

# WAKES COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

## Chairwoman's Report

The last few months have been busy for some of us on WCPC as we try to progress our usual tasks and responsibilities day to day by email and meetings online and in person, and have taken on two new, exciting projects.

We continue to carefully consider the planning applications on which we are consulted by Colchester Borough Council; some are of increasing complexity and require professional knowledge and experience. The Council is open to representation in writing or by attendance at its monthly meeting, usually the first Wednesday in each month at the Village Hall (see <https://e-voice.org.uk/wakescolne/>). In early autumn we undertook a survey of all Highways issues, amounting to 25 road defects including potholes, signage and pavement defects and reported these to our County Councillor, whom we constantly press for action and updates. These continue to be the most frustrating issues for the Council and residents alike and, given the limits on government spending and Essex County Council (ECC) funding, are in future likely to be even slower in getting resolved. We are also awaiting funding for repair of solar lights (about 10 are out on Station Approach), for signage associated with flooding at Chappel Corner, and for a new restricted road sign at Lane Rd, all of which have been approved. Every time we are told there may be some work in progress on design for Station Rd traffic calming we get up our hopes, only to find, yet again (how many times over 25 years?!), they are dashed and nothing materialises. Meanwhile this road and Chappel Corner become more and more unsafe for pedestrians and motorists alike given the volume and speed of traffic, with some inappropriate huge lorries. This is a downside of modern village life. For this reason, over the last year the Council has agreed in principle to purchase a VAS it has sourced, and has been actively seeking to install it near the Village Hall; this is another ongoing saga of delays, getting permission from ECC for its location, sourcing a separate pole, obtaining stats about the underground facilities. We hope that we will see some movement towards its installation in the winter months. Watch Out!

We make much more progress at a faster rate on the contributions which we can make independently as a Council. We trust that during the summer you enjoyed the four large colourful planters installed on either side of the bus shelters. The plants were challenging to keep watered during the drought, as, despite having installed water butts, they remained empty and we had to take water to the planters. They have recently been winterised with some new plants and bulbs by the small team who look after them.



WCPC has also donated two new small planters to be located near a listening bench to be installed opposite the station building and to be looked after by the station adopters group. We could do with some new volunteers to support these projects.

This autumn WCPC at last acquired a new footpath right of way, kindly permitted by Nicholas Percival as a community contribution from the development of Wakes Hall Park. This footpath links with the existing Footpath 25 which emerges at the bottom of Tyburn Hill, near Cammacks, and enables walkers to negotiate the hill in safety on the inside of the hedge secure from the traffic. To recognise the availability of the footpath, which can then easily be linked up with Footpath 26, going down to Old Hall Farm, we have put together a new walk of approximately 4 mls. A public walk was organised by the Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> October to celebrate the opening of the footpath, and although the weather was inclement, 13 walkers turned out and enjoyed the exercise and views, accompanied by five dogs on leads. We are hosting another walk, the Fishing Lake Walk, about 3 mls, on Sunday December 18<sup>th</sup>. Please join us at 10.30am at Station Approach. Both these walks will be included in the revised and updated version of the local walks booklet which is actively underway, and which we intend to publish in the spring, when the remaining two walks will be organised.



The Council is supporting an exciting oral history project, Memories of Living in Wakes Colne and Chappel, for which we have secured significant funding from Ward Cllr. Sunnucks', Locality Budget. To launch the project, we issued a public invitation and delivered some notices to long-standing residents for a social gathering at which we explained the project, which is also being supported by Colchester Recalled. Over 35

residents turned out and over tea and cake shared some fascinating and amusing memories of living here over the decades, which were recorded. Some people brought photos, newspaper cuttings, programmes and scrapbooks and enjoyed looking through these memorabilia.



As a result, over 30 households in Wakes Colne and Chappel wish to participate in this project, which involves recording memories, some going back to WW2, usually for about an hour, and collating memorabilia to be stored digitally, and ultimately archived at the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford and at the University of Essex. A small team of four or five are working to record residents' memories, and, given the numbers who wish to be involved, we expect the project to proceed throughout 2023. We hope you will understand that we need to prioritise our contacts and will get to you in due course. Eventually we intend to produce a small booklet drawing on these memories and memorabilia.

If you wish to be involved in any of our projects, to report any local problem, or have any comments or questions please contact the Parish Clerk ([parishclerk@wakescolne.org](mailto:parishclerk@wakescolne.org)). We should be especially pleased if anyone would like to join the council for which we currently have a vacancy.

Cllr. Monica J. Taylor (Dr), Chairwoman, WCPC