

# Voice



Gerrards Cross  
Parish Council Newsletter  
February 2014

[www.gerrardscross.gov.uk](http://www.gerrardscross.gov.uk)



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## CARS, CARS, CARS, CARS

### PARKING – PROBLEMS STILL REMAIN

Despite the presence of Parking Wardens and 300 free places behind Tesco, parking remains a contentious issue for residents, whether it is commuters parking all day in your street or having to pay while you pop into a shop for 5 minutes. The obvious solutions of a second story on the Station Road car park – for which funding is in place - and a free half hour in all the car parks are ignored by South Bucks District Council [SBDC], who control our parking.

Bucks County Council [BCC] say they will issue a "Tool Kit" this January to all Parish Councils enabling them to prepare requests for changes that are in line with current regulatory and BCC rules. The Parish Council has formed a Speeding and Parking Working Group, with Ian Bayliss as Chairman, to prepare requests for changes to BCC. However BCC say that "mainly due to a backlog of requests and the lengthy consultative process, approval can take between eighteen months and two years"!

Although concerns about speeding and parking are common throughout Gerrards Cross, the Working Group has decided to use East and West Common as a test case to see how the new "Tool Kit" procedures work. In November, a letter was sent to all residents of West Common asking for proposals and comments. Two thirds of residents replied and a similar letter is now being sent to East Common residents. After consolidation of the issues raised, the Parish Council hope to make a request for changes in February / March.

The Parish Council will keep all residents informed of progress and would welcome feedback from them via our website or the office.



### What's happening?

#### SOLAR LED STREET LIGHT ON EAST COMMON

Trialling this light on the turning circle on Packhorse Road is a local company, Sun Air Sustainability. The aim is to reduce carbon emissions. The trial has started with a 12W LED light and will increase gradually to a 30W light. These lights are designed for use in areas which do not require lights to be on all night. They come on for 5 hours when it is dark, then switch off, working by sensors throughout the night thus preserving energy whilst providing light when necessary.

#### GOOD NEWS FOR PEDESTRIANS WISHING TO CROSS THE A40

Funding is now in place to install a Toucan pedestrian crossing at the crossroads of Packhorse Road, Windsor Road and the A40. The large Lime tree on the corner of Windsor Road will be felled so that the pavement can be widened to enable large vehicles to turn safely without mounting the kerb.

## TESCO TRAFFIC LIGHTS – A DECISION BUT NO MONEY TO IMPLEMENT IT

Members of the Parish Council met with the Bucks County Council [BCC] Cabinet Member for Transport, Janet Blake and her team on the 13th September, when we were informed that BCC supported the option preferred by Gerrards Cross residents, namely to remove the set of lights at Station Road, remodel the set outside Tesco to allow better access and safety for pedestrians and bring back the pedestrian crossing outside Boots, using the pre-existing ducting and wiring. However, due to budget cuts BCC have no money to make the changes. They met with Tesco on 4 October 2013 to see if Tesco would assist in paying but, despite numerous requests, we have not received any official feedback from BCC. Unofficially we understand that Tesco have not ruled out providing funding for the change in the layout of the traffic lights, which has been their consistent position in all discussions with Parish councillors, but cannot make a firm decision until their new financial year in April.

Full details of traffic flow measurements carried out by BCC both before, during and post construction of Tesco are on our website. However we believe this information is incomplete as there is no data following the reconfiguration of the lights in September 2012 nor on the number of vehicles that bypass Packhorse Road to avoid the lights. We would like your help to test BCC's data. We are looking for twenty volunteers who regularly drive through the centre of Gerrards Cross at peak times to measure the time it takes to pass through the village over the period of one month. We would also like to hear from anyone who now uses Bull Lane or Marsham Lane to avoid the lights. If you are interested please contact the Chairman of the Highways Committee at [mike.lawson@gerrardscross.gov.uk](mailto:mike.lawson@gerrardscross.gov.uk)

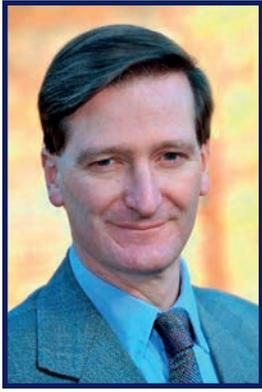
We will keep you updated



**After 7 years as Editor, I am passing the challenge to Frances Chidell. Voice has been fun although it receives so little comment that I wonder if anyone reads it! It is your community - do let us know your views and what you think.**

**Madeleine May  
Councillor**

# A Sense of Optimism



## The Rt. Hon Dominic Grieve, QC, MP for Beaconsfield, looks ahead with confidence

The last three years, he said, had been a time of rigorous cutback and in this era of austerity the government aimed to ensure that those at risk were properly looked after. While his surgeries gave people support, support was also given through the District Council and the Citizens' Advice Bureau. All aim to lead to "a system which is fairer to those in want whilst providing good

incentives to help the long-term unemployed."

