

Chignal Parish Council

C/O 45 Cherry Garden Road, Great Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 1DH

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Clerk: Will Adshead-Grant

Chair: Lynn Ballard

Website: e-voice.org.uk/Chignal-Parish

Vice Chair: Linda Nelson

Minutes of the Bi-Monthly Meeting of the Chignal Parish Council held on Monday 8th November at 7.30pm in the Chignal & Mashbury Village Hall

Governance

2021/346 Chairman's Welcome

Chair

Ballard

Councillors

Lewis, Elwick, Stainton, Towns and Nelson

2021/347 Apologies for Absence

City Councillor Nicolette Chambers

Cllr Lewis (departed at 9PM)

2021/348 Register of Declarations of Interests and any requests for dispensation

None requested

2021/349 Public Open Session for any matters that need to be drawn to the Parish Council's attention. The item does not need to be on the current agenda.

17 members of the public

Concerns raised about speeding, road use, danger to cyclists and walkers – 25 houses in Chignal Smealey area affected. Resident witnessed a near miss incident between a cyclist and van on Chignal Road. Road Traffic levels are higher than previous years. Volume high on Chignal Road to Chelmsford. Examples provided of White Gates fitted in other areas, (not Essex) that cost £2000 for 2 pairs of gates. Offer to fit them by a member of the public. Confirmation that White Gates reduce speeding but do not eliminate it. The amount of rubbish collected every week on the road to Chelmsford is up to a black bin bag.

Survey – List of priorities by the Parish Council: concerns about the Priority that may be given to the White Gates.

Change in the Parish Boundary. Little Hollows residents have been contacted directly by the City Council. New suggestion to move the Parish Boundary to include Little Hollows but not the Persimmon part of the Parish. Field opposite Little Hollows is not allocated for housing in the approved Chelmsford Local Plan.

21st November Chelmsford 10k Run around the Chignals 2-4pm

2021/350 County and City Councillors' Reports

- i. Essex County Councillor Report – Cllr Mike Steel

North East Bypass Consultation

The North East Bypass consultation closes 13th Nov. Details of the application are here

<https://planning.essex.gov.uk/planningapplication.aspx?AppNo=CC/CHL/85/21>

My own parish of Great Waltham are keen to make comments about encouraging traffic to use the new route rather than via Ford End, Essex Regiment Way, or Broomfield Road and are asking for appropriate signage on the existing roads. You might want to consider something similar.

Meeting with Highways Cabinet Member

I have arranged for the Highways Cabinet Member to meet 5 of my 10 Parish Councils on 19th Nov (GW, LW, Chignal, Writtle and Broomfield). These 5 have the most queries on Highway maintenance and LHP requests submitted. The meeting will look at the gap between PC/public expectations and

Highways delivery and what can be done about it. The meeting is at 10am 19th Nov at Chignal Village Hall and will have 2 reps from each PC.

I will send out a briefing note before the event.

White Gates

Promote the LHP meeting on the 17th. Cost covers Traffic Road Orders, Utility searches and approved contractors. Essex does not support a self-installation model.

Thank you for hosting this event.

Chelmsford Local Highways Panel (LHP)

The latest report for all schemes can be accessed by the Chelmsford LHP website. The report is updated in the first week of each month.

<https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/local-highway-panels/chelmsford-lhp>

The website also contains information on the types of schemes in a series of Members' Guides, including the required criteria. My approach is to take recommendations from the PC, rather than individuals, and support ones that align with the objectives and criteria of the LHP.

It should be noted that the LHP is not an enforcement agency and speeding issues, or other traffic violations, need to be reported to the police via 101 or report on line

<https://www.essex.police.uk/ro/report/>

You can also report it to SERP and ask them if they will arrange some speed traps

<https://saferessexroads.org/>

The 30mph request has been submitted, but has not yet been validated, so doesn't have a reference number

40mph and closure Hollow Lane:

The 40mph on Woodhall Hill (sic) has been partially implemented. I am fairly sure that this was supposed to extend to Copperfield Road, but it doesn't seem to. I have queried this with the engineer – possible that it is just a delay. I know that the Hollow Lane closure is still awaiting delivery of the gate.

Not having had a response from the Highways Engineer (phone or email) I went to the site office 4th Nov, and spoke to the guy in charge:

- Some mix up on the drawings so they have had to order some extra 40mph signs
- They are waiting for the gate (needs to be a special key that can be used by emergency services). I pushed him on timescales – he said weeks rather than months.

