

WAKES COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

Chairwoman's Report

With the easing of lockdown, during the past two months, it has, at last, begun to feel that we are beginning to make some progress with our ongoing local issues and community projects. At our June meeting, held again, after 15 months, in the village hall, WCPC Councillors were finally able to meet in person for the first time, and we have also been able to hold informal meetings outdoors. We all appreciated doing business socially rather than remotely by Zoom. We still have a vacancy if you are interested in joining us.

We have been fortunate to be able to get the attention of our newly elected County Councillor, Lewis Barber, who discussed with me our local issues of flooding, speeding, road crossing, pavement clearance, signage, etc, and, after visiting Wakes Colne to see for himself, also attended our Council meeting to listen to our views. He is certainly aware of our needs and seems keen to find ways forward with Highways issues at County level. Whilst we are cognisant of financial restrictions and highways regulations, we need to find more creative and timely ways of working with Essex County Council professionals and politicians to bring about solutions to current traffic management, road and pavement repairs, as WCPC is very limited in what we alone can achieve.

Our County Councillor and Ward Councillor, Peter Chillingworth, are encouraging us, together with community members, to consider developing a Neighbourhood Plan. The main benefit may be to give local people more of an influence over future housing developments, which are most likely given the target numbers of houses Colchester Borough Council has to meet by 2030. As you will see elsewhere in this Village Reporter, we are joining with Chappel Parish Council (CPC) to ascertain if there is local interest in obtaining more information about the considerable research and consultation which would be required to submit such a plan. Please contact the Parish Clerk (07508 787869 or parishclerk@wakescolne.org) if you are interested.

On a lighter note, in mid-June, WCPC was pleased to launch a new initiative, a Plant and Seed Swap, in the bus shelter on the PO roadside, opened by Cllr. Barber, with Ward Cllr., the Chair of CPC, other councillors from WC and C PCs and several members of the public present. Thanks to all who contributed plants and seeds. The idea is that you bring a plant or some seeds and swap them for others. So far this is being maintained seasonally on a voluntary basis, and, like the telephone book exchanges, is going well. Please donate or help if you can.





You can see more photos and follow WCPC events and public notices on our own Facebook page, which is kindly being maintained by one of our councilors, at: <https://www.facebook.com/wakescolne.parishcouncil>

The Footpath Working Group, and friends of WCPC, are busy updating the walks leaflets for republication. After undertaking surveys of the current state of our footpaths we are organizing two clearance and signage replacement working parties on August 16th and September 20th. If you care to join us please let the Parish Clerk know.

Finally, in July councilors will be delivering to every household the Annual Report for the municipal year April 2020 – March 2021, together with a reprinted copy of *Lost Chappel and Wakes Colne*, which we think many residents, especially newcomers, may enjoy, and a list of some everyday local contacts which you may find useful. Happy summer reading!

Monica Taylor (Dr.) Chairwoman Wakes Colne Parish Council