

Chesterton Parish Council

Annual Report for April 20th, 2023

This has been a challenging year for the Parish Council in many areas but, due to the hard work of the Clerk and Councillors, we have managed to keep on top of the key issues facing us and I am confident that this constructive approach will bear fruit in 2023-2024.

Planning Issues

These have taken a disproportionate amount of time and will continue to do so. The Wates application has been submitted for 147 homes on a Greenfield site adjacent to Vespasian Way. The Council has objected to this application because of the almost total lack of sustainability and has received almost total support from residents. Our view is that this application is speculative and can only be considered under the current Local Plan under which we have had 100 new homes already. We are awaiting an application from Lone Star over the Lodge Farm site and have declined to join them at a pre-application meeting with CDC. The Siemens development is going ahead and the Parish Council has campaigned vociferously to ensure that the Little Chesterton road will be gated with a one-way system from the Green Lane end. The application by Bloombridge (Bicester Gateway) on land opposite the Hotel for 273 units of 1 and 2-bedroomed homes received our support given that the impact upon the village will be minimal.

We have met with the Great Wolf staff including their directors to raise the many concerns that are present already. We are monitoring the Construction Traffic Management Plan to ensure that no HGVs use the A4095 through the village and are insisting on adequate signage to ensure that the access routes are clearly followed. We have met with Oxfordshire County Council over the SIO6 funding to generate a public bus service in the near future.

Consultations

We have been consulted over issues including the proposed Bicester Ring Road and a consequence that the 60mph speed limit on the A4095 from Vendee Drive will be reduced. Following consultation, Cherwell District Council

reviewed the number of Parish Councillors with an increase from 7 to 9 and also a minor exchange of land on the Middleton Stoney road. Consultations over the allocations of S106 monies are still continuing against a background of some confusion by Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

Positive Achievements

The Keep Chesterton Tidy Group has worked incredibly well covering such a wide area.

The Speed Watch Team has been very active with results that have led to police action against “speeders”. Village speed limits have now been reduced to 20mph.

The Chesterton Library has been very well used not only by village residents but also by users from further afield and improved signage of events is now in place.

Allotments have been better kept and subject to many complimentary comments.

The Chesterton Parish Council decided not to increase the precept this year to house owners, and this has been reduced by – 1.6% against a background of sizeable increases by Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council in the community charges.

There are still things to be done in 2023-2024 including the emergency plan, rural bus services, and reviews of the plethora of policies. We are also keen to promote the “Community Coffee Morning” held at the Red Cow which has operated as a de factor “Surgery” for residents. We are also working on a map of Public Footpaths in the Parish which should prove very popular.

Finally thanks to all those in the community who have contributed in so many ways to life in Chesterton and may this continue.