

Chapmanslade Parish Council Annual Report 2018/19

Neighbourhood Watch (NHW)

In the past 12 months the Chapmanslade NHW scheme has been adopted into the Wilts NHW scheme which is part of the overarching national scheme. This links Chapmanslade NHW into the Local Police team. Crime levels in our area remain well below national average and we continue to adopt a posture of warnings when crimes are notified in the local area.

The NHW Coordinator receives daily messages of local crimes from the Police via the Wilts Messaging site and passes on appropriate messages via the Village Facebook page, the Village website and, when there is direct crime in our very local area, via the Church email list. His policy is to filter out the 'town crime' in Warminster and Westbury which makes up the majority of reports on the system.

Currently 13 villagers are signed up to the Wilts Messaging site and more are encouraged to sign up at: www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk

A recent bid has been made by Short Street residents to be included in the scheme and to purchase NHW road signs and window stickers to deter crime, especially the outbreak of fly-tipping they have seen over the past 12 months. Procurement is via Wilts NHW and the NHW Coordinator will be seeking funds from the PC in the new financial year for new road signs throughout the village to get the NHW message across and bring our deterrence up to date.

The emphasis is still on the individual to spread the message when risks are alerted, and it has been an excellent sign of our community that many people openly inform neighbours and friends when potential risks are detected or alerted. But the information still does not reach all our community and new ways of informing particularly those not on the internet in a timely manner are still being explored along with the Village Plan Community Group.

Planning

One of the Parish Council's primary functions, and the one that takes up most of our time, is to consider planning applications concerning our parish, to comment on them to Wiltshire's planning authority and, where we consider this necessary, to object to applications if we believe they are not in the best interest of the parish. Most planning decisions are taken by planning officers at County Hall, under delegated powers, but where we feel a planning application is contentious we can ask Fleur de Rhe Philipe, our Wiltshire Councillor, to "call the application in" and, if she agrees, it is then considered by a sub-committee of elected councillors if the officers recommend approval. As parish councillors, we see our responsibility being to protect both the quality of our environment and the quality of residents' lives here in Chapmanslade. We believe that our knowledge of the parish and of residents' views on specific planning applications should be valuable assets for those people, whether they be professional planners or politicians, when reaching decisions.

So, this year we have had eleven applications to consider, and we will be looking at a further two later this evening. Most of these applications have not been contentious, simply involving minor improvements to residences planned by residents to bring their properties up to date. Some however, have involved more discussion, and some considerable controversy.

The proposal to build a number of houses at Barters Farm exercised the council on a number of occasions throughout the year, as indeed has been the case for a number of years now. In February the developers finally submitted their plans to build 39 dwellings on the site. Although their earlier proposals had proposed 26 dwellings, we raised no objection to the increased number but we did have major concerns about the mix of dwellings, particularly the lack of bungalows for those wishing to down size but remain in the village and affordable houses for shared ownership or rental. We saw these as crucial to the village. We also had major concerns regarding the safety of the proposed access to and from the site.

Later, in July, the developers submitted a revised application, for 43 dwellings, which largely addressed the parish council's concerns about the mix of houses and gave an assurance that the parish council would not be liable for the cost of maintaining the proposed play area on the site. However, the parish council's concerns about road safety were not addressed and therefore the council decided to object to the proposals on this basis. We expressed the hope that Wiltshire Council Highways and Chapmanslade Parish Council can agree a traffic management scheme that will address some of the concerns.

As of today, Wiltshire Council is still considering the planning application. We await the outcome.

Over the years, planning applications concerning the former Thoulstone Golf Course, much of which lies within the parish, have been varied in nature. In June, the site owner submitted a major application which proposed to demolish the former golf club and driving range buildings and to construct 28 self-catering holiday residences. The application also proposed provision for a restaurant, farm shop, conference space, spa treatment rooms, leisure pool and community hall. Staff accommodation, car parking and associated landscaping works were also included in the application.

The Parish council agreed to support this application and planning consent, with a large number of conditions, was granted in January. We wait to hear when construction will commence: we recognise that, when implemented, the project has the potential to bring economic and social benefits to the parish.

In the past ten years the owner of Sienna's Valley in Huntenhull Lane has submitted many planning applications, the most recent ones relating to the farming of alpacas. Two recent applications, the first in April and the second in October, sought permission to construct a temporary rural worker's dwelling, on the assertion by the owner that alpacas need 24 hour attention, seven days a week. A similar application had been made a few years earlier, which had been turned down and then gone to appeal, with the appeal being dismissed. The Parish Council has repeatedly challenged the assertion that alpacas need constant 24 hour attention and has expressed a number of other concerns particularly relating to Sienna Valley's position in a Special Landscape area. The planning authority turned down the April application but, after our County Councillor had withdrawn the call-in notice which would have meant the application would have been decided by the planning committee, the October application was approved by officers under delegated powers. A large number of conditions were specified, including confirmation that the planning consent is for three years, after which the property is to be demolished and the land returned to its original condition.