During the coming year and indeed for the next 20 years, population growth, he said, would cause considerable pressure on development throughout London and the south-east. Through better checks on immigration it may possibly be reduced but it is going to be a "great challenge" to provide extra school places in Buckinghamshire, and the Department for Education must look for more school sites.

Buckinghamshire is the fastest growing economic area in the UK. This must be maintained. South Buckinghamshire was spared the worst building pressures for residential accommodation because of good local planning.

## Signs of hope for 2014

"The United Kingdom is attracting more investment than any other country in Europe", continued Dominic. "Our economy is reviving as much through manufacturing as through services and there should be a period of growth which will not be just a consumer-led boom... If we can manage to restrain government expenditure and make our country an attractive place to do business, we may place ourselves at the forefront of European economic development.

"All these are issues which have an intense political dimension. There is a growing debate about our position in the European Union and in the coming year we will have the referendum on Scottish independence. These will have momentous consequences for our future as a nation and for our general wellbeing." Dominic hoped Scotland would vote to remain in the UK as the arrangement had served us all well over the last 300 years.

In conclusion he said he was resolutely optimistic about the long-term future of our country. As long as we maintained the Rule of Law and our values, our country's capacity to adapt to new circumstances and challenges would always be present.

"Far from failing at the moment, it seems to me that the UK has shown great resilience in the face of considerable problems. Whatever 2014 has to throw at us, I believe that we can come through the year both nationally and locally with optimism."

## The Gerrards Cross CE School

Someone visiting The Gerrards Cross CE School for the first time might be surprised to find it tucked away in the quiet of Moreland Drive. Originally founded in 1862 on the site now occupied by Colston Court on East Common, the school moved to its current position in 1968. Now with 420 pupils and 65 members of staff, the school thrives within its generous setting of eight acres, with pupils able to enjoy excellent facilities including spacious classrooms, two large fields and playgrounds, music and IT rooms, a well-stocked library and a swimming pool.

The school's outstanding reputation is built on its academic standards, the rich and stimulating curriculum offered to its pupils and the nurturing and personal development of each individual child. Whilst these remain constant, the many changes in the world of education and in our locality ensure the school's continual development. In 2012 we became an Academy under the government scheme, at that time only available to schools judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding'. This status enables us to ensure that the education which we provide is tailored specifically to our children in Gerrards Cross and that our budget is maximised for their benefit. Whilst birth-rates in Gerrards Cross continue to fall, we remain over-subscribed, often holding waiting lists for every year group. Prospective parents visiting the school on one of our fortnightly tours are always impressed by our children's focused and enthusiastic approach to their learning, their high standards of behaviour and by the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Children use iPads in lessons and other exciting IT devices in a variety of activities, ensuring that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the exciting technological world ahead of them. Professional musicians and specialist sports staff now complement the excellent teaching and classroom support team, enabling us to provide an excellent standard of education for all pupils.

Links with St James continue to develop as part of our Church of England School status. The school and church work together on a range of events during the year, aimed at both children and parents; and members of clergy are regular visitors to the school, leading an assembly each week.

Our Mission Statement, created in 2013 by children, parents, staff and governors, articulates the aims of the school, and the central importance of our Christian foundation. It is both a responsibility and a privilege to work with our children, and to give them the opportunities and confidence which will prepare them go on to live happy, fulfilled and successful lives.

Our school seeks to provide an engaging, challenging and inspiring education, in an environment where every individual is valued, nurtured and celebrated.

With a firm foundation of Christian values, we share a vision of excellence which enriches today and equips for tomorrow.



## WHO IS THE LORD OF THE MANOR AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Our Commons are a remnant, with Goldhill and Austenwood Commons, of the medieval agricultural system of the Manor of Chalfont St Peter, of which I am the present lord. Local people grazed their animals on them until the beginning of the 20th century. The Manor has land and rights attached to it but in essence it is the right of the lord to hold a private court, with a jury of local people. This court, amongst other matters, managed the Commons until 1914. The court last met in 1925 and has rolls which run from 1308; a transcription of them is in the GX public library. The Manor goes back to Anglo- Saxon times and is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1087), when Roger was the lord and Odo Bishop of Bayeux the overlord.



The grazing of animals ceased when GX developed following the opening of the railway in 1906. Trees started to grow on the former pasture and in 1914 a scheme giving the public the right to use the Commons for walking and recreation was put in place under the Commons Act 1899. The lord remains the owner and the Parish Council manages them on behalf of the public. The Council has the necessary powers to maintain them as a public open space but cannot change their natural features, make new paths or place structures on them without the lord's consent and only he can grant rights to third parties. In 1229 Henry III granted my predecessor the right to hold a weekly market and an annual fair. We had a farmers' market on West Common for a short while and the annual Feast of St Peter is held on Gold Hill Common. In 1540 Henry VIII granted the lord the right to impound stray animals and to take waifs (stolen goods dropped by a thief in flight!).

