

Parish Council Annual Report 2010-2011

For yet another year the main focus of the Parish Council has been the dredging of the village pond, which was finally completed in January, but not without complications. Otherwise new projects for the common and two controversial planning applications were the most visible items.

Appointments

We welcomed Lynn Woodgate as Councillor at the beginning of the year. Lynn volunteered to take responsibility for both the School and Play Area. The year ended with the announcement from Cllrs Frank Auton and Howard Green that they would not be standing for re-election in May. Cllr Peter Clackett subsequently decided not to re-stand as well. I would like to thank all three Councillors for all their hard work and support.

Election

2011 was an election year for the Parish Councillors and with all the critical comments towards the Council, it was disappointing to see the lack of interest from villagers to get involved. The four remaining Councillors were re-elected without an election.

Meetings

During the year under review, the Parish Council held six meetings throughout the year. Susan Smith continued in the position of Clerk to the Parish Council. During the year, the Councillor attendance at meetings averaged 85% with all of the officers attending five or more meetings.

Residents of the village are welcome to attend all Parish Council meetings. The lowest turnout of residents was 0 whilst the highest was 9, with the average attendance being 4.

Village Pond

The various fund raising events and activities meant that the funds were finally available for the work to be undertaken. The Council, having decided to proceed with the work, agreed for the work to be delayed until after the Village Show in September. This looked promising until we lost out to larger projects at the contractors, London Rock and we were delayed until December, when we were then hit by the very cold weather, finally with 24 hrs notice, we were on for a start in early January. The contractors took great care with the surrounds to the pond and removed a substantial amount of silt. What we (and they) were not expecting was

the substantial amount of debris recovered from the pond, this led to a variety of critical comments regarding the project. This was resolved with a number of debris collections being organised by the Clerk and I would like to pass on my thanks to those Villagers who volunteered.

Best Kept Village

Success in the Best Kept Village competition evaded us for yet another year. We have entered again for this year, but with the amount of building work being undertaken in the village at the moment, this will be a real challenge. As usual, the judging will be held during June and I hope the villagers will make an extra effort to keep the village looking good.

Newsletter / Website

The village website has been completely revamped and re-organised with much more flexibility allowing each of the groups being able to update their own pages. Many thanks go to the Webmaster Derek Higgins for all his hard work.

Penny Ware took on the daunting task of following Frank Auton as the editor of the village Newsletter. Congratulations to both of them for such a smooth handover.

Planning

Planning Applications continue to be reviewed by the Parish Council with Councillors sending appropriate feedback to Chiltern District Council reflecting the best interest of the village, its environments and its residents. There were a total of 32 applications submitted for properties in the village of which only 3 had any objections raised by the Parish Council.

Planning Applications are a subject which can cause tensions between neighbours and two applications in particular caused emotions to run high which also resulted in unjustified criticism of Council Members. The Parish Council do not make the decision regarding Planning Applications – ours is purely advisory. The Parish Council's role and process is available on the village website. With all building and major works, there is no substitute for discussing plans with your neighbours.

Finance

The Parish Council maintained the precept at £6,500 for another year; this reflected the financial commitment of the village pond clean-up and was

agreed prior to the award of the grant from the Big Lottery towards the cost of the Pond.

All Saints School

The school continues to be very popular and has won a number of awards over the year including the Challenge Award, the Green Flag Award and the Rights Respecting Award.

Play Area

The annual ROSPA report on the safety of the equipment in the Play Area highlighted the need for some attention to be given to the ladder ring. Bucks County Councillor David Schofield kindly donated £500 funding towards the cost of re-barking the Play Area.

Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG)

Due to overlapping responsibilities with the Local Area Forum and a lack of interest, the local NAG has not been resurrected in a physical form; however messages are still being distributed via e-mail.

Village Hall

The village hall continues to be well maintained, but bookings have remained stubbornly low during the year despite a number of efforts being made to increase its use.

Coleshill Common

The common continues to be managed successfully by the Coleshill Common Management Committee, led by Chris Wege, and the village appreciates all the hard work done by the team. Two new projects for the next couple of years are the use of Dexter cattle to maintain the grassland and the opening up of the common. I look forward to seeing cattle on the common over the summer.

Tennis Club

The Parish Council agreed to an extension of the existing lease for 25 years to ensure that the proposed upgrading of the clubs facilities is worthwhile.

Cricket Club

As mentioned earlier, the debris within the pond spoil spread on the meadow surrounding the Cricket Ground caused issues with local residents and club members.

Open Spaces

Nothing to report.

Local Government

Last year's success in bidding for some of the Highways Delegated Budget from the Amersham Local Area Forum allowed for the re-surfacing of the lay-by in Village Road. I think the results are a vast improvement.

For the new financial year, the Parish Council have requested funding for the re-instatement of the grass triangles in the village.

During the year we were pleased to have Cllr David Schofield, our local Bucks CC Councillor attend our meetings.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to my fellow Councillors and the Parish Clerk for all their hard work, support and their selfless efforts and of course to the people of Coleshill village.

Colin Lambert
Chairman
May 2011