



Your Parish Needs You! Appeal from Chris Brown (Chairman)

May 7 is the date when your new Parish Council will be elected. As a number of the existing 12 Councillors are expected to stand down, this could be your opportunity to become a Councillor.

If you are passionate about Gerrards Cross, why not put thoughts into action and join the Parish Council? We are a non-political organisation of volunteers who work together to improve and maintain our village. Any UK citizen over the age of 18 can apply.

The Council is recognised as being active in eagerly taking up the new opportunities of Localism. This is taking shape in the form of Devolution of County Council responsibilities and budgets to the parish level. In April we will be taking over aspects of Highways maintenance, including grass cutting, hedge cutting and footpath maintenance, and possibly more to follow. We are also making major

headway in improving our Commons, with new play equipment installed and also working with the Forestry Commission on long-term maintenance.

With a record level of planning applications and the move towards on-line paperless plans, this is another exciting and challenging area of development.

The Best Kept Village competition will be a great opportunity to showcase our village and the work done by the Council working with residents and other organisations.

If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact the Parish office as soon as possible. Although nomination closes at the end of March, you should aim to get your application in early.

Parish Office: 01753 888018.



*Gerrards Cross Conservation Volunteers brave the recent cold weather to work on the Common - and still manage to look cheerful!
If you would like to join them, please look at our website for more details, you will be most welcome. www.gerrardscross.gov.uk*

Parish Council Grants for 2015-16

Each year the Parish Council consider applications from local clubs and organisations for small grants towards varying projects

For the coming financial year the Council have agreed the following:-

- **The Gerrards Cross CE School:** £450 towards the creation of a small prayer garden available to all 420 children, 70 staff and parents and governors.
- **Gerrards Cross Community Association:** £13,000 towards refurbishment projects.
- **Padstones:** £600 towards helping to create a supportive environment for the residents.
- **Age Concern Gerrards Cross & Chalfont District:** £500 towards the support of local residents.
- **The Chiltern Dial-a-Ride:** £550 to contribute with door-to-door transport for local residents.
- **Leonard Cheshire Disability:** £500 towards an entertainment evening for all the residents.
- **Gerrards Cross Junior Squash Club:** £500 to help with coaching members.

Who's responsible?

Thames Water's dispute with BCC

Oak End Way residents have had a trying time over the last year. Firstly, the road condition deteriorated, with large pot-holes of surface tarmac coming away causing problems especially for cyclists. These were repaired after a lot of pressure from the Parish Council just in time for last year's Fun Run.

However, since then, following a heavy downfall of rain, the road failed again leaving a large area fenced off for safety. The Parish Council were advised that the Thames Water chamber had collapsed and Bucks County Council (BCC) were not responsible for the repair.

Since then there has been an ongoing dispute between Thames Water and BCC as to who is responsible for the repair.

Cll Nick Moss supported local residents' complaints that had fallen on deaf ears. Bucks County Council (BCC) recently arranged to dig some test holes in the presence of Thames Water officials to determine who was responsible for the necessary repairs following the collapse of the water chamber. Wayne Fabian, Local Area Technician for BCC, has advised us that Thames Water have now accepted responsibility and will be undertaking the works to repair the road.



Focus on Speeding and Parking

Report by Ian Bayliss, Chairman, Speeding and Parking Working Group

This group (SPWG) was formed in July 2013, initially to address concerns of residents in East and West Common about speeding motorists and random parking. Since its formation, the group has had several meetings with Bucks County Council (BCC) representatives who are responsible for these issues and their scope has been extended to include other streets than those by the commons.

Although progress has been rather slow, we now have firm proposals, agreed with BCC, for parking restriction changes in West Common, East Common, Layters Way, Bulstrode Way and Bentinck Close. A proposal for a 20mph speed limit in West Common was made as a test case but was rejected by BCC as the traffic is usually much slower than the current 30mph limit and enforcement is not realistically possible.

The Council approved the quote of £16,414.00 from BCC at the Highways Committee meeting on January 5, 2015. The next stage of the project will be in BCC's hands and they will carry out another 'official' survey of residents' wishes. When their approval has been received the legal processes will start followed by implementation.

You can be assured that the Parish Council will continue to keep all residents informed of progress by regular newsletters to those directly affected and through articles in VOICE.

Once the SPWG is satisfied that the first round of change is underway the SPWG would be happy to receive other proposals from Gerrards Cross residents via the Parish Council offices.

Parish Council Awards

Gerrards Cross Parish Council, at a reception after their meeting on Monday, November 24, thanked volunteer traders for their contribution to the local community.

At the reception which was attended by all Parish Council members, Chairman Chris Brown presented Certificates of Appreciation to five local firms: Tesco, (represented by manager James Lingard and Kathleen Bond) BP Collins, Wildwood, Apple Tree and The Bull Hotel for their support of the Gerrards Cross Conservation Volunteers, (GXCV). Volunteers meet from 9:30am to 12:30pm on the third Saturday of every month by the Parish hut on East Common Road to clear the paths on the Common for others to enjoy safely.

Local traders help by sending teams who, besides providing rest and refreshment, give health, safety and legal support.

GXCV leader Bill Collins said: "Local traders make a huge contribution to our work and we encourage others also to become involved."



