

No. 185
January
2017



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHIGNALS WITH MASHBURY

Chignal News

Christmas Wreaths, Swags & Garlands

Our Christmas started early this year with a fabulous day making Christmas decorations to adorn our door, table or mantlepiece. This year it was held in the Chignal Chapel and we were made very welcome by Irene Hindmarsh.

Diana Barnes held a one-day workshop demonstrating the making of Christmas wreaths, swags and garlands. The day started with a cup of tea prepared by Sandra while Diana demonstrated three different designs. After Diana's demonstration we had a sandwich lunch which Norman collected from Sainsburys. We then went into the Chapel to start creating our own decorations while listening to Christmas carols.

It was an excellent day. We had a lot of fun and everyone went home with beautiful decorations. This is the fifth time Diana has been to the Chignals and the people who attended the workshop would like her to return again next year. A date has not yet been arranged but I am sure I will be arranging another Workshop in 2017.

I would like to say a big thank you to Irene and Malcolm Hindmarsh for allowing us to use the Chapel and for being so obliging while we set up for the Workshop and cleared away at the end of the day. A big thank you goes to Sandra also for generously giving her time to us. She served endless cups of tea, set out the buffet lunch and generally helped the day run smoothly. As always she did this in her usual efficient way and with a big smile.

Looking forward to the next Workshop.

Joan Smith



Bowls Club

Unfortunately, the Club report for November appears to be floating around in a 'computer cloud' somewhere as it never arrived on the Editor's desk. Therefore, this starts with the November report and concludes with our latest news.

October saw the Bowls Club members launching enthusiastically into the Competition and League Season.

Our opponents in the first round of the West Area Cup were Boreham. We played the match at High Easter and were successful in winning. We await to see who our opponents will be in the second round.

Three League games have been played so far against RHP, High Easter and Stock. Some games were more successful than others but we are beginning to build up points in the League Table. Four more League games are due to be played by the end of the year. The evenings always end with friendly chatter over tea and biscuits.

We have just started playing our internal club Pairs and Singles competitions with the aim of presenting the winners with Trophies at our AGM next year.

On Saturday 22nd October we held the Mike Bell Trophy competition. This year eight pairs entered. There were good games of bowls, with some close scores. In the evening we all enjoyed a meal at The Duck, Newney Green, after which the prizes were presented by Margaret Bell. This year's runners-up were Audrey Smith and Janet Campen and the winners were Martyn and Yvonne Towns. Well done, everyone!

The Club are looking forward to the next social event which is in December. This is the Christmas Knock-out Bowls Competition, followed by Fish and Chips (food features highly in the life of the club!) and the giant Christmas Raffle.

The club entered teams in the Essex Pairs and Triples competitions. Everyone enjoyed their days at Braintree but unfortunately no team progressed past the round robin stage.

We have now played all our away League games. Results have been varied but we have added more points to our total. Hopefully, our home games will produce even more points!

We now know that our opponents in the second round of the West Area Cup are White Notley and the game will be played in January.

The Christmas Knock-out Bowls Competition has now taken place and this year was won by Sandra Francis and Emma Morton – well done! Supper followed – no Fish and Chips this year but jacket potatoes, various toppings, salads and delicious desserts. The giant Christmas Raffle followed and then carols were sung. A very good evening, enjoyed by all.

We look forward to another year of bowling in 2017.

We are still meeting on Thursdays from 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm at High Easter Village Hall and would love to see new members joining us. For more details please contact Gordon on 02145 231406.

Women's Institute

A very well behaved puppy attended our meeting in November with his handler Vivien Baker, who gave us a very interesting insight into the training of a puppy before it is handed back, to eventually become a 'Guide Dog for the Blind'.

Our very successful Christmas meeting included a Craft Stall, Charity Display, Bring and Buy Stall as well of course a table of delicious Christmas refreshments. We were delighted to welcome visitors, especially our entertainment, the Writtle Hand Bell Ringers who rung some favourite tunes, inviting members to 'join in'. A session of 'Have a Go' saw some members ringing the hand bells with, I think, a recognisable tune!

Irene and Malcolm were thanked for their hospitality at the United Reformed Church, where we have been made very welcome.

