baptist Church Extension Project
- The Waste Recycling Plant
- Proposed Traffic Calming Measures

Each of these proposals caused protests and for varying reasons.

It is our democratic right to support or oppose proposals which we feel will have a detrimental effect on our lives, which I applaud, but it is most important that we exercise this right responsibly. It is crucial to get our facts right and argue our case by sensible discussion without descending into scare-mongering and personal abuse.

The recent public campaign against The Waste Recycling Plant for some reason assumed that the Council would raise no objections and maligned the whole Council with an anonymous leaflet and email campaign which was widely circulated in the village and was completely without foundation.

I was greatly impressed by the effort if only the facts had been accurate.

The closure of our Library is imminent and despite several meetings to try to find ways to save it there have been few offers of help and not a word of protest or public indignation. Perhaps it just doesn't matter?

We are a community and we should strive to protect our institutions and each other.

*Sean C. Butler
Chairman*

Speed Limit Review

Since 2009 Bucks County Council have been carrying out a review of Speed Limits in Area 11 which includes Long Crendon. The Parish Council have actively fed back their views on what needed to be changed. In most areas, we have got our way on the changes required but there were some areas where we were not successful. The main changes that have been implemented are:-

- A 40mph limit on the Chearsley Road from the existing 30mph limit to the last house on the right hand side.
- An extension of the 30mph limit on the Bicester Road, including the first part of Westfield Road.
- The whole of Frogmore Lane and Sandy Lane now in the 30mph zone with the limit moved back to the Shabbington Road.
- An extension of the 30mph Limit on Chilton Road.
- The extension of the 30mph limit on the Thame Road was completed earlier when the new roundabout was installed.

There are still some items on the snagging list but these should be completed shortly.

We await the moving of the "gates" to reflect the start of the new speed limits. One of the gates on Chearsley Road will be moved to Shabbington Road.

We were not successful in the following areas:-

- Extension of the 40mph Limit on the Chearsley Road to the other side of the entrance to Notley Farm Trading Estate and 50mph to Chearsley.
- A 40mph limit from the 30mph limit to the other side of the Woodway Farm Estate on Bicester Road although we have negotiated better signage to be installed soon.
- Westfield to be 30mph throughout its length.
- Thame Road to be 40mph from Drakes Drive roundabout to the Thame Bypass roundabout.
- Shabbington Road to be reduced to 50mph.

RT



LITTER BINS AND DOG BINS

The Council provide bins for litter and recently purchased 4 larger bins, two of which were sited in the Square and one each in Cheersley Road and High Street. The litter bins are supplied to cater for smaller items of litter and must not be used for bulk litter.

Separate bins are provided for dog fouling. We have recently purchased 3 additional bins which were strategically placed for disposing of dog fouling.

It is important for residents to ensure that dog waste is not put into the litter bins and vice versa. The AVDC waste collection service is reluctant to clear bins that have dog fouling in them and this creates a nuisance to all residents.

Please note that it is an offence to allow your dog to mess in a public area and not pick it up immediately.

PAVILION UPDATE

The Pavilion continues to be very busy with Football and Cricket in season, both with adult and youth teams. Most weekends are taken up with these activities.

During the week, we continue to have twins club, jingle tots and young farmers - all on a regular weekly let.

The Parish Council have their regular 1st Monday in the month meeting as does the Planning Committee on the 3rd Monday.

The Greening campaign has really taken off and meetings about Bio-diversity, composting and saving energy are all held at the Pavillion.

Buggyfit is another group which regularly uses the rooms and, of course, it is extremely popular for children's parties, being a bright airy room overlooking the Rec. with all the facilities, including a lift.

For information on hiring this lovely room contact:

Andrea on 01844 208508

IMPROVING OUR PLAY AREAS

Due to work pressures , councillors will not be able to continue to progress the project to improve the Recreation Ground and Harroell play areas until later in the year. The Council felt this was appropriate in the present financial climate although it will to delay the project for the time being.

