

LITTLE CHALFONT PARISH COUNCIL

Newsletter – Spring 2018



One or two unitary councils for Bucks? A look at the options

As Buckinghamshire no longer receives any money from central government, it has to find ways of saving money wherever possible to fund all the services that need to be provided at a county level.

Both county and district councils accept the need for change, but have different ideas on how this should best be achieved. Milton Keynes is already a unitary council and there are two proposals being considered for the future of the rest of Bucks.

The following is a brief outline of each of these proposals:

You are invited to attend the
**ANNUAL PARISH
MEETING 2018**

In the village hall on Wednesday
16 May 2018 at 7.30 pm

(A glass of wine/soft drink will be
available from 7pm)

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Guest speakers:

Rob Hacking, head teacher,
Little Chalfont Primary School.

Jake Rigg, senior public affairs
manager, Affinity Water.

**PLUS: A presentation of the work of
the parish council**

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There will also be an opportunity to
meet your parish councillors to
ask questions and make suggestions
for future projects

Single unitary council

Bucks County Council (BCC) wishes to create a single, unitary council for Bucks, to replace the current four district councils (see map) and BCC.

This, it is claimed, would provide more streamlined services and save an estimated £18m a year in costs, once the new system is up and running.

Under this proposal, parish and town councils would still exist as at present, but could take on more community assets and services, if they choose.

However, district and county councils would cease to exist in their present form. In their place 19 community boards would be established to serve Bucks' towns and villages

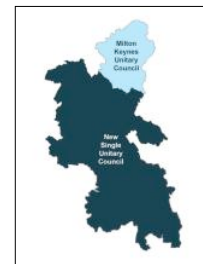
This would enable local councillors to take decisions on issues such as funding for community groups and maintenance of local roads. They would meet regularly in each area and the public would be encouraged to attend.

Two unitary councils

Together with the other Bucks district councils, Chiltern District Council (CDC) has made an alternative proposal of two unitary councils, one for South Bucks and one for North Bucks.

It feels that, because the north and south of the county are so different, it would be better if there were two new unitary councils. Local councillors would ensure that money raised in the local area would be spent locally.

It would also enable housing, infrastructure and jobs to reflect the different needs of local communities in the north and south of the county.



Top left: existing set up. Top right: proposed two unitary councils. Bottom left: proposed single unitary council.

CDC claims that two unitary councils would provide more local involvement in decision-making and better local accountability.

CDC and South Bucks District Councils point to their recent partnering with South Bucks District Council as an example of how such an arrangement could work.

Have your say

A leaflet from CDC is being delivered to every household in Little Chalfont, giving more details of the north/south proposal. The single council details can be found at www.futurebucks.gov.uk.

The Secretary of State for housing, Sajid Javid, has given a preliminary view that he is "minded" to create one unitary authority for Bucks. However, no final decision has been made, and he has stated that he wishes to hear from as many local people as possible regarding what they would prefer for their county and its councils.

Local residents are urged to have their say on which option they prefer for their community at sajid.javid@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Deadline for responses is 25 May. ■



From the chairman

I was pleased and honoured to be elected chairman of Little Chalfont Parish Council at our February 2018 meeting, having previously been vice chairman. I hope I can continue the excellent work of my two immediate predecessors in the role, Gill Roberts and Brian Drew.

My wife and I are both originally from Merseyside, but have lived in the village for nearly 40 years. My two daughters both went to primary and secondary schools here.

The next year will be an extremely challenging one for me and my fellow councillors.

The major challenge, of course, is the threat to our green belt with the proposals to build 700+ houses on land between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane. Our village has grown hugely over the past few years, and the suggestion that it can take something like a 30% increase in housing stock, with all the attendant problems that that will bring, is a very worrying situation. The parish council is doing its utmost to ensure that the interests and preferences of Little Chalfont residents are represented in challenging this threat.

We are also trying to get a new village community centre built on the site of the present one, but are meeting strong opposition from the district council. The parish council has worked tirelessly on the new hall proposals for the past five years but, sadly, we are still some way off getting anything agreed.

Again, this will take a lot of time and effort on the part of the parish council to deliver something that the Little Chalfont residents are very keen to have. It will provide our village with a much-needed resource both for present and future needs.

I hope very much that you will be able to join me and the other parish councillors for our annual meeting, to be held in the village hall on Wednesday 16 May. We not only have guest speakers but you can also hear about the works undertaken by your parish council on behalf of the village.