Our meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month, and on January 5th 2017 we welcome Debbie Skeete who will give us a talk on Beautiful Barbados, the competition will be 'A Sea Shell'.

In February our Speaker will be Linda Blunt, who will talk about Nepal: Plants, People and running a Charity.

Visitors are always welcome, our meetings are at 2.00 pm for 2.30 pm in the United Reform Church.

Janet Campen

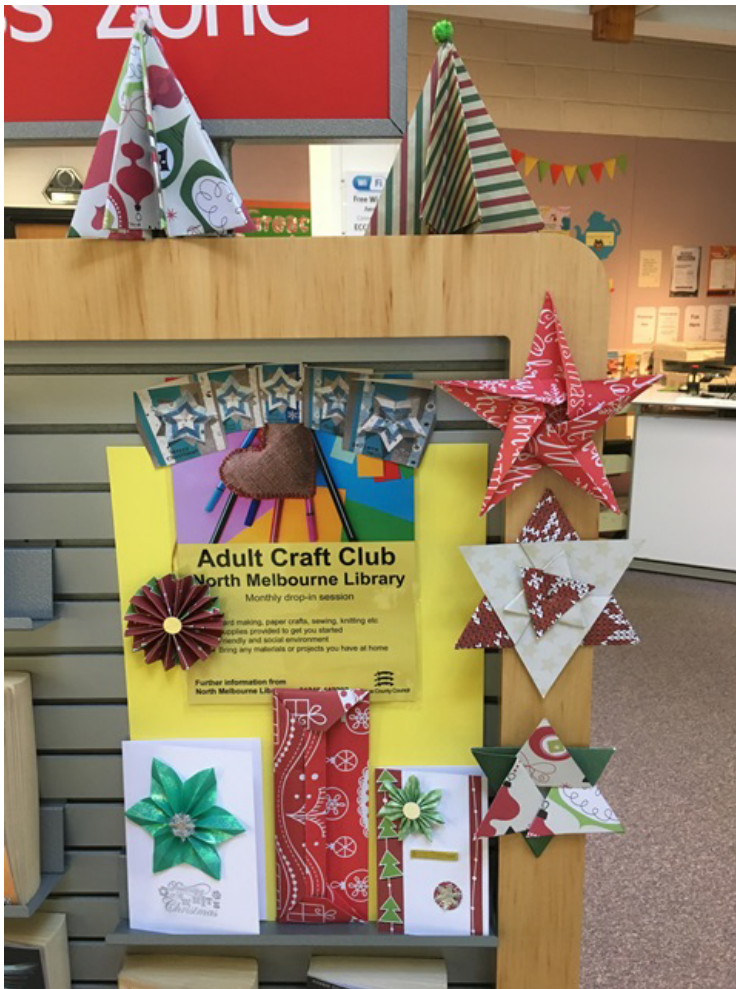
Welcome to the Chignals with Mashbury Friends Group

We are a small group of friends who are pleased to be able to help residents (whether new to the neighbourhood or not), in a variety of different ways. Over the years we have proved that a friendly face can do much to help a person whatever their needs may be. This may be introducing them to village activities, clubs, like minded people etc, or something more practical e.g. companionship, someone to talk to, light shopping etc.

We realise that you may already have a kindly relative or friend helping you in some way, however if you feel that we might be of assistance, please do not hesitate (leaving a message if needed) by phoning one of the following people:-

Helen	on 01245 440241
Barbara	on 01245 440528
Joan	on 01245 440339
Gill	on 01245 442474
Lynn	on 01245 440880
Sandra	on 01245 445245
Sarah	on 01245 443497

North Melbourne Library



Craft Club (Monthly)

Fun and games were had by all at our new monthly craft event. Staff member Jo demonstrated an origami Christmas tree and star made out of Christmas themed card and there were lots of supplies to make Christmas cards. All seven members had so much fun they are keen to return next month and bring in their own chosen crafts and to share skills with each other.

