

## **Gerrards Cross Parish Council**

*Annual Parish Meeting – 2015*

### **Report from South Bucks District Council**

***Councillor Santokh S Chhokar***

#### **Firstly ....**

I would like to thank Gerrards Cross Parish Council for its support and - where necessary - constructive criticism - in helping your District Councillors carry out their duties. Your Parish Councillors put in a lot of time and effort for you – and should be appreciated.

#### **South Buckinghamshire District Council - an efficient Council successfully meeting today's challenges**

SBDC has continued its efforts to provide efficient and effective services to our residents - whilst having to make do with less money. For the fifth year in succession SBDC has frozen its share of Council Tax for its residents.

#### **Joint Working with Chiltern District Council**

SBDC has made good progress in joint working with Chiltern District Council – which is aimed at delivering quality Council services and reducing the cost of doing so. We have agreed arrangements for sharing twelve services and more will follow. We are seeking to streamline and merge SBDC services with those provided by Chiltern District Council. Both Councils have saved substantial sums of money – whilst improving efficiency and delivery of services.

#### **Waste Collection**

In case you have not noticed - the past year has been the Year of the Wheelie bins. Yes, the transformation of our Waste Service is well under way. Our new Waste Collection Service has had a successful launch. Our Waste Team has responded well to reports from residents about any local difficulties and problems. Thanks to the support and cooperation received from our residents – together with the committed efforts of our staff - SBDC has managed to implement this major service in a positive manner. We seem to have got right the formula for providing a Waste Collection service which is efficient, cost effective and meets residents' needs.

#### **Green Belt**

We have continued to resist attempts to compromise our Green Belt. Yes, even after SBDC's refusal, the Pinewood Studios development was given the go ahead by the Secretary of State – SBDC is actively working with Pinewood to ensure that the development is carried out in a manner sympathetic to the character of South Buckinghamshire.

## **South Buckinghamshire Golf Club**

Our new flagship South Buckinghamshire Golf Club has been very well received. It is quickly becoming a popular and competitive choice for players and also as a venue for meetings, events, parties.

In October 2014, as Chairman of SBDC, I used it for the Chairman' Community Fund Golf Day to raise thousands of pounds for local good causes. Please do use it as all surplus income after paying for outgoings is re-invested in this facility. We are lucky to have such a community asset – which we should use and promote whenever the opportunity arises.

## **Changes at SBDC**

The Wards in the District have been re-zoned by the Boundaries Commission, after consultation with SBDC, local residents and other interested parties. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of Councillors from 40 down to 28. One of the positive aspects is that Gerrards Cross is now single Ward – represented by 3 Councillors. The first election under this arrangement takes place on Thursday 7 May 2015.

After the elections SBDC will also have new Council Leader, as Adrian Busby, the Council Leader for the past 8 years, has decided not to stand for re-election. Adrian deserves the thanks of all South Bucks residents for his outstanding leadership – which has been key to SBDC being in such good shape today. I know that SBDC is the envy of many Local Authorities who regularly credit us with 'punching well above our weight'.

## **My Past Year as Chairman of SBDC**

Apart from my role as a Gerrards Cross Councillor, I have also served as Chairman of South Bucks District Council.

I am proud that a Gerrards Cross Councillor has served as the 'face of South Buckinghamshire' - representing and promoting South Bucks at numerous events over the past year.

I have met people helping themselves - and people helping others - making lives better. I have impressed to see that Gerrards Cross possesses so many quite remarkable people doing seemingly quite ordinary things – and quite ordinary people doing undoubtedly quite remarkable things.

## **And finally ...**

Four of our longest serving District Councillors are 'stepping down'. Between them Jennifer Woolveridge, Deirdre Holloway, Peter Hardy and Rachel Pope have provided Gerrards Cross residents with many years of dedicated and distinguished service. They have also been a source of strength, inspiration and wise counsel for me. I wish them well.