

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Wednesday 12th March 2008, at 8pm
in the Community Centre**

Present: Peter Fentem – Vice Chairman
Howard Rolfe
Russell Pope
Steve Reid
Susan Ross
Tim Fowell
Julie Redfern (from 8.45pm)

Elaine Culling - Clerk

23 members of the public

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman ran through the Agenda for the meeting.
Apologies for absence were received from Michelle Cookson.

2. Policing in Great Chesterford

Howard Rolfe introduced Chief Inspector Joe Wrigley, the District Police Commander, explaining that since he took up the position last October there has been a refreshing change regarding policing in the area as well as real sense of working together with other authorities.

C.I. Wrigley gave a brief talk during which he emphasised that going forward he hoped to make it easier for the public to speak to the police and for the police to communicate with the public. He intends for the police to have a regular presence at the North Area Panels, and will introduce new initiatives including Neighbourhood Action Panels and Neighbourhood Beat Surgeries.

C.I. Wrigley went on to explain the police structure as it applied to Great Chesterford. There is a Neighbourhood Specialist Officer, currently Sonia Grayland, together with a team of 4 Police Community Officers. There is also a Police Response Team available if necessary. He stressed that Great Chesterford is a relatively low area of crime, in the last six months there had been just over 30 crimes, and for that reason the police were low profile. The detection rates however are considered high.

The location of the Uttlesford district, on the border with Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk did present a challenge, and for this reason there were now fortnightly telephone conference calls with neighbouring forces to liaise on police matters.

Finally C.I. Wrigley outlined the 4 B's a scheme to help residents detect and prevent crime in their neighbourhood:

1. Be suspicious – always check the credentials of callers.
2. Build relationships – get to know your neighbours.
3. Be bold – report any suspicious activity to the police.
4. Brave it out – if unhappy about a caller, don't let them in.

The new contact telephone number for the police regarding non-emergency issues is 0300 333 4444, for emergencies it remains 999.

There now followed a Question & Answer session.

Q. How can the police, with its new style of policing, ever hope to have the local knowledge that the 'Village Bobby' used to have, and be able to respond to incidents as quickly?

A. C.I. Wrigley explained that Great Chesterford was in fact in a better position as police cover was now 24/7 whereas before the village only had cover whilst the 'Village Bobby' was on duty. As a result more crimes are being detected.

Q. Why does the notice for the