Next session Tuesday 24th January at 10.30-11.30



Community Tea Time (First Saturday of the month)

Nine ladies and one gentleman expressed their gratitude for our festive community tea time. A representative from Age UK set up a table displaying leaflets and was engaging in conversation with most of the group. There was a real buzz of conversation and the Christmas cake and mince pies, kindly donated by Morrisons, disappeared rapidly washed down by tea or coffee!

Community Jigsaw Puzzle Lending Library

Welcome to:

“The Chignals with Mashbury Community Jigsaw Puzzle Lending Library”

Over 150 puzzles for loan of various subjects, sizes and levels of difficulty etc.

If you are looking for something to occupy your time and like doing jigsaw puzzles, then why not telephone to ask for a selection of puzzles to be brought to your place of residence, so that you may choose any that you may like to try. The puzzles may be borrowed for 4 weeks, after which a request to have the puzzle(s) collected using the phone number below must then be made. You may re-new your puzzle(s) if you need more time to complete them. There will be no charge for this.

If you are interested, please telephone 01245 440528 to request a visit. If we are unable to answer your call, please leave your name and telephone number and you will be called back as soon as possible. Thank you.

Church of England Services in January/February

Sunday 15 January	9.30am	Communion	Ford End
	11.00am	Communion	Great Waltham
	11.00am	Communion	The Chignals with Mashbury
Sunday 22 January	9.30 am	Family Service	Ford End
	11.00am	Communion	Great Waltham
	5pm	Evening Space	Great Waltham
Sunday 29 January	10.30	Joint Communion	Little Waltham
Sunday 5 February	9.30am	Communion	Ford End
	11.00am	Communion	Great Waltham
Sunday 12 February	8am	Traditional communion	Great Waltham
	9.30am	Communion	Ford End
	11.00am	Family Service	Great Waltham
Saturday 19 February	9.30am	Communion	Ford End
	11.00am	Communion	Great Waltham
	11.00am	Communion	The Chignals with Mashbury
Sunday 26 February	9.30 am	Family Service	Ford End
	11.00am	Communion	Great Waltham
	5pm	Evening Space	Great Waltham

Contact: Alison Bates Parish Administrator
Tel: 07957 228467
admin@littleandgreat.org.uk



Chignal Parish Council Meeting 14th November 16

Present:

Cllr Chris Anstey Cllr Steve Middleditch
Cllr Lynn Ballard (Chair) Cllr Linda Nelson (Vice
Chair), Cllr Martyn Towns

In Attendance:

Cllr John Aldridge Essex County Council
Mrs. Janet Mills (Parish Clerk) and 4 Parishioners

1. Apologies For Absence

Cllr Malcolm Feltwell, Cllr Nicolette Chambers,
Chelmsford City Council

2. Register Of Declarations Of Interests

None

3. To Approve The Minutes Of the Monday 12 September 2016

The minutes were approved and signed by the
Chairman as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising From The Minutes

(a) Chelmsford Local Plan

The City Council proposed to drop all of the 3
Spatial Options proposed in the Issues and
Options Document. Cllr Anstey and Cllr Ballard
attended a workshop on 22 September expecting
to receive information on the next stage of the
Local Plan process and the evidence base that
would be used to generate a Preferred Spatial
Option. Surprisingly no new information about
this was given at the meeting. Instead the
meeting was advised that consultation on the
Preferred Options would be undertaken in
January 2017. Parishes in North West
Chelmsford offered to provide local knowledge to
inform the evidence base for the next stage of the
Local Plan such the traffic modelling, green
wedge and landscape studies. Cllr Blake from
Broomfield Parish Council had reiterated this
offer of assistance on behalf of the neighbouring
parishes. This has not been taken up by CCC
and it appears that the new evidence base will
not be published before the Preferred Spatial
Options consultation in January.

(b) Traffic Survey Chignal Smealey.

Residents had raised concerns that Chignal
Road was actually closed for part of the week in

which a traffic survey was undertaken in Chignal
Smealey. This was regrettable but the survey
was considered to be a representative snap shot
of the traffic using the road on a daily basis. The
survey revealed that approximately 1,000
vehicles, mostly cars pass through the village on
a daily basis. There were also some delivery
lorries and only a few Heavy Goods Vehicles. All
but one or two vehicles had been travelling at 37
Miles per hour, which was within the permitted
speed limit. On this basis there did not appear to
be enough evidence to justify reducing the
current 40 mile an hour speed limit. It was
suggested that the creation of green swathe
paths might provide a safer environment for
walkers.