Further consultation with residents will take place once the project resumes.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The **Parish Council** meets in the Pavilion at 7.30pm on the first Monday of every month, except when it is a Bank Holiday in which case the meeting will take place on the second Monday of the month.

The Planning Committee meets on the third Monday every month in the Pavilion at 7.30pm. See the notice boards for further details.

Members of the public are welcome at these meetings and have an opportunity to address the Parish Council for a few minutes prior to each meeting. The Clerk should be contacted on 01844 208007 or 01296 483444 if you wish to speak at a meeting.

Agendas for and Minutes of the meetings are placed on the notice boards and the Council website www.long-crendon.com.

Note that minutes are published once they have been approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.

LONG CRENDON DAY CENTRE

Our Village Day Centre is run two days a week at the Baptist Chapel.

It is run on a voluntary basis with helpers that have assisted for many years. We have clients that are lonely, frail and some that just love company. We provide transport and a lovely hot meal and entertainment in the form of cards, dominoes, bingo and quizzes. Every year we arrange a coach outing and this year we will be going to see D Day Darlings at Wickstead Park to enjoy songs from the war years

Anyone interested in assisting or wishing to spend time with us at the Day Centre should contact Andrea Camden on 01844 208508.



STREET LIGHTS

Thank you to residents for reporting street lights that are not working.

Please phone the Clerk with the information and please quote the number that is on the label when the light is a proper column or, if the light is on a telegraph pole, the number on the bracket at the top of the pole.

Please note that, once reported, we wait to have a few lights in need of repair rather than paying for a call out charge each time.

KEEPING THE VILLAGE LOOKING GOOD

The Council has just reviewed the contracts for maintaining our open spaces. We have re-let them to our four existing contractors as we are happy with their work and their prices were competitive.

The need to improve the maintenance of open spaces and keep on top of litter is part of our Parish Plan and hopefully you will agree that the village is now better maintained. Key to this has been additional litter picking and more frequent emptying of litter bins and we would like to thank the contractor Dave Coney for keeping on top of this. We should also thank those villagers who do their bit to help.

Whilst Councillors try to keep an eye on their area, please let the Parish Clerk know if any areas of the village don't look as good as they should.

VILLAGE BIO-DIVERSITY GROUP

Another priority for the Parish Plan is increasing the bio-diversity of our green spaces. This means providing native plants, animals and insects with the right habitat to maintain and encourage them in the village. The village Bio-Diversity Group is now up and running. Supported by the Parish Council, it is run by the members, who include professional experts on plants, insects and butterflies.

As you may have seen, the group has started organising surveys to find how much wildlife we have left in the village. Last December, eggs of brown hairstreak butterflies were found on Harroell Field. These are a rare local species, which is a priority within the UK. This year we are organising surveys of plants, and amphibians and reptiles.

If you would like to join the group or help please contact:

mike.lebrun@long-crendon.com



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Another priority in the Parish Plan was identifying sites for affordable housing and rented homes. Over the last two years the Parish Council has been working with the County Rural Housing Officer to try and find suitable sites. Villagers had identified around a dozen sites and all have been considered.

Unfortunately we have discovered that, to be feasible, any site needs to be available at much less than the commercial cost of land for housing. In practice this rules out everything except land already owned by the District or Parish Councils (we were told County Council land has to be sold at commercial values), or agricultural land.

The only potential Council owned land would be Harroell Field. However, this is the only large informal public open space in the village and the Parish Council would not consider building on it. In practice even the Housing Officer did not consider it suitable as it would cost too much to improve road access and move electricity cables.

The only remaining option was using agricultural land. Whilst the Parish Council were concerned that this would mean extending the boundaries of the village, if it was the only way we might get some affordable housing it did need to be considered. The Housing Officer concluded that the only suitable site would be along the Chearsley Road and the landowner was not interested in selling.

This is a disappointing outcome, but the Parish Council will keep the need for affordable housing on our agenda for the future.