I look forward very much to serving as parish council chairman and helping the local community in future projects.

Ian Griffiths

Role of the parish council

What we can do for you

Little Chalfont was formally a ward of Amersham Town Council. However, Little Chalfont has always been regarded as a separate community and the Little Chalfont Parish Council was formed in 2007 to best serve the local residents.

There are several different types of council throughout England, and each has its own responsibilities for different kinds of local services.

At the parish council, we are often asked why we do not provide more money for care of the elderly, for example, or to repair the roads.

The reason is that these are not the sorts of powers that are vested in the parish council. To better help residents understand what we can and cannot do, below is an explanation of the different councils' powers.

However, please note that this will be subject to substantial change if the current proposal for a single or dual unitary council for Bucks is passed (see page 1).

County councils:

These are responsible for services across the whole of a county, like:

- Education
- Transport
- Fire and public safety
- Social care
- Libraries
- Waste management
- Trading standards

District, borough and city councils:

These cover a smaller area than county councils. They are the local planning authority and also usually responsible for services like:

- Rubbish collection
- Recycling
- Council tax collections
- Housing

Parish, community and town councils:

These operate at a level below district and borough councils and, in some cases, unitary authorities. They are elected and can help on a number of local issues, like providing:

- Allotments
- Public clocks
- Bus shelters
- Community centres
- Play areas and play equipment
- Grants to help local organisations
- Consultation on local planning.

They also have the power to issue

fixed penalty fines for things like litter, graffiti, fly posting, dog fouling offences.

Funding the parish council

Parish councils are funded by levying a precept, collected with the council tax paid by the residents of the parish.

The item on page 4 of this newsletter gives details of the parish council precept and where the money is spent.

Parish councillors

Parish councillors are elected to serve for four years, unless a casual vacancy arises that may be filled by a by-election or by co-option.

A parish council consists of the chairman and not fewer than five elected parish councillors; a quorum of the main council committee is at least one-third of the members, or three members, whichever is the greater.

All parish councillors are *volunteers* and are not paid for their time.

Attending meetings

Every parish council meeting – and planning committee meeting – is open to the public, and we encourage you to attend and see how we serve the community.

Before each meeting starts, members of the public have 10 minutes in which to address the parish council on any topics on the agenda that are of interest to them.

However, please note that there are some agenda items where the council formally excludes the public and press on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest, because of the confidential nature of the business. This latter also applies to any sub-committee of the parish council. ■

Little Chalfont farmers' market

For spring/summer 2018, the farmers' market and craft fair will be held in the village hall from 9am-1pm:

Saturday 12 May

Saturday 9 June

Saturday 14 July

Saturday 11 August

If you are interested in taking a stall either at the farmers' market or at the craft fair, please contact the organiser, Carolyn Towner at info@tvfm.org.uk or call on 01895 677455

Threat to our green belt

New moves to save it

Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils are still preparing their emerging local plan, which includes proposals for 700+ new dwellings in the green belt between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane.

Later this year they will publish the draft plan for public consultation. Local opposition is massive. Of all the replies received to the councils' last consultation on their 15 'preferred options' – green belt sites for possible development – nearly a third were objections to the Little Chalfont site.

In January about 500 local residents attended our meeting to protest to the district councillors elected for Little Chalfont.

They were left in no doubt about the strong local opposition to the plan.

In March 2018 we wrote to both councils giving details of the

weaknesses that we and our professional advisers found in the evidence so far presented to justify release of the site for development.

Our letter gave notice that, unless the Little Chalfont site is withdrawn as this community wishes, we shall bring those weaknesses to the attention of the government inspector who vets the draft plan next year.

The result could be that the whole plan is found unsound.

Please visit the new campaign website opened in February at savelittlechalfont.org.uk It has a copy of the letter, and a list of ways that you can help the campaign run by the parish council/community association coordination group.

Our Save Little Chalfont facebook page is popular for its up-to-date information and good pictures of the site. ■

Briefly.....

Memorial benches

The parish council is proposing to put additional park benches



near the pavilion at Westwood Park.

If you would like to sponsor a memorial bench please contact the parish clerk on 01494 766655 or email clerk@littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk.

New community centre

Following the decision to withdraw our planning application for a new building to replace the village hall, the parish council has now had time to examine the reasons for the case officer recommending that the district council planning committee refuse the scheme.