(c) Damaged Manhole Covers

With a note of thanks to Cllr Aldridge for his
assistance, the meeting was advised that the
damaged manhole cover at Howletts Corner had
now been repaired. The PC would write to
Highways to ask that they monitor their
contractors when cutting the verges in order that
repeated damage did not occur in future. With
regard to the outstanding work to repair the
damaged manhole cover by Stevens Farm,
Highways had agreed to undertake the work and
look at piping the nearby ditch when resources
became available.

(d) Gardening Express

The new hard standing had now been laid: this
allowed for staff cars to be parked off the road
and large lorries to load, unload and turn on site.
It was noted that this had resulted in a major
improvement to the problems of the verges being
damaged and very large lorries turning in the
village.

(e) Bridleway 33

The Clerk would contact the Highways depart-
ment to ascertain whether a road sign stating "No
Through Road" could be erected in the first
instance.

(f) BT Representative

Cllr Nelson was having difficulty in finding a
representative to attend a PC Meeting. It was
noted the damaged telephone pole at Beadles
Corner had now been replaced.

Chignal Parish Council continued

5. Public Question Time

- a) In answer to a question, the meeting was advised that there was no further news regarding the erection of a new packing shed or intended building works at the Pieces Cottage site.

6. Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave the following report:

- a) A great deal of litter had appeared between the Church and Langleys. It was noted that a car was seen to regularly park and dump litter and debris in the vicinity. Residents of the new Little Hollows Countryside Homes development had raised concerns that there was no public footpath between the new development site and the school and shops in Copperfield Road. The problem was that the footpath would cross the proposed Persimmons Homes development site which was yet to be developed. Meanwhile, residents of Little Hollows had a considerable walk around the perimeter of the estate to gain access to Copperfield Road. Chignal Parish Council raised this concern at the outline and full planning application planning stage. It was noted that planning conditions were applied to the Persimmons development to ensure a public footpath was provided to link both estates to Copperfield Road. Cllr Ballard would contact the planning department to ascertain how many of the proposed 198 houses on the site adjacent Little Hollows development fell within the Chignal Parish.

7. County and City Councillors' Reports

Cllr Aldridge joined the meeting and gave the following report.

a) Flooding Outside Stevens Farm.

Cllr Aldridge confirmed that ditches at this location were now being cleared and the Highways Department would be investigating a nearby blocked pipe.

b) Street Lighting –

In order to reduce electricity costs and improve the night time environment, a number of pilot projects were being undertaken to install LED lamps. The new LED technology produced more light and was much more cost effective, consequentially the number of light columns required could then be reduced. This may then lead to further savings on the lights which are currently left on all night.

c) Winter Salts –

It was confirmed that in previous years the main roads would be salted as and when required during the winter season.

d) Broadband –

The project had gained momentum and Phase 3 was now underway. With regard to the 17 houses within Chignal that did not seem to appear on the roll- out plans, Cllr Aldridge advised that the home owners should make direct representations to the ECC.

e) Chelmsford Railway Station -

Cllr Aldridge was pleased to announce that the work to modernise the Chelmsford Railway Station was now complete.

8. Parish Plan Committee

The Chairman updated the meeting as follows: copies of the Parish Plan had been distributed to residents and to the sales office at the Little Hollows development site. Spare copies were available if needed. The A5 size, twenty four page Welcome Pack was in the final stages of being developed: the latest version would be circulated shortly for final approval. The cost of printing and producing the document was £111.00 for 100 copies; £220.00 for 200 copies; and, £57.00 for 50 copies. Cllr Ballard raised and Cllr Nelson seconded a motion that the costs of production of the Welcome Pack be funded from the existing Parish Plan Committee delegated budget and from the Community Infrastructure Levy monies. With no objection the motion was carried.