The unique nature of commons has been protected by law since the middle of the 19th century; currently the Commons Act 2006. This prohibits their enclosure and the placing of structures or a hard surface without ministerial consent. I feel strongly that the semi-wild aspect of the Commons should be preserved whenever possible. They contain relic acid grassland and numerous species of flora and fauna, one of which is nationally endangered. I am aware that there is increasing pressure for change, such as the creation over recent years of the children's play area, which has proved enormously popular. There have been proposals for a car park and more recently a BMX track both of which I opposed after careful consultation. I felt that they would have been too intrusive and would have spoilt the uniquely rural and primeval feel that makes the Commons so special.

David Baldwin, Lord of the Manor



## 2013 HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR LIBRARY

- The Gerrards Cross Community library has increased its membership by enrolling 531 new library members.
- Many events have been celebrated throughout the year such as National Poetry Day and
- World Book night [when the Chiltern Shakespeare Players performed scenes and sonnets]
- We opened the library for two evening events where we had many visitors and very successful childrens craft activities. June = 261 visitors  
December = 416 visitors (compared with 164 in Dec 2012)
- Our opening hours have been extended by an hour a week on weekdays to meet customer demand. We serve on average 15 people a day in that first 30minutes.
- The library gives an opportunity every month for charities and community services to meet and talk with library users at our free coffee mornings.
- During the Summer we enrolled 160 girls and boys to continue their literacy experience with the Summer Reading challenge
- We hold regular monthly crafts activity for adults culminating in a very festive Christmas flower arrangement event.
- The library supported two local authors by giving them the opportunity to give talks on their books.
- In the second half of 2013 we extended our weekly Bounce & Rhyme to two sessions a week to cater for babies as well as toddlers. We also have a Story time after school on Fridays.
- Richard Fenton has provided over 80 free one to one tuition sessions for people needing help with their IT.

A big Thank You to Richard and our volunteers for making all of this - and much much more - possible

# Meeting with Network Rail and Chiltern Railways

An open meeting between Nick Jordon, Network Rail's Community Relations Advisor, and Mark Cooper, Regional Manager of Chiltern Railways, took place at the Memorial Centre on October 10, chaired by Councillor Mike Lawson, chairman of the Parish Council's Highways Committee.

The following questions and comments were made:

**1** Could the pathway adjacent to platform 1 at Gerrards Cross station be re-opened?

NJ: I will see if this is possible.

**2** When will the connection through Gerrards Cross, Bicester to Oxford be up and running?

MC: The new service will be in two parts, firstly to the new Oxford Parkway station by December 2015; secondly to Oxford station by 2016.

**3** When will the planting on the slope by platform 2 be reinstated?

MC: Hopefully next year. The embankment is outside Chiltern's area.

**4** The provision of a second storey on the car park has not materialized and car parking is getting more difficult.

MC: There are no plans to increase the capacity of the car park. We have retained the designs from the original project and will regularly review capacity.

**5** When will you do something about the appalling condition of footpath 7 which goes over the railway bridge from Layters Way?

NJ: The bridge will be structurally checked annually. I will find out when it is to be refurbished.

**6** The quality of the refurbishment work on the station was substandard. Water leaks and drains blocked.

NJ/MC: Both to look at the situation. MC plans to review canopy's condition and repair continuing leaks.

**7** Has Mark Cooper seen the unacceptable condition of the ladies toilets?

MC: We hope to make some minor improvements and plan to improve the overall quality.

**8** Why is there "No Parking" for cars on Station Approach for people making travel enquiries?

NJ: Network Rail owns Station Approach and Chiltern Railways leases it from them.

MC: The sign was put there as some vehicles were parked there all day. Preventing short-term parking was not intended. We will review our signage.



**9** Can extra coaches be put on to avoid standing in the train to London?

MC: We have a limited amount of stock. We are trying to add to our fleet but European emissions standards have effectively stopped any manufacture of diesel rolling stock. We will be sourcing additional carriages from other operators. We are looking at options as we will continue to grow and the new Oxford route will accelerate this.

**10** Mill Lane bridge fence is rotten and needs replacing.

NJ: I will organize this.

**11** Litter is in abundance in and around the station and on the footpath.

NJ: We do not have regular litter-picking but I can get a team to the area.

**12** When a passenger collapsed there was no procedure and there was no HYPERLINK defibrillator.

MC: We only have defibrillators on main stations. All staff have basic training and there are help point phones on platforms. All security officers are able to call for assistance.

**13** Could Network Rail look at the feasibility of a point at the other end of the siding at Gerrards Cross to speed up the service between Birmingham and London? Also could the fast track be reinstated at Wembley, Denham, High Wycombe and Princes Risborough, etc.

NJ: I will try and establish why it was removed.

**14** The lighting along Orchehill Rise is not good. Kindly cut branches of trees obstructing lighting.

MC: I'm told this area is council owned so we cannot install additional lighting. The trees protect the houses behind the car park from light pollution.