A new application will soon be submitted. There will be little change in the design of the building but some minor changes to the entrance from the road and the parking layout will be incorporated.

New 20mph zone for Bell Lane

A part-time school advisory 20mph zone is to be installed on Bell Lane.

The new signs are intended to alert drivers to consider their speed in the vicinity of the school, a measure welcomed by residents and school alike.

New cherry trees to be planted



New cherry trees will be planted along the Amersham Road to replace the ones that died.

Pictured above is

one of the cherries just coming into bloom in Chenies Parade. This is a joint project by the LCPC and the LCCA.

National bike week

9-17 June 2018

Property marking is one of many ways that can help the police to reduce bicycle theft.

While some stolen bicycles are returned to their owners, most are never seen again because they have no markings on them, or no recorded details such as frame serial numbers and size, make, model, colour or a picture.

Bike marking is a simple solution and means that the police are more likely to identify a stolen bike and return it to the owner. A simple sticker on the inside of your bike frame, with your postcode on it, will inform the police of ownership.

To support the National Bike Week Campaign, Chiltern & South Bucks Community Safety Team will be providing bicycle security marking labels to local residents. If you would like a bike label, please contact



Lock it or lose it!

communitysafety@chiltern.gov.uk with 'bike label' in the subject line, or call them on 01494 586535.

As well as marking your bike there are other ways of preventing and reducing the risk of bike theft:

- Keep your bike in a locked garage or shed, as more than half of bike thefts take place on victims' properties.
- Always lock your bike when you're leaving it, use a strong lock and secure it to a bike rack where possible, as thieves can lift bikes over signposts especially if the lock is loose.
- There are other ways to identify your bike, such as recording and registering it on www.immobilise.com or investing in an electronic tagging system. ■

Bucks adult learning

Personal development

Have you ever considered learning a new skill or improving an existing one? Perhaps there is something you have always wanted to try, but haven't yet had the opportunity?

Buckinghamshire Adult Learning offers a wealth of courses in arts &

crafts, languages, various skills, fitness and health & leisure. They have both daytime and evening courses from beginners to advanced that take place in village halls, community centres, local schools and adult learning centres in Beaconsfield, Amersham, Chesham and Gerrards Cross.

Want to learn how to write

creatively, plan your garden planting design for spring and summer, or wish to go further? Why not try one of the new courses starting in 2018.

Courses vary in length from 31 weeks, 10 weeks or starter courses between 6 sessions to one-day workshops, so there is something to suit everyone.

For further information, go to www.adultlearningbcc.ac.uk ■

Little Chalfont Nature Park

Spring is here!

As we leave the cold, the snow, the dark nights and the wet weather behind us, we hopefully look forward to the start of spring.

The arrival of British Summer Time is an ideal time to think about planning a visit to the Little Chalfont Nature Park. Come and admire the space for the peace, quiet and tranquillity, to see the daffodils in spring, orchids in early summer, unusual trees, wild flowers, beetles, bugs and butterflies, as well as seeing and hearing birds.

The nature park boasts rare wild flower meadow, a woodland walk, and ancient woodland. If you haven't already discovered it, the entrance to the nature park is on the approach

road to Dr Challoner's High School, which is off Cokes Lane.

The notice board and map at the entrance to the park gives information to assist with finding the locations of various displays and activities.

Perhaps you would enjoy the story telling circle, or how about a picnic in the picnic and play area, or what about having a go on the climbing wall or building a den in the woods?

Thanks to money from donors, with some significant contributions from individuals and family trusts, the Little Chalfont Charitable Trust, responsible for delivering the planned features, has placed an



A young kestrel perched alongside a carved owl on one of the nature park benches

order for the purchase of a wooden den to be installed in the play area and log seating for the teaching area. It is expected that work can be started by early May.

So, if the sun is shining and the weather is pleasant and warm, and you are wondering what to do with yourself or the children, don't forget you have Little Chalfont Nature Park on your doorstep just waiting for your visit. For further information on the nature park, please go to the website: naturepark.littlechalfont.org.uk ■

Parish council precept

What happens to the money?

Householders will recently have received their annual council tax demand and may have noticed an increase of 5.4% over the previous year. The amount payable to the parish council is exactly the same as last time but equates to only about 4% of the total.

Precept refers to the amount of money that the parish council claims, having calculated its needs from the

annual budget. This is the main income for the parish council, supplemented mainly by fees for the use of the village hall plus Westwood Park football and cricket pitches.