Chignal Parish Council continued

9. Budget Committee

With one minor spelling mistake, the minutes from the committee meetings held on 12 September and 26 October 2016 were approved. The meeting received the following report: Cllr Ballard advised that the meeting held 26th October was held primarily to look at the budgets and to set the Precept for next year. The committee also reviewed progress against the Parish Plan Action Plan. Members considered each budget heading and made adjustments where necessary based on spend to date and projected expenditure in the new financial year. It appeared that funds may not be sufficient to cover the general running costs and obligations of the Parish Council for 2017-2018. Members took also into account the following aspects:

- a) A substantial increase in the number of households in the Parish as a result of the new Little Hollows development which would entail additional expenditure on services provided by the Parish Council;
- b) The spreading of any increase in the Precept amongst a larger number of Council Tax paying residents in the Parish;
- c) The additional responsibilities covered by the Clerk in servicing new committees and implementing requirements of the Transparency Code;
- d) The possibility of having to find additional funds for specialist advice and printed material to assist the Parish Council to achieve local residents' aims in relation to the next public consultation on the Chelmsford City Council Local Plan.
- e) The expected rise in inflation due to recent currency devaluations.
- f) The Precept was not increased last year. After much deliberation Members had agreed to make the following recommendation to the full Parish Council meeting on 14th November:

Recommendation: that the budget (attached to these minutes) is approved and the Precept be increased by £250.00 for the coming year. Members agreed that an application for a

Precept of £5,950.00 for the year 2017-2018 be made.

Cllr Nelson raised and Cllr Anstey seconded a motion that the recommendation be approved. Cllr Towns considered that the Precept should not be increased as the Parish Council had enough funds for the next year and raised an objection. **With this one objection the motion was carried.**

With regard to reviewing progress against the Parish Plan Action Plan the following was noted:

- a) The Welcome Pack was in its final stages of production
- b) Road Safety - a traffic survey had been undertaken on Chignal Road.
- c) For those without access to their own vehicle, "Dial a Ride" and the "Friends of the Chignals and Mashbury" would be promoted in the next Newsletter.
- d) A Broadband Champion had been appointed.
- e) To assist with overcoming social isolation, the Coffee Mornings would be promoted in the next Newsletter.

The committee discussed and agreed to make a recommendation that an Independent Community Parish Plan Group made up of residents be approved. A community meeting would be arranged in the new Village Hall in January or February to take this forward.

Recommendation: that an Independent Community Parish Plan Group be established. Cllr Ballard raised and Cllr Middleditch seconded a motion that the recommendation be approved. **With no objection the motion was carried.**

10. Jubilee Orchard Sub-Committee

The minutes from the Committee meeting held on 7th October 2016 were received and noted. Cllr Ballard advised the meeting that the Fruit Celebration Event held on 16th October had been very successful and well attended.

Chignal Parish Council continued

With regard to future events, it had been decided that there would be no Wassailing event in January 2017. Instead, a Spring Blossom event in May involving traditional Maypole Dancing was being considered. Under the lease agreement, the City Council may impose a rental charge for the Orchard site in 2018. The Orchard Committee would need to consider how it will generate future income to meet the yearly expense. Concerns had been raised regarding access to the Orchard for those negotiating the blind bend at Howletts Corner. There had been several traffic incidents there in the past year. It had been reported that an area that had been used as a pull-off on the bend had been fenced off by an adjacent property. Highways would be asked to confirm the ownership of this land.

11. Planning Applications

The following decisions where noted:

14/00976/MAT/1 to MAT/9 Western Parcel Land, North of Copperfield Road, Chelmsford - Material amendment to permission reference 14/00976/FUL (Residential development of 60 dwellings together with associated and ancillary development including access, roadworks to Hollow Lane, servicing, amenity space and landscaping.) **MAT MAT 4 Pending Consideration**

16/01093/OUT: Land South West of 213 Chignal Road, Chelmsford. Outline planning application for residential development comprising three dwellings. **Pending consideration**

New Applications- To meet the planning timetable the following applications were considered and the following comments made:

Application Number 16/01679/FUL: The Willows, Mashbury Road, Chignal St James, CM1 4TX. Proposed swimming pool in private rear garden of existing dwelling. **No Objections**

