

CHALTON PARISH NEWSLETTER

NEWS BY KEITH FEATHERSTONE, CHAIR, CHALTON PARISH COUNCIL

This has been a most unusual and challenging year for everyone. Our last Parish Council meeting in the village hall was in March, since then we have had to hold Zoom meetings. Unfortunately it has not been a quiet year as there have been many developments which have kept us rather busy. We began the year with a new Parish Clerk who then unfortunately resigned to move nearer her family. Fortunately we had several responses to our advert and following Zoom interviews appointed Sorchia Buckingham, a Toddington resident. Sorchia has thrown herself whole heartedly into the job and has been a great help. At the same time the service provider for the Parish Council website decided to stop offering this service and along with other local parishes we were forced to find another provider. The new service provider was identified and a new website created (<https://chalton-pc.gov.uk>) with many more up to date features now. Fortunately with Steve Grayson, a Parish Councillor and IT consultant, we have taken the opportunity to improve other aspects such as document storage and uniform government email addresses.

The local response to COVID-19

At the beginning of COVID-19 we discussed with Toddington how best to set up a help line for those who might require emergency help. Once again Steve Grayson came to our aid and set up a designated telephone line. A circular was delivered to all the village, Steve and his wife Val monitored the line and were able to provide help to several residents.

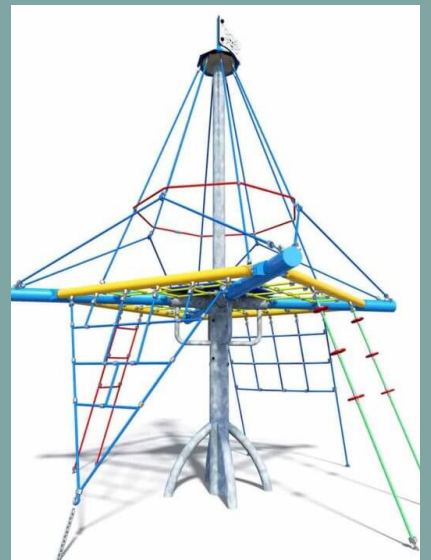
Chalton Playground Revamp

Although we had budgeted for a playground upgrade the annual safety survey showed that substantial repairs were required with some play equipment not meeting present day standards. We had a budget of £10,000 this was not sufficient and we applied for a Community Asset grant. With the help of our Ward Councillors, Silvia Collins and Mary Walsh, we were awarded a grant of £10,000. This money will enable us to undertake the necessary repairs and to add additional play items.

We also applied for a grant from National Grid but were told that they do not give grants to Parish Councils. The Chalton Village Association (CVA) came to our aid and applied for a grant in their name. They have been awarded £10,000 to which they have very kindly added a further £5,000 from their own funds. This has enabled the purchase of a Pirates Lair climbing frame which will add considerably to the enjoyment of the playground.

*The latest on
this December issue:*

COVID-19
CHALTON PLAYGROUND
WATER END LANE
SUNDON SUBSTATION
SUNDON RFI
20MPH SPEED LIMIT
LINMERE DEVELOPMENT
FUTURE VILLAGE EVENTS



Water End Lane

The Parish Council is in discussions with National Grid about repairs to the additional damage recently caused to the entrance of Water End Lane. As there have been a number of incidents when traffic turns into Water End Lane we are hoping that the parking area can be enlarged at the same time. Hopefully this work will be completed in 2021.

Reporting of issues

Many of the issues that occur such as pot-holes, traffic nuisance, lights not working, footpath repairs and so on, can in fact be reported by the community on the Central Bedfordshire website. Quick action examples of this recently were fly tipping that was cleared within a few days, road works traffic lights near *The Fancott* reported and fixed within hours.

