

Great Waltham Parish Council

Ford End Update

Recreation Ground

Early in 2020 the Parish Council asked Ford End residents what improvements they would like to see at the village recreation ground. The consultation was prompted by an offer from one of our City Councillors, on behalf of Chelmsford City Council to plant trees as part of their carbon reduction initiative and comments from local people who suggested ways of making the area more enjoyable and accessible.

You may have responded to the questionnaire or come along to the village hall to share your ideas. Twelve months on we thought you would like to know what we have achieved in the last year and the plans for the future.

Work on the woodland area at the top end of the recreation ground started in October and was carried out by Chelmsford City Council at no cost to the parish. A semi circle area was cleared and fenced and a mix of 480 field maple, hawthorn, willow, holly, scots pine, blackthorn, wild plumb and alder whips were planted in February. The fence that is currently in place is to protect the young trees until they become established and will eventually be removed giving everyone access to the area again. To help set the scene the Parish Council purchased ten small trees comprising of four oak, three small leaf lime and three field maple and the planted area will continue to be managed by Chelmsford City Council at no additional cost.



Following a successful application to the Essex County Council's Locality Fund Cllr John Aldridge awarded £1,000 to the Parish Council to be used towards the purchase of picnic benches. The long term intention is to have a group of three benches close to the woodland area and with that in mind the Parish Council provided the additional funds to install a base large enough to add two more benches when funds allow. The first bench installed in March is designed specifically to provide wheelchair access and the benches are constructed from recycled materials.



Work is also underway to improve the children's play area. The existing wooden multi-play unit will soon be replaced with a new multi-play unit and the area will once again provide a full range of play activities for younger children.



Future Plans

The Parish Council is also working towards providing the other improvements identified and requested during the consultation. The full plan is available to see on the Parish Council website or available from one of your local Parish Councillors:

<https://e-voice.org.uk/greatwalthamparish/copy-of-parish-directory/copy-of-policy-files-2/>

In addition to providing two more picnic benches the Parish Council also intends to install two seats at appropriate locations at each side of the field and we are hoping to provide an all weather activity area suitable for older children and adults. This could be a Multi Use Games Area similar to the one recently installed at Great Waltham Recreation Ground which offers an all year round area for football, basketball and cricket games.



Finally, to link the whole area and make it accessible to everyone all year round we hope to install a path as indicated on the plan.

However, while we feel we have made a good start it will take time to provide the remainder of the improvements and we are unable at this stage to say when the next phase of work will take place. Unfortunately money that could be used for parish wide improvements occasionally has to be spent repairing damaged and vandalised equipment. Most recently the Parish Council has had to fund the repair of two section of damaged fencing on the far side of the field. If you witness or notice future vandalism in the recreation ground please report it using the Police 101 service and inform the Parish Clerk - clerk@greatwalthamparishcouncil.co.uk

On a more positive note we welcome your thoughts and suggestions on fundraising to speed up the remainder of the work. We will always look to access grants for this type of project but many are not accessible to local authorities and parish council's. **If you (or your company) would like to sponsor or make a donation** towards the project or fund a particular item please let us know. Your Parish Council representatives would like to hear your suggestions and can provide more detail on costs and specifications:

Alan Martin – alanmartinpc@gmail.com

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Ford End Road Traffic

For a number of years the Parish Council has been working with Essex County Council Highways to address residents concerns with the speed, weight and volume of traffic using the B1008 through the village. You may have attended the public meeting in the village hall in 2016 where we called on Highways to make improvements that would help residents feel safer using the pavements alongside the main road. Over the last six years numerous meetings have taken place with Highways and we have managed to achieve a 40mph buffer at the Chelmsford end of the village and the variable, advisory 20mph speed limit outside the school, with a similar 40mph buffer at the northern end of the village on the cards. Leading up to the lockdown the village Speedwatch group were very active and will continue again when the rules allow.

While Highways continue to rule out any form of physical traffic calming measures or weight restriction they are not opposed to our proposal for an average speed camera system. In 2019 the Essex County Council Head of Infrastructure stated he would support the project by committing 50% of the costs from the Local Highways Panel, the balance to come from a contribution from the Parish Council and other sources. Disappointingly all grant applications we made have been declined and the pandemic has unfortunately disrupted the fundraising efforts and stalled the project. However, in a follow up meeting with the Head of Infrastructure in February 2021 he re-confirmed his support for the project and stated he will look again at funding options and work continues with further meetings planned. More recently our MP, Kemi Badenoch has added her support to the project. For further information on this project or suggestions or offers of help with fundraising please contact:

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