Application Number 16/01760/FUL: The Orangery, The Green, Chignal St James, CM1

4TY. Proposed conversion of garage to habitable accommodation. **No Objections**

12. Representatives' Reports – To note

a) Playing Field – The hedges needed cutting. Contractors would be asked to supply Quotes. The pole style barrier to the playing field now seemed to be out of keeping against the New Village Hall. Members suggested that a new wooden gate may be more visually pleasing: this should be considered if funding could be found.

b) Village Hall Liaison- The roof had now been tiled and glazing had been completed. Recent problems had now been resolved; work continues to meet the end of year completion date.

c) Newsletter Including Website – The November edition had been slightly delayed and would be printed on 14th November and distributed shortly.

d) Gravel Liaison - It was noted that the conifers in Chignal Hall Lane had now been removed .

e) Community Safety- It was noted that there was a proposal that Chelmsford Police Headquarters, currently sited in Springfield, Chelmsford may be moved to the Essex Fire and Rescue Headquarters in Kelvedon.

f) Highways- No further report at this time.

g) Footpaths/Bridleways – A note of thanks was given to Highways for the excellent work undertaken to cut back the hedges and resurfacing the bridleways at Beadles Hall and Maple View to Dyers Hall. It was noted that the Footpath sign between Holly Spring and Ivy Cottages in Chignal St James was damaged. Cllr Nelson would look into the matter.

James was damaged. Cllr Nelson would look into the matter.

h) Telephone Box –No further report at this time.

i) Tree Warden – The Clerk would write to the land owner regarding concerns about the safety of the diseased/damaged branch of the Hybrid Black Poplar overhanging the highway on the bend between Brickbarns and Pieces Cottage.

Chignal Parish Council continued

13. Finance - The following was noted and approved

a) Balances in the accounts, as at 30 September 2016 were: Current Account £22,483.26 Savings Account £3,240.53. The Clerk reminded the meeting that not all of these funds were available or related to yearly running of the Council, thus had no bearing on the Precept amount. At present £13,300 had been awarded from the Community Infrastructure Levy to be used to implement the Parish Plan; £947 was related to the running of the Orchard and £340.00 was related to IT funding from the EALC.

b) Cheques issued since last meeting
None

14. Correspondence for Information

The Clerk circulated local government new letters and bulletins.

15. Late Urgent Business for Information

There being no late and urgent business the meeting closed at 9.35pm

16. Date of Next Meeting: Monday 9th January 2017, 7.30pm in the United Reformed Church, Mashbury Road, Chignal Smealey CM1 4TE.

The Passion of Christ (April 2017) Auditions

The auditions for the Passion Plays will be held
in St Mary and St Lawrence Church, Great Waltham
on **Saturday 21st January at 10.30am,**
and **Sunday 22nd January at 2.30pm.**

All will be welcome, from any church or none!

For more information, to register an interest, or if you
can't make either of these dates, contact

Michael – mtproctor@lineone.net (01245 360483)

Or Keith – thederrys@yahoo.co.uk (01245 361701)

We are also looking for people to be involved in costumes, backstage and scenery, and will have some sponsorship opportunities if you would like to help fund this wonderful initiative.

The Chignal Tree Warden Report

During the various consultation events that we held last year for the new Parish Plan, several people asked for more information about Tree Wardens – who are they and what do they do In The Chignals?

The Tree Warden Scheme is a national initiative to enable people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woods. The scheme was founded and is co-ordinated by The Tree Council www.treecouncil.org.uk

Tree Wardens are volunteers, appointed by parish councils or other community organisations, who gather information about their local trees, get involved in local tree matters and encourage local practical projects related to the trees and woods. Chelmsford City Council's Tree Officer supports a network of Tree Wardens from the rural parishes and the urban areas, provides guidance on policies such as Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) and organises free training sessions on topics such as tree recognition, tree pests and diseases and plant propagation.

I was delighted to be appointed by the Parish Council as the Chignal Tree Warden five years ago, particularly given my passion for horticulture, the countryside and walking. Tree Wardens keep an eye on what is happening to the trees and hedgerows in their patch, paying particular attention to the protection of trees that contribute significantly to our local landscape and checking for potential safety problems such as decayed limbs, pests and diseases or trees that have been damaged by extreme weather.