Quick link to reporting page

<https://tinyurl.com/CBC-HW-Reporting>

Planning Applications

We continue to receive planning applications for power related connections to the Sundon Substation, the latest being for a solar farm on 111 acres of Chalgrave Manor land. The Parish Council has objected as this land is one of the last open areas and the wide landscape views would be adversely affected. There would also be a considerable loss of amenity on the footpaths which pass through this area. The solar farm would connect to the substation via an underground cable which would run under the B579 before running down Water End Lane. This is the same route that would link the Fancott 22.5MW peak power station that was granted permission in 2019.

Central Bedfordshire Council are continuing to push their plans for a rail freight interchange in Sundon and part of this plan includes the release of 45Ha (110 acres) from the Green Belt for warehousing. Central Bedfordshire Council say this is necessary as the developers will then contribute to the cost of the M1 – A6 Link Road. The Parish Council has strongly objected as this development would bring an additional 6,500 heavy vehicles and cars onto local roads and onto a motorway junction that is already at capacity. The development would also remove the fine avenue of Poplar trees which line the old Cement Works access road and expose the village to greater levels of noise and pollution. John and Keith presented the Parish's views at the Local Plan Examination hearings and we now await the judgement of the Plan Inspectors.

Ward Councillor Grant

Our clerk is currently discussing a further grant of £500 which is in the gift of Councillor Collins. This will be used towards the purchase of two games tables.



More Dog Litter bins



Steve is also dealing with the Council about the installation of new litter and dog poo bins in the playground. Unfortunately the Parish Council will have to contribute to both the initial and regular cost of emptying.

HRN1 - Linnmere

As you will have seen the Houghton Regis development (now officially called Linnmere) continues a pace and we are told that a school and some houses in phase 1 will be completed in 2021. Construction of the new Lidl warehouse will begin in 2021. This is by any standard a monster warehouse, 120,000m² and one section will be 30m high. When operational it will employ 700 people and be accessed by 625 heavy trucks a day.

Construction has begun on a new community centre by the roundabout at the entrance to Linnmere. This will have a cafe, adventure playground and meeting rooms. On the next plot there will be a small supermarket, Lidl of course. The development of phase 3, much of which lies within the Chalton Parish boundary has now been brought forward. When completed we will have within the Parish a further 5/600 houses and a hotel. There will also be a new pub but this will just sit within the Houghton Regis boundary.



20mph Speed Limit

Brett and Ron have pushed for a 20mph speed limit outside the school and have requested that the school bus pickup be moved further along the road to avoid the pedestrian crossing. Traffic speeding along the Sundon road remains a concern and despite several requests to Central Beds nothing has been achieved. We have asked for the costs of a speed warning sign and will budget a contribution towards the costs if this will help.



Village Notice Board

We are budgeting for a new village notice board which will hopefully be installed in the New Year.

South Beds Dial-a-ride

This service operates a membership based on-demand bus service for transport between villages and local amenities. It is supported financially by Central Bedfordshire Council together with other sources and even provide organised day trips. Vehicles are COVID-19 safe/compliant.

Website: <http://www.sbdar.co.uk>

Chalton Village Day 2021

The Christmas carol concert is a victim of the current restrictions. The CVA have said that they are hoping to book the Toddington Band for Christmas 2021. Although all the bookings for the village hall had to be cancelled this year, we are told that the hall already has many bookings for next year. Unfortunately the Pensioner's lunch has also fallen victim to the COVID lockdowns. It has been suggested that as an alternative and of course if there is sufficient interest, that we hold a Village Day next year on either the 3rd or 17th July. If we are to do this we would need to begin planning early next year and would need lots of help from both old and young. If you are interested please contact any of the Parish Councillors or CVA Committee. We also have two vacancies for Parish Councillor. If you have an interest in the village and want to support the community and help improve the village please contact any of the Parish Councillors to discuss this.



We wish you all a safe and healthy 2021

Contacts

Chalton Parish Councillors

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Chalton Village Association

Diane Delicate

Jane Baker

Debbie Grygiel

Alison Williams

<http://chaltonvillagehall.co.uk/>