Post

Contacted CEO of Royal mail to raise concerns with the situation covering a lot of the Chelmsford area. Covid and staff issues potentially. The postman has to sort his own mail before doing the delivery.

- ii. Chelmsford City Councillor Report - Cllr Nicolette Chambers

Boundary Changes:

City Council Parish Boundary change recommendations were approved to go to consultation at the City Council meeting of 22nd Sept. All residents potentially affected will get a written correspondence and invitation to comment. Others who are not directly affected (i.e. not changing parish, even if the parish is affected) can still comment via the website, but they will not be individually contacted.

Bin Collections

So far bin collection has not been affected by the national HGV driver shortages.

Covid

Post Covid car park income recovery is not going too well. Whilst short term retail car parks have returned to 80% of pre-Covid levels, Park & Ride and long term commuter car parks are around 20%.

2021/351 Confirmation of the minutes of the Bi-Monthly meeting of the Parish Council on 13th September

Resolution Confirmed

2021/352 Note the Orchard sub-Committee minutes of 1st November 2021.

Resolution Noted

2021/353 Chelmsford Governance Review: public consultation

Parish area: Chignal (Parish Council)

At the last Parish Council meeting it was noted that the City Council would be consulting residents affected by recommended changes to parish boundaries in October/November. Chignal is one of the parishes where the boundaries are proposed for change: removing the new housing areas of Little Hollows and a part of Copperfield Place from Chignal parish to join the unparished built-up area of Chelmsford.

Individual letters explaining these boundaries changes and asking for views have been sent by the City Council to residents in the affected areas bordering Hollow Lane but it does not appear that residents in the rest of the rural parish have received this direct communication.

The consultation asks 3 simple questions:

- Do you agree with the change?
- Why do you feel this way?
- Tell us anything else to help make a final recommendation for this area?

The consultation questionnaire can be completed on-line at www.chelmsford.gov/cgr **before 30th November 2021**

The effect of the proposed removal of the Hollow Lane part of our parish would be felt socially and financially.

Several families in Little Hollows have become involved in village activities and clubs. This is important to the long term survival of our community life as there is a much high proportion of residents in the older age groups in the villages than in the new housing areas. Residents in these new areas report that they prefer being part of a parish which provides opportunities to elect representatives, (one of our parish councillors lives in Little Hollows); influence the development of the rural area around their homes; and get involved in the community life of the villages.

A consequence of reducing the current electorate of 396 to 226 is that the parish precept which is paid as part of the annual Council Tax would be borne by fewer householders. As the majority of the parish council budget is spent on the Clerk's salary and other fixed costs, the residents who remain in Chignal Parish would see a rise in their Council Tax bill.

The number of Parish Councillors would remain at 7, although there are only 6 currently and as mentioned above, one of these lives in Little Hollows.

The Parish Council has argued consistently for the Little Hollows residents to stay in the parish as it is clear that many of them are keen to be involved in our rural community and to support local activities and facilities, by committing time and expertise to stand as parish councillors, joining local committees and clubs, attending events and carrying out tasks such as litter picking and bulb planting.

The area of Chignal parish known as Copperfield Place has only just been completed so it is too early to know whether these new residents would wish to remain in the parish. The rest of this new development is in Broomfield Parish. One option could be to include all of the Copperfield Place area in Broomfield parish with the Little Hollows area remaining in Chignal parish. Another option would be to leave the parish boundaries as they are now and to make efforts to involve these new residents in the life of our parishes.

Parish Area: Mashbury (Parish Meeting)

The City Council recommends no changes to boundary or governance arrangements for Mashbury, but a targeted consultation of residents is to take place regarding whether residents feel local community governance would be more effective and efficient by being part of Chignal parish.

In 2015 Chignal Parish Council responded to a consultation on a series of options for the future community governance of Mashbury by welcoming a possible amalgamation, given the initial positive views that had been expressed by Mashbury residents towards joining with Chignal. There was widespread and pragmatic support from Chignal residents for amalgamating with Mashbury as it was generally acknowledged that there is already a great deal of contact, sharing of facilities and commonalities between the two communities.

Chignal Parish Council would be prepared to reconsider a fresh proposal to amalgamate with Mashbury, given the many similarities in population make-up and geography and potential opportunities for even greater community co-operation.

Recommendation

That the Parish Council informs the City Council that it does not agree with the proposed removal of the new housing areas bordering Hollow Lane from Chignal Parish for the reasons set out above and that it is prepared to consider amalgamating with Mashbury to improve governance arrangements for that community.