Bucks County Council will pay us a little over £8,000pa towards the devolved services eg, grass cutting. The total income for the 2018/19 year is budgeted at £279,000.

Where does the money go? Over half of the income is spent on a combination of office costs including staff salaries, maintaining Westwood Park, the village hall, the nature park, grass verges and street lighting.

£9,500 pays for the one-hour free parking in Snells Wood car park and £25,000 has been budgeted for improvements in Westwood Park, especially the pavilion.

£5,000 has been set aside in support of the action to try to stop the loss of our green belt in the area between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane. Additionally, the parish council is still hopeful that a new community centre will be built in the next year or two and has therefore transferred £25,000 to the building reserve. The balance goes on smaller items including grants to local organisations. ■

The following is the fifth in an occasional series of articles about groups that regularly use the village hall

The U3A Group

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is a learning co-operative for people of retirement age, which enables members to share a variety of educational, creative, social and leisure activities.

It was started in France in 1973 and was first introduced to Britain in 1981. It continues as a rapidly growing network, with over 400,000 active members at more than 1,000 locations.

Membership includes many with experience and expertise in almost all walks of life. Members share their knowledge and experience and develop their own capabilities by learning from each other. No qualifications are required, and none



Chess Valley U3A digital imaging group

are given. All you need is interest and enthusiasm!

Chess Valley U3A, based in Chesham, was formed in the autumn of 2008 and now has over 700 members with over 40 interest groups. The groups meet at a variety of locations ranging from village halls down to members' own homes. Three of these groups meet locally in Little Chalfont.

The photography and digital imaging group meets in the Little Chalfont

Village Hall; the computer group meets in the Little Chalfont Community Library; and the wildlife group meets at nearby Amersham Common Village Hall.

The branch is a registered charity and is responsible to our members and to the Charities Commission. The annual membership fee of £20 entitles members to attend the activity groups of their choice, as well as the monthly general meetings. These meetings, with an invited speaker, are held on the second Thursday of each month at the Broadway Baptist Church, Broadway, Chesham.

A quarterly newsletter is distributed to all members giving full details of each of the group's activities as well as reviews of past events and other items of interest.

Further details and a list of local activity groups is available on the Chess Valley U3A website at www.chessvalley-u3a.org.uk ■

Parking update

More problems to address

It is often said that actions to address parking problems usually only succeed in transferring the problem to another location – and so it has proved in Little Chalfont.

The wide-ranging changes to waiting restrictions in the village centre have generally been effective and well received but, in some instances, the changes have simply transferred the problem to another nearby location.

As an example, our picture shows how Linfields has been transformed into a car park for most of the working week, with cars obstructing some driveways in the process and sometimes blocking access to emergency and delivery vehicles.

In response to representations made by residents of such affected locations, the parish council has agreed to

submit proposals to Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) for further waiting restrictions.

These will be in **Linfields, Harewood Road, Yarrowside, Cokes Lane and Chessfield Park** and to extend the residents-only restriction in **Chalfont Avenue** to include a restriction on Saturdays.

The first stage of the process of establishing new restrictions will be a localised consultation survey to assess the extent of local agreement for change.

It has also been agreed in principle that the funding of the review and implementation of any/all subsequent changes will be shared equally between the parish



Commuters parking in Linfields have clogged the road and obstructed driveways

council and BCC.

The parish council is aware that commuters and others will react to any changes by seeking alternative locations to park without charge, but the parish council will seek to restrict such practices to ensure road safety and reduce major inconvenience to affected residents. ■

Little Chalfont Community Association updates

LCCA website: www.littlechalfont.org.uk

Village day – 16 June 2018

Our annual celebration of the community will be held in the village centre from 12 noon until 4pm – there is still time to book your stall to promote your club or organisation.

There will be the usual fun run in the morning in Westwood Park: register from 8.30am, the run starts at 10am.

Please support the new village day raffle! Tickets will be on sale soon, with prizes donated by local businesses and proceeds to good causes.

There will be a bake-off in the village hall, and the dog show returns on the village green alongside other entertainments. This year's scarecrow competition has the theme 'women in history', with further details and an entry form available from our website: www.littlechalfont.org.uk/vday

Help on the day is always welcomed and if you are able to give an hour of your time please contact Paul Nicholls by email to villageday@littlechalfont.org.uk

Village centre developments

Chenies Mews (end of Chenies Parade)

The latest advice is that the work will be completed within the next two months and that the contractors

expect to leave the site soon after the end of May.