ENCOURAGING OUR WILDLIFE

This year as an experiment the Parish Council has extended the wildlife area on Harroell by reducing the frequency of grass cutting under the cherry and apple trees and a 2 metre strip along the bottom hedge. The aim is to encourage a wider range of native plants (rather than just grass), and encourage wildlife, in particular insects and butterflies. Instead of cutting the grass fortnightly, it will be cut once (October) or twice (July and October). We will also plant more trees in the autumn to extend the woodland.



Most of Harroell will continue to cut regularly with paths through the wildlife area for walkers. We will also cut part of Glovers End (on Chearsley Road) less frequently. Members of the Bio-Diversity Group have also set up an experimental area on the common land at Lower End by Dragon's Farm.

A number of villagers have asked that the grass on verges near their homes be cut less frequently, for example on Frogmore Lane and Harroell lane. These areas are cut by the District Council, so we will be talking to them to see if they will amend the contracts for next year.

We are very conscious that people do have different views about how long grass should be grown and may view some native plants as weeds, preferring a more formal tidiness. Please be assured that at this stage the reduced grass cutting is an experiment and everyone's views will be considered before we consider making any permanent changes.

MLB

MLB

COMMUNITY PAYBACK

Community Payback is a scheme delivered by Thames Valley Probation Service in partnership with Thames Valley Police and can be an option given to offenders as part of a 'community sentence' which requires offenders to carry out 300 hours of unpaid work. This work benefits the community and means that offenders pay the community for their crimes.

Projects under this scheme can include such things as removing graffiti, picking up litter, clearing undergrowth from paths and other public areas and working on environmental projects.

Offenders must wear bright orange visibility jackets marked 'Community Payback' whilst they are working. These jackets show that they are paying back for their criminal behaviour. This is the most visible of the 12 requirements that make up a community order. It is compulsory, strictly enforced and closely monitored. Those who fail to comply with it are returned to court.

Recently, your Parish Council has undertaken the first tentative steps to take up the services offered under this scheme and a group of workers under the control of a supervisor has begun to clear the gutters and pavements of the High Street of rubbish and weeds and, where appropriate, has cut back overhanging shrubbery.

Understandably there may be concerns as to the background of those undertaking this work and the Council has been informed that, whilst anyone over the age of 16 convicted of an offence punishable by custody can be considered for this unpaid work, specific exclusion is made in respect of those assessed by the Probation Services as unsuitable due to severe drug or alcohol abuse, offenders on incapacity benefit, offenders with severe mental health problems and those whose behaviour makes them unpredictable and/or dangerous.

To date, our early experiences have been good given the constraints placed upon Bucks County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council. It is apparent that, if we wish to see our pavements, gutters and footpaths free of weeds and rubbish, the responsibility for this will largely fall upon the Parish Council. Whilst in no way denigrating the excellent work undertaken by Mr Coney, he cannot do everything and, with this thought in mind, it is the intention to continue to use the services provided under this scheme in an effort to keep the general appearance of the village at a good standard.

JH

BIG SOCIETY

Every year public-spirited volunteers get out in their communities and support people who are affected by severe weather conditions. Whether shovelling the snow away from schools or transporting food and medicine to the vulnerable, these volunteers step up for neighbours in trouble. This is the community spirit that lies at the heart of the Big Society and the Government is keen that no would-be volunteer is discouraged or barred from helping out. Guidance is available for all those individuals, and voluntary groups, who want to get involved this year. Visit www.communities.gov.uk/publications/.../s-evereweatherguidance to find out more.

The guidance challenges misconceptions about health and safety laws getting in the way of action and volunteering. It also contains contacts for useful charities for

vulnerable people such as the Red Cross, and tips on how to volunteer. We need the Big Society most in times of adversity when communities have to pull together. This guidance sets out how you can survive the ice and snow and help your neighbours to do the same.

If you are stuck at home due to the snow ask your boss if you can use the day to volunteer locally. Skills such as plumbing and tree surgery are very valuable.

Remember:

You do not need a Criminal Records Bureau check to call round and check on elderly friends and neighbours.

You can help clear paths and pavements to prevent slips and falls – don't believe the myths about being sued.