Parishioners in Little Hollows have made it clear they wish to stay in the Parish. The Residents of the Persimmon houses in the Parish are not fully occupied and we do not know their preference.

2021/354 Agree the Parish Council Meeting Dates for 2022 to 2023

Dates to be advertised on the Agendas, Minutes, Website and Noticeboard.

2nd Monday of the Month.

10th Jan, 14th March, 9th May, 11th July, 12th September and 14th November – Bi-Monthly Parish Meeting

Community Meeting to be Agreed.

Planning

2021/355 Planning Applications:

1. **21/01545/OUT. Land North of Warren House, Roxwell Road, Writtle.** Approval of Parish Council comments:

Chignal Parish Council advocated at the various stages of Masterplan preparation for the planting of a continuous wide landscape and ecological buffer of native trees and shrubs along the whole of the northern perimeter of the Warren Farm development site. This would serve to screen this urban development and associated light pollution from Mashbury Road and form part of a landscape corridor that would link to the extensive nature reserve being created on the restored Brittons Hall landfill site and to the upper Can valley to the north west of the site.

Most importantly, this tree belt would contribute to local climate change mitigation efforts, such as the Essex Forest Initiative, which is designed to lock up carbon, offsetting the carbon produced which is contributing to on-going climate change.

The approved Masterplan acknowledged that there would be views of the site from the north from the higher ground around Brickbarns Farm on Mashbury Road, Chignal St James and that a landscape buffer would be included as requested by the Parish Council.

The Council is therefore very disappointed and concerned to note that the illustrative drawings submitted with the planning application appear to be different to the landscaping proposed in the Masterplan. We feel strongly that the northern boundary tree buffer which the Council has proposed should be shown clearly on the plans accompanying this application. We should like to be able to comment on a detailed landscaping plan that includes this tree buffer before permission is granted for this development. This should clarify the number and type of trees and arrangements for their future management. The trees should also be established early in the project to give them time to provide a visual screen as houses are built on site.

Recommendation

That permission should be conditional on the inclusion of a substantial tree buffer along the northern perimeter of the site as described above in accordance with landscaping provisions agreed in the approved Masterplan. This should be of sufficient size to mitigate the impact of this urban intrusion on the rural landscape of Chignal St James or to provide a meaningful corridor for wildlife.

2. **21/05254/TPO. The Old School Mashbury Road Chignal St James Chelmsford.**
Description of works: T1 - Lime - Reduce canopy up to 6 metres. Reason: Due to its size of canopy lots of brittle branches and it is some considerable time since works have been carried out and in parts is quite dangerous.

2021/357 To approve Payments :

Essex pension fund	£144.40	PENSION
HMRC	£36.80	PAYE
CLERK SALARY	£153.26	Salary
Village Hall Hire	£200	Council Meeting Hall Hire
Cllr Towns - Keys	£10	Reserve

Total £544.46

Resolution **The Payments were approved**

2021/358 Review of the Bi-monthly bank reconciliation

Resolution **The Bank reconciliation was approved with Zero Variance**

2021/359 Confirmation of the closure of the external audit 2020 to 2021
The audit was passed with no concerns. The high level of reserves was noted.

2021/360 Update on getting the Parish Councillors online banking with Barclays Bank
The Councillors have been issued with membership numbers and cards. Most of waiting on the card readers.

2021/361 Agree and Confirm the Parish Council budget 2022-23
A budget of £8000 was discussed. This is an increase of £400 per annum.

Resolution **The Budget was approved**

2021/362 Discuss and approve the Parish Council precept 2022-23 to be placed on Chelmsford City Council

A precept of £8001 will be placed on the City Council (must be divisible by 9). This is an increase of 5%. However with the increase in the Council tax base the Average Band D increase is 0%

Resolution **The Precept was approved**

Reports and Updates

2021/363 Report on the outcomes of the Community Meeting on climate change and ecological emergency (report attached).

19 people attended the Community Meeting from Chignal St James (8); Chignal Smealey (8); Little Hollows (2); Newlands Spring (1). Presentations were given by parish councillors on:

- Climate change key facts and how they link to our daily lives;
- Community renewable heating initiatives;
- Individual actions that could make a difference;
- Gardens, gardeners and the community orchard;
- Parish-wide climate change mitigation projects.

A range of suggestions were generated by the break-out groups on community-wide and individual actions that could contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change

1. Increasing bio-diversity and carbon capture

Tree planting: greatly appreciated that the parish has supported tree planting and happy with the way the council have looked after and watered the trees. Suggestion to plant some trees close to the gazebo on the playing field to act as shade in the summer.

