



Chorleywood Matters



Issue No 5 Spring 2006

News & views from Chorleywood Parish Council

Let's show what a literate community we are!

Chorleywood LITFEST

This Spring Chorleywood is to have its own Literary Festival, organised by Chorleywood Library and the Chorleywood Bookshop.

From March onwards you will be able to take part in a Writing Competition, test your knowledge in a Literary Quiz and, over the weekend of May 5th -7th, attend talks and events at the Library and War Memorial Hall led by some of your favourite authors, including Barbara Trapido, Jeremy Strong, Jodi Piccoult, Mary Hooper, Ann Cleaves, Sarah Harrison and lots more.

The Parish Council has given permission for a marquee to be placed on the Common on the evening of May 5th to host a special "CSI Investigation" event for teenagers.

Additionally, the Litfest is promoting "1 Book 4 Chorleywood". The book chosen is Jodi Piccoult's "My Sister's Keeper" and the aim is for everyone in Chorleywood to have read this book by the time Jodi comes to speak at the event on May 6th.

The book is available at the Library and at the Bookshop, as are details of the competition, the quiz and the program of events, so get reading and writing and show what a literate community we are!

Further information on this event can be found at: www.cwllitfest.org

The Common is in Safe Hands

There is a frequent misunderstanding about what Common Land is. The word "common" does not mean it is owned by everyone. It means that the owners of certain properties (commoners) may exercise specific rights on land which is owned by someone else.

Chorleywood Common is owned by Chorleywood Parish Council. The Common was deeded to Chorleywood Urban District Council in 1898 by the then Lord of the Manor and was transferred to Chorleywood Parish Council in 1973 when the UDC ceased to exist.

The Common is registered to the Parish Council under the Commons Act. The Council has no power to hand it over to any other organisation, nor would it ever wish to do so.

Should the Parish Council ever cease to exist, it would be up to the Government in power at the time to dispose of the Council's assets. These would not pass automatically to the District Council or any other body.

However, it is in the highest degree unlikely that the Parish Council will cease to exist in the near or distant future. The Government seems at present to be considering moving towards large unitary authorities, leaving the parish and town councils in place and giving them more powers and responsibilities.

Whatever the future may hold, the Parish Council's finances are in good order, its management sound and its procedures correct. The Common is quite safe in the Parish Council's ownership.

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Who Pays for the Parish Council?

You do, through the precept.

So what is the Precept?

Basically, it is the amount of money the Parish Council considers that it will need in the coming Council year to run the services which it provides for the Parish. This money is provided by you through your Council Tax bill.

Each year the Council's committees consider what funds they will need for the coming year. These budgets are then assessed at the Policy and Resources Committee, which agrees a figure to be recommended to the Council. The Council agrees a final figure and this information is then passed to the District Council to be added to your Council Tax demand. The precept is not part of the District Council's tax. Three Rivers is merely the agency which collects it on our behalf.

What are you getting for your money?

- The services of a fully trained Parish Clerk, three administrative officers, three Common Rangers and the caretaker of the Halls
- The day to day running of the Council's office, the maintenance and replacement of its equipment plus all insurance and legal costs
- The maintenance and replacement of all outdoor equipment (tractors, mowers, etc.) and the garage which houses it

- The care and maintenance of Chorleywood Common & Grovewood
- The care and maintenance of the War Memorial and Hollybush Halls
- The care and maintenance of the Lawn Cemetery and Christ Church churchyard
- The care and maintenance of the allotment sites at Dog Kennel Lane, Copmanswick and the Swillett
- The organisation of Village Day and Christmas Fair (with help from the Business Association)
- The production of this newsletter and other information material
- Plus grants to local organisations etc.

The Parish Council gets no grant aid from the Government or the District or County Council to run its services. The money comes directly from you to the Parish Council with no strings attached. Thus the Parish Council remains totally independent and is only influenced by the needs of you, the Parishioners.

The Council's books are audited each year; its accounts are open to scrutiny by any resident in the Parish who may wish to see them. An Annual Report is published every year, showing the full range of the Council's business and activities.

The precept for the coming year has been set at approx. £260,000, a larger than usual increase, but there is a special reason for this...

Our Own Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)

The Parish Council has agreed with Herts Police Authority to fund two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) for a trial period of two years.

The cost to the community of these extra officers this year will be £30,500 (the equivalent of £5.11 per annum, or approximately, 10p per week, per Band D equivalent property).

Working with the local police, the Parish Council will have considerable input into how these officers are used in the Parish and, additionally, the powers of PCSOs have been increased to include enforcing byelaws and dealing with antisocial behaviour and traffic problems.

These officers will be in addition to the present police allocation for our area and they will operate **only** in the parish of Chorleywood. *We have been assured that they will not be pulled out for support in other areas.*

The Council is well aware of the concerns of local people on the need for a regular and visible police presence in Chorleywood with officers who know the area and the community. Therefore, we have decided that the reason for this extra charge on the precept will be supported by the people of Chorleywood and we're going for it!

All Change

The Council will be reforming its Committee structure from the beginning of the new Council year in May. We have found that meetings of certain committees have frequently had to be cancelled for lack of business and the Council has therefore decided to reduce its Committees from six to three, Policy and Resources, Open Spaces and Planning. The Cemetery and Allotments and Rights of Way will be absorbed into Open Spaces and Highways matters will come under Planning. There will also be the War Memorial Hall Committee, who manage both the War Memorial and Hollybush Halls but with a changed name to the Chorleywood Village Halls Trust.

The Council's Calendar of Meetings for 2006/7 has now been approved and copies can be viewed on the Council's notice boards or obtained from the Parish Office. All the Council's meetings are open to the public and take place on a Tuesday.

Re-instatement of the Common

The small level area opposite Darvells was originally formed by heavy vehicles manoeuvring to gain entrance to Darvell's Yard when it was a light industrial site. Although also used for some time for parking, it has never been an official car parking area. In 2003, with the advent of the development of Darvell's Yard for housing and the closure of the old entrance, the Parish Council took the decision that the need for this turning area was now redundant and that the area should be returned to Common on the completion of the new development.

Drainage works have recently been carried out on the Common on the slope down to The Kennels to alleviate the risk of flooding to the properties there and the surplus soil has been used to reinstate the area opposite to Darvells and will be re-seeded from the Council's bank of seed collected from the Common.

New Common Leaflet

Popular as the present Circular Walk leaflet has proved, there have been many requests for one containing more information, such as the names of the ponds, etc. Working with the Friends of Chorleywood Common, the Parish Council has obtained a grant from the Chilterns Conservation Board to fund the production of a new information leaflet for the Common. The information and map have been updated and the leaflet re-designed and it should be available by the time this edition of Chorleywood Matters goes out. Copies can be obtained from the Parish Office, the Library and the Friends, who will be sending one out to each of their members.

Chorleywood's Lost Pubs

With the conversion of The Sportsman into flats, Chorleywood has lost yet another of its hostelries. Even now, Chorleywood is well supplied with pubs for a moderately small community but, in the days before you could just hop into the car to go to your Local, your pint needed to be available within walking distance and there were three others.

In the Hammer, the hamlet along Common Road, the Rose and Crown shared its business with the Berkley Arms. This has now been converted into a dwelling but, if you look as you drive down Common Road to the village, you can still see the brewer's sign painted on the side wall.

In the Swillett, the dwelling that used to be the Swillett Post Office was once the Dove beer house and somewhere off Berry Lane (I think; it's variously called Chorleywood Hill or the Slip) was the Jolly Brickmakers' Arms. There was a brick kiln still working just off Berry Lane in 1871. That makes ten hostelries of one kind or another in little Chorleywood. Admittedly, in those days hard physical labour gave a working man a considerable thirst, but even so!

(By the way, a beer house only sold beer, a public house also sold wines and spirits and an inn additionally provided food and accommodation.)