Planting new trees and hedgerow shrubs is another job that Tree Wardens get involved in, along with fellow community volunteers. I'm sure most of you will have visited the Jubilee Community Orchard near the village hall which has 70 young fruit trees plus new hedgerow shrubs planted around the perimeter. On The Green in Chignal St James, an oak tree was planted to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and is thriving.

This May during the Tree Council's 'Walk in the Woods' festival I'd like to organise a guided tree walk around Chignal using our marvellous network of footpaths and bridleways. Apart from the joy of walking in our lovely countryside in the company of friends and neighbours, we'll aim to help you to recognise some of our native trees and to explain some of the ways that trees and hedgerows are managed to increase their value for wildlife, for timber production such as cricket bats, fire wood and stakes and to improve road safety.

The date and more details of the guided tree walk will appear in the March edition of Chignal News but if you have any questions about the work of Tree Wardens or would like to report any concerns about trees in Chignal, please give me a call: Lynn Ballard 01245 440880.

From the County Council

A Break from Drinking in the New Year?



As the festive season came to a close Essex County Council urged people to get their 2017 off to a positive and healthy start by signing up for “Dry January”. “Dry January” is a national initiative run by charity Alcohol Concern, which encourages people to sign up to go alcohol free for 31 days. The plea comes following a survey, conducted by Alcohol Concern, which shows 1 in 4 adults have been drunk in front of a child at Christmas! “Dry January” is a great initiative to help you get your 2017 off to a healthier start, so if you would like to know more visit www.dryjanuary.org.uk. If you are reading this too late in January, why not take up the Challenge in February.

Should you have concerns about this issue, the County Council has also designed an online tool which can tell you if your drinking is risky. An innovative alcohol screening, advice, intervention and referral website is available if you visit <https://dontbottleitup.org.uk/> For tips to help you cut down on your alcohol intake visit: <https://dontbottleitup.org.uk/worried-about-alcohol/tips-for-cutting-down>

Armed Forces Heritage

Almost 400 years of military history were celebrated at a combined reception, held at County Hall in December. It was attended by officers, men and women from 16 Air Assault Brigade which has some 3,000 soldiers based at Colchester’s Merville Barracks. They were marking 75 years since the first British airborne brigade was established – a role they now fill as the British Army’s rapid response force.

33 and 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiments, stationed at Carver Barracks in Wimbish, also attended to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Corps of Royal Engineers. The two units specialise in supporting the British Army by finding and clearing explosive devices – with both recently serving tours in Afghanistan.

The event recognised the pride that the people of Essex have in our servicemen and servicewomen and celebrated the flourishing and mutually-supportive relationship that exists between the Armed Forces and the community of Essex, in which they are based.

Essex Energy Switch

This year’s Essex Energy Switch opened on 6th December 2016 and will be running until 14th February 2017, giving residents an easy and hassle free option to find a better deal on their energy costs. This is a County-wide collective aiming to help residents and small businesses save money on their energy bills. After the successful switches of previous years, residents in Essex have saved over £2million through this Scheme.

If you wish to find out more and sign up online you can do so at essex.gov.uk/energyswitch

If you have any problems about **County Council** matters please let me know on **01245 421524** email cllr.john.aldridge@essex.gov.uk and see my blog <http://dnn.essex.gov.uk/chairmanblog/Home.aspx>

John Aldridge CC Jan - Feb 2017

Gardening Club

Even though it may be raw outside, it's worth wrapping up warmly to do a daily walk around your garden to see what's growing. The startling pure white of Christmas Roses and creamy yellow scented blooms of Mahonia are a delight this year in my garden and the fresh spiky leaves of snowdrops, crocus and miniature iris are already pushing up through the fallen leaves.

Back in November we were treated to another entertaining talk by Zsuzsa Serer from Herbal Haven. This time she brought along some of her extensive collection of tropical plants for us to smell and even taste. Some were familiar such as orchids and aloes, others we use in cooking but have never seen growing such as cardamom, turmeric, coffee and tea.