Road verges: would like to see them left longer with wild flowers and not trimmed as often. Note: the Parish Council reached an agreement with the City Council and Essex Highways about 4 years ago to have a half cut of the verges in the spring to give the less vigorous wild plants a chance to flower in line with Plantlife's recommendations and road safety requirements.

Proposal to survey wild plants and wildlife in St Nicholas churchyard: funding would be available through the St Nicholas Bat Conservation project to carry out the survey and to produce an information board in the churchyard.

Community orchard: encourage more volunteers to help with the practical tasks of managing the orchard and wildflower meadow in a low carbon way. E.g., canvassing interest in a training session on using and maintaining an Austrian scythe to carry out the annual meadow cut.

Wildflower meadows: advice requested on how to establish and manage a wildflower meadow. Orchard Committee and Gardening Club could consider:

- Organising practical demonstrations on ground preparation and seed sowing in the autumn in individual gardens and on the annual meadow cut and removing the hay in the community orchard.
- Producing a guide on establishing and managing a wildflower meadow in printed form and on the Chignal website.

Soil protection: advice requested on the benefits and practicalities of sowing and managing green manures. Gardening Club could consider:

- Sharing experience of sourcing green manure seeds, e.g., www.sowseeds.co.uk
- Visiting members' gardens to see green manure plants growing.

Home grown food: share surplus with residents who may not be able to grow food themselves, such as elderly pensioners.

- Gardening Club could consider working with the Friends of the Chignals and Mashbury Group to distribute surplus vegetables and fruit plus produce could be collected at the monthly Coffee Mornings.
- Save seeds and distribute to residents.

Traditional ways of farming and gardening: research needed in the parish to learn how food was grown without chemicals and modern machinery. Many of the older properties were connected to farming and have an interesting history. Old field names are cultural indicators, such as "Empty Purse" behind St Mary's Cottage which records a time when surplus crops produced on this fertile ground were distributed to poorer residents.

2. Options for home heating and insulation (see attached Powerpoint presentation)

Group heat/ground pumps and solar panels: consensus to do a feasibility study (Phase 1) for parish wide application and also consider heating schemes in clusters rather than individually to benefit from economies of scale etc. Consult residents and invite interest in Chignal News.

Insulation of attics/walls: should also be considered to help with the effectiveness and efficiency of all the above projects.

3. Transport

Cycling and walking: consider ways of making cyclists and walkers feel safer on the parish roads and on routes into Chelmsford.

Cycle paths: check progress on the cycle path proposed on the west side of Chignal Road from Trent Road to Roxwell Road. Note: maps showing current cycle routes around Chelmsford can be printed from:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/files/chelmsford%20cycle%20map.pdf>

Traffic calming: continue with efforts to implement measures such as a new 30mph limit on Chignal Road and village entry gates

Electric Car Charging: advice on costs, community schemes etc

4. Keeping it Local

Promote local traders: decorators, electricians, gardeners, plumbers, general jobs – Chignal website, community page and Chignal news

Encourage locals with “skills” to volunteer to help: skills audit and register, similar to Friends of Chignals & Mashbury

Ensure succession of community volunteers: consider ways of engaging the interest of young people and their parents in community projects.

5. Reusing/Recycling

Repair Shop: community sessions to repair rather than throw away – advertise repair skills - – website, community page and Chignal news

Jumble sales: recycling clothes and goods – Modern twist - consider setting up a parish marketplace where goods could be advertised for swap, purchase or “free” to a good home. Note: there is a Chelmsford Freecycle group, www.freecycle.org

Borrowing: community scheme to loan equipment – website, community page and Chignal news
Borrow tools/ equipment through the library: <https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/news/essex-library-of-things/>

6. IT Technology

Recycle equipment: communicate where to recycle phones, laptops, printers, cables etc

Re-furbished equipment: encourage rather than purchase new

Community IT: workshop at Coffee Mornings

Recommendations

Residents to be consulted through Chignal News and email on these suggested actions and invited to comment and rank in order of priority those potential projects which might require funding from the Parish Council.

2021/364 Consultation on proposed Community Projects: residents’ questionnaire included in Chignal News

Project name	Project Description	Expected outcomes	Estimated cost, (if known)
Tree planting	Up to 5 small fruit bearing trees south of the Playing Field Gazebo. E.g., rowan, crab apple, spindle.	Additional shelter for playing field users. Food and habitat for wildlife. Carbon capture. Landscape enhancement.	£750 (purchase, planting, mulching protection and irrigation)
Community orchard: low	Training for volunteers to use Austrian scythes to cut	Reduction in carbon emissions. Less noise and air pollution. Health benefits from fresh air,	TBC

carbon management	meadow areas rather than hiring a power scythe.	exercise and social interaction. Acquiring new skills.	
Community low carbon heating	Group heat/ground pumps and solar panels: do a feasibility study (Phase 1) for parish wide application and also consider heating schemes in clusters rather than individually to benefit from economies of scale etc. Home insulation is an important component of this project.	Reduction in carbon emissions. Increase knowledge of alternatives to oil and LPG. Economic and social benefits from joining a community approach to changing to low carbon heating.	TBC. Grants would be sought to implement this project. Match funding or pump priming money might be required from Parish Council funds.
Traffic calming and improved road safety for cyclists, walkers	Installation of Village Entry Gates on Chignal Road either end of the proposed 30mph area through Chignal Smealey. Application made in 2018 to the Local Highways Panel. Estimated cost of both gates to comply with Essex Highways regulations and conditions is £10,500. The LHP budget is overstretched but Parish Council could offer to pay 50% to secure earlier installation of the gates.	Entry gates and a message to drive carefully signal to drivers that they are entering a settlement that is cared for. Evidence that they are effective in slowing traffic and alerting drivers to expect pedestrians, parked vehicles and residents entering and exiting their properties.	£5,250 (50% of estimated costs)

2021/365 Ideas for celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, June 2022

Invite the Community Group to suggest some ideas for events and activities. For example, a Community Party/Picnic and dedicating a new "Queen" apple tree in the orchard. Saturday 4th June 2022.

2021/366 Representatives' Reports: to discuss and debate any items.

- A) Little Hollows / Copperfield Liaison - Cllr Elwick
Persimmon development (in Chignal Parish) is 90% complete.
The Broomfield site will continue into 2023
Landscaping has continued and some planting has been maintained.
- B) Playing Field - Cllrs Elwick, Towns and Nelson
Trees along the southern perimeter were cut back.
The Parking Bollard is in place.
No update on the information board.
Consider a memorial plaque for the gazebo.
- C) Village Hall Liaison - Cllr Towns
Bookings back on track.
Looking for some grants to improve several spaces around the Village Hall.
- D) Community Engagement - Cllrs Nelson and Stainton
Meet in the next few weeks to review status.
Facebook page to be discussed with Council on process and governance.
Parish News print cost increase of 9% - Requires a tender.
- E) Community Safety – Cllr Lewis

Awaiting a response from Chelmsford City Council to discuss the legal position
Laws on the trail cameras on the sites with a CCTV Sign. Contact Nicolette
Chambers to champion.
Spare set of Defibrillator pads - £78
Unit is now on the national register.

- F) Highways (include Hedges) - Cllr Ballard, Towns and Elwick
- a) Feedback on the Essex Highways webinar for Parish Councils. 73 Parish Council attended. Highways reduced the time from 3 hours to 2 hours, limiting time for questions.
 - b) Update on traffic calming measures on Chignal Road
 - c) Closure of Hollow Lane
 - d) Meeting of Chelmsford North West Parishes with ECC Highways Cabinet Member – Friday 19th November.
- G) Footpaths/Bridleways – Cllr Nelson and Cllr Towns
Footpath still obstructed at the rear of Brittons farm
- H) Tree Warden – Cllr Ballard
- a. Update on Chignal Road/Hollow Lane tree planting scheme.
City Council’s Arboricultural team should start the planting before Christmas.
No news on the Green Grant application: to be escalated.
 - b. Webinars organised by ECC on the Essex Forest Initiative and the Tree Council on the importance of Hedgerows.
- I) Countryside conservation and climate change (Inc Friends of the Nature park)
Cllr Ballard, Lewis, Nelson, and Stainton
30 people now on the membership list of the friends of the Nature park.

2021/367 Items for the next Agenda

- Community Engagement paper – Cllrs
- Questionnaire on the community projects: feedback
- Tender on the printing of the Parish news
- Update on the Chelmsford Governance Review

Next Bi-Monthly Meeting Monday 10th January 2022

Meeting Closed 21:38

W.Adshead-Grant

Clerk to the Council

Next Meeting

Monday 10 th	January 2022
Monday 14 th	March 2022
Monday 9 th	May 2022
Monday 11 th	July 2022
Monday 12 th	September 2022
Monday 14 th	November 2022