It is understood that some of the flats have been sold and that the first occupants will be moving in on 31 May. As the newsletter goes to press there is no information available about who may be taking over the ground floor units.

The Sugar Loaf pub

Present information from the owner of the freehold, the brewer Charles Wells, is that the company is planning a major refurbishment,



which it will undertake alongside a new tenant.

The company is currently seeking the tenant. Once a tenant has been found, the company is expected to approach the Little Chalfont

URGENT! Could you help please?

Volunteer needed to keep the nature park website updated

- Website fully developed.
- Occasional updates from data supplied by the management group.
- Usual items news and photos.
- Not demanding on time.
- Training available if required.

This is an opportunity to contribute to Little Chalfont's very special nature park. To learn more, without commitment, please contact Natasha Meldrum, parish clerk on 01494 766655 or email her at clerk@littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk

Community Association to assist it in seeking the views of the community regarding the new style and product offering of the pub. Look out for further developments

GE Amersham Place news

We are advised that the refurbishment and creation of the additional car parking spaces at the front of the building are on schedule and that the staff will be moving in during May and June.

GE has stated that it is prepared to open the new car park for local residents at the weekend, although this may not be until late summer. ■

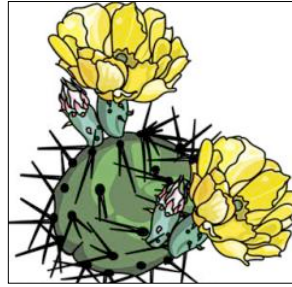
Defensive planting

In a green and leafy village like Little Chalfont, gardening is obviously a passion for many people. Sadly this has not gone unnoticed by criminals. Garden crime is a reality.

According to police statistics, the most likely items to be stolen are mowers, strimmers, chain saws, hedge trimmers, garden furniture and plants. You can reduce the risk of becoming a victim of garden crime, while at the same time creating an

attractive garden by planting an impenetrable hedge, which can be just as effective as a fence.

Planting prickly shrubs around vulnerable windows can also serve as a deterrent to the burglar. So you can create a beautiful garden *and* reduce the risk of being the next victim of



Prickly plants can help to stop garden thefts

garden crime. Criminals don't like climbing through prickly plants and hedges. They know that a small item of ripped clothing or blood can help the

police identify them.

For a full list of defensive plants please visit either:
www.chiltern.gov.uk/homesecurity
www.southbucks.gov.uk/homesecurity ■

About Little Chalfont Parish Council

Parish councillors



*Ian Griffiths
Chairman*



*Michael Parker
Planning committee
chairman*



*David Rafferty
Vice chairman of
council and planning
committee*



David Alexander



Mike Crowe



Brian Drew



Chris Ingham CMG



Vinny Patel



Janet Walford OBE

Newsletter distribution

The parish council is indebted to Adrian Lockyer, membership secretary of the community association, for organising the distribution of the newsletters and to the volunteers who deliver them, ensuring that all homes and businesses in Little Chalfont receive a copy.

JW/4.18

Parish council meetings

Parish council general meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, except for August.

The meetings are held at Little Chalfont Village Hall in Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont, commencing at 7.30 pm. The meetings are always open to the public, so why not come along to a meeting and see your parish council in action? Local residents frequently take advantage of the opportunity allowed at all meetings for public comments, to express their views and to ask the council for support in relation to various matters.

The next meetings of the parish council will be held on Wednesday 9 May 2018.

Planning committee meetings are usually held every fourth Tuesday. At these meetings you can hear discussions of planning applications submitted for Little Chalfont, have the opportunity to comment on specific applications of interest to you and hear whether or not the parish council agrees that a planning application should go ahead.

The next meetings of the planning committee will be on held on 9 May and 5 June 2018.

Parish council office

The parish council office is located at the rear of the village hall in Cokes Lane. Contact details for enquiries:

TELEPHONE: 01494 766655. If unattended, you may leave a message on the answerphone and we will respond as soon as possible.

EMAIL: clerk@littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk

OFFICE OPENING HOURS:
 Mon, 9am-3pm. Tue-Fri, 9am-1pm.



*Natasha
Meldrum
Parish clerk*



*Sallie Matthews
Assistant parish
clerk*

Any comments or suggestions?

If you have any comments or suggestions to make about this newsletter or its contents, please contact the parish clerk on clerk@littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk. We welcome all feedback!