On **Monday 16th January from 10.30 – 12.30** we are planning an outdoor practical fruit tree pruning demonstration in the gardens of two of our members in Mashbury Road, Chignal St James. Darren Lerigo from Modern Mint who spoke to us in September about gardening tools will show us how to prune apple and pear trees. If you'd like to have a go yourself, please bring along secateurs, loppers or pruning saws – clean, sharpened and disinfected. Gill and Pete from the 'The Three Elms' have kindly agreed to let us park in their car park and they will provide hot soup for us at the end of the session. Cost for the morning is £3.00, including soup. If you'd like to come along, please email Lynn: gardening.chignalsmashbury@gmail.com

On Wednesday **15th February** 2017 Ian Tinton from Woodview Garden Maintenance will tell us all about "Soil improvement using wool compost and bracken". This meeting will start at 7.30pm at the United Reformed Church, Mashbury Road, Chignal Smealey, Chelmsford CM1 4TE. Cost: £3.00 includes refreshments.

On Wednesday **14th March** we are pleased to welcome Richard Ayres who will speak about "Anglesey Abbey Gardens": the stunning winter garden is well worth a visit at the moment. We hope that the new village hall will be ready in time for this meeting.

We are a very informal club and give a warm welcome to newcomers. All of our meetings are open to guests and non-members and as a special incentive, we can offer you one free "taster" session so you can see whether you'd like to come along more regularly and join the club (a bargain at only £2.00 a year).

Community Coffee Mornings

There are two monthly coffee mornings held in the Chignals on the first and third Wednesday of each month. At the moment, they are both held at the Chignal Chapel, United Reform Church in Chignal Smealey. The coffee mornings are a good opportunity to meet and get to know local people. We hope to see you at the coffee mornings - (we also serve tea!)

St. Nicholas' Church

Hope in the darkness

I stood in my kitchen in the early morning half light while the kettle boiled for my first cup of tea feeling fed up and tired. I have this cold that keeps going and going – this is at least its third week and I still feel dire. I know I'm not going to die, but it just drags on and on. Yesterday I had a minor argument with a parked car, and have written my car off – mind you when your car is as old as mine it doesn't take much – and I know people coping with a lot worse than that so who am I to moan?

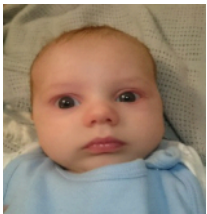
Things I had wanted to do clearing up, getting things sorted haven't happened so I'm still sat in my messy office rather than the clean clear space I had envisaged in my mind. The New Year is only a few days old and it feels like the same old same old scrunginess.

And when I talk to other people things seem hard at the moment – it does seem to be getting dark so early, people are a bit depressed, struggling with getting going again into the New Year.

And the thought that had popped into my head as I stood by the kettle was of the importance of hope in the darkness, hope when things look dire, or just a bit dingy and unrelenting. Hope is a candle that only really shines when it is dark. Hope that things will be ok, maybe not up to my expectations, but all will be well, even when it doesn't look like it. This too will pass. Hope for the future is so important in these dark days, hoping for spring, hoping for new life, hoping for what we cannot see at the moment.

I hear the reading love is patient, love is kind a lot – it is a favourite people choose but I heard something new in this reading the other day. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. It is love that bears these things. It is love that hopes. Love gives us what we need. I don't always feel very loving, but I don't think that's the same. So love hopes all things. Love for ourselves and other people.

I pray that you have hope at this dark time of year wherever you are, whatever you are going through. Sometimes the best we can do is to endure and to hope. It might not be very exciting but it keeps us going.



Something that brings a real sense of hope is the birth of a child, especially to first time parents, so it was great to christen Ben Clarke, son of Martin and Caitlan and we had a real celebration on 11 December followed by great food in the 3 Elms. It was good to welcome the newest member of the Clarkes, as well as the more mature ones!

Thank you to everyone who took part in our Christmas Services and who worked to make St Nicholas church look so beautiful. It was great to have our friends from the URC join us for the Carol Service and we had a bumper number at the Crib Service on Christmas Eve. Carol singing at The 3 Elms was a select affair but we were made really welcome by Gill and Pete and there were plenty of mince pies!

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