Footpaths

- The Chapmanslade Footpaths group met for the first time early last year and agreed to both adopt and maintain (where possible) the footpaths throughout the parish.
- The Wiltshire Rights of Way Officer visited and supported the completion of repair and replacement work in a number of areas.
- This was reinforced by some local assistance to put-in a kissing gate and clear some of the larger obstacles.
- The intent is to repeat this again this year.
- Discussions included how to improve the access out of the village to the East, especially the section from Barters to the A36 road-bridge; these discussions continue.
- Further thoughts are included in the Village Plan including opportunities to enable access to all.

Community Speed Watch (CSW)

The CSW team currently consists of 9 people with a new volunteer awaiting accreditation from Wilts Police. Since the last meeting the CSW team has now integrated into the Wilts Police Duty Sheet system whereby our activities are shared with the Local Police Team, and we are notified of their plans for Speed Patrols in the Parish. This has also helped our PCSOs to coordinate and attend our sessions which tend to be a fortnight a month as we share the laser gun with Dilton Marsh.

We also held a very successful Speed Awareness Day in the Summer with the most junior members of our community from the Busy Bees Pre-School supported by our PCSOs to highlight the issues of speeding to the children and to remind drivers that despite being on an A road our village is an area frequented by children.

To augment the efforts of CSW we applied to the PC to purchase a Speed Indicator Display (SID) at the end of 2018. After a thorough review it was decided to approach the Warminster Area Board for a grant for 50% of the capital cost to purchase the SID. The Area Board approved the sum of £ 1692.50 for the Parish Council and the SID and associated solar panel were procured in December and fitted in early January at the Frome end of the village. Results were positive and it was decided in March 2019 to expend further funds to provide a longer road sign post plus additional solar panel at the Westbury end of the village. This cost will be a further £900 paid by the Parish Council, the equipment has arrived and is awaiting Wilts Highways to erect the new post. Once installed the SID reader can be transported between the two ends of the village on the A3098, and national experience shows that this type of interchange retains the impact of speed reduction from the SID.

What are the impacts? Prior to the SID the CSW team regularly recorded average speeds in the mid-high 30 mph although these figures are unquantifiable as a regular count could not be made. A recent sample of over 19,000 hits from the SID shows that over the first week of March 2019 the following speeds were recorded for all vehicles entering the village from the Frome end:

38% pass the SID at 30-35 mph (within national tolerance of a 30 mph speed limit),

34% pass at 25-30 mph

18% pass at 35-40 mph

5% pass at 40-45 mph

2% pass at 20-25 mph

1% pass at 45-50 mph

Well over 85% of vehicles showed a slight reduction in speed from when the SID first registered them and flashed the 'Slow Down' notice to when they passed out from its beam.

Peak traffic times are 0600-0800 and 1600-1800 daily and we still see peaks in volume of over 600 vehicles per hour during these times. Peak speeding times are before 0700 and after 1900 daily.

Defibrillator

It's been over 4 years since our defibrillator arrived in the village, courtesy of the Friends of Frome Hospital.

Throughout that time, it been regularly checked & maintained & occasionally taken out of it's box in anger.

This year has been interesting as we were asked to stand down as Defib checkers in favour of a central team from Frome Hospital.

We have recently written an article for the BRIDGE reminding everyone of the locations of the 2 Defibs in Chapmanslade & Corsley and increasing the awareness of their existence.

From time to time you may see fundraising efforts for the Defib –if you do, your support would be appreciated.

Litter Pick

The Great British Spring Clean is a national event organised by the environmental lobby group "Keep Britain Tidy". This year, for the second time and as part of our Village Voice initiative, we organised our own litter pick to coincide with the national event. On a pleasant afternoon on March 23rd, 21 village residents, including a six-month old baby, donned their yellow vests and in the space of an hour collected enough litter from every part of the village to fill the equivalent of three wheelie bins.

The litter pick was further evidence of the strong community spirit that we have in Chapmanslade. We are proud of our village and its environment and by carrying out this task we are showing that we really do care. Hopefully, passing motorists, who are largely responsible for our litter problem, will notice how clean the village is and this might make them think again before discarding their litter through their car windows.