James Lingard and Kathleen Bond of Tesco, Gerrards Cross, with their Certificates of Appreciation from the Parish Council.

Work on the Commons

As always, at this time of year, Committee members have been faced with a number of tasks: checking play equipment, ensuring footpaths are kept clear of fallen trees and picking up litter.

East Common

Many residents have requested that the main footpath on East Common that goes past the play area towards the A40 be improved. The Committee have now approved the quote which covers a new surface. This will be appropriate for wheelchairs and work is now in progress.

Latchmoor Pond

Extensive work has been carried out round the pond tidying up generally and especially removing superfluous willow slips which were taken out by tractor to ensure the roots were removed.

Improved Lighting

Residents and Councillors are concerned about the inadequate lighting on East Common near the Memorial Centre. Three new lamp-posts have been installed and an application has been made to South Bucks District Council to raise the tree canopy. All this will help considerably.



Help from Amersham

Council agrees to BCC proposal

From 1st April 2015 subject to an acceptable contract, the Parish Council have agreed in principle to take on certain services using Amersham Town Council as contractors rather than wait for Bucks County Council to carry out these tasks.

For the last four years the Parish Council has received a grant of £8,000 from BCC to cover the smaller tasks within the parish such as cleaning road signs, removing posters and other illegal signs, trimming foliage obscuring road signs,

and serving hedge cutting notices. Within this budget the Highways Committee have also been able to install three new bases at bus stops and restore kerb lines on certain roads.

Earlier this year BCC proposed that further services were to be devolved. These cover grass cutting, trimming vegetation obstructing pavements and footpaths, weed control on pavements, maintenance of rights of way and some minor repairs to traffic signs.

The County Council will give the Parish Council funds equivalent to the budget they would have otherwise allocated for these services if they were not devolved and the Council is aware that this grant will not cover all of the work. The Parish is able to use the funds to provide the most effective delivery of the services appropriate to the Parish using the Amersham Town Council as contractors.

Railway Links

Chiltern Railways are building a new rail line between Oxford and London Marylebone. The new station will be to the north of the city and named Oxford Parkway. The line should be open later this year and will run from the centre of Oxford from spring 2016.

Towns and villages to the north of Oxford will gain especially from improved rail access and a new station. It also means the fast-growing town of Bicester will enjoy an additional link to the capital. The project will see the re-establishment of long-lost rail links, such as High Wycombe and Oxford. In order to achieve this a new $\frac{3}{4}$ line will be built at Bicester to link London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street with the existing route between Bicester Town and Oxford.

VOICE IT!

Residents have their say.

Re: Poorly parked vehicles, (e.g. on the pavement), who deals with these?

How about speed restrictions for West Common road? It's dangerous for residents.

I love the new bench on East Common. Well done.

Defibrillator for St James Church

Chris Brown, Chairman of the Parish Council writes:

The Parish Council has been working with St James Church to provide an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) which will be located on the outside of the St James Centre building. This has been registered with the NHS Ambulance Service and is available as a Community Unit, for use by the public in emergencies to re-start a patient's heart using an electric shock when they have suffered a cardiac arrest.

In the case of an incident where cardiac arrest is suspected the first step, as always, is to phone for an ambulance on 999. Whilst the ambulance is on its way, the operator can advise the caller if the use of an AED might be appropriate, where the nearest unit is located and give them a code to access the cabinet. Using the AED can mean a patient is resuscitated in the shortest possible time and greatly improves their chances of recovery. Sometimes, literally, it's the difference between life and death.

These days AEDs are becoming common in public places, such as shopping centres, stations, gyms and cinemas and are relatively simple to use, even for a non-medical person. The unit gives full, audible instructions to the user and will not administer an electric shock to the patient unless it is appropriate.

Chris Brown says the Council is pleased to help the church provide this unit and that the church had been generous in funding it at the most cost-effective price. He hoped other organisations in Gerrards Cross would follow the church's example and also install such units. We understand Chiltern Railways are installing a unit at the station and there is one planned for the Memorial Centre on East Common.

Do you think we should have another Community Unit AED available in the centre of Gerrards Cross? Contact us on the website or email to let the Council know your views.

Highways High Spots

Mike Lawson, Chairman, Highways Committee, writes:

We have installed paved hard standing at the bus stop on Fulmer Road opposite St Huberts Close. As it would have taken Bucks County Council some time to have carried out this work, we decided to undertake the work ourselves and very nice it looks too. We have had positive comments of how much more convenient it is, and the Committee have agreed to undertake feasibility to do the same on the stop further south.



Good news from Tesco



News continues to be positive from James Lingard, manager of the Tesco store in Gerrards Cross. He has confirmed that Tesco are willing to pay toward funding improvements in the traffic lights by the store, taking out the set at Station Road and improving the layout for pedestrians.

We are still waiting, after many months, for Bucks County Council officials to produce a final plan and costing for the improvements in order to take up Tesco's offer.

Wild plant control

We continue to receive complaints from residents about plants and hedges impeding pedestrians on footpaths and pavements. We normally write to the householder concerned and they usually do the decent thing and cut back the offending vegetation.

If you think your own boundary plants and hedges could be causing problems for pedestrians or impeding sight lines for drivers turning out of junctions, please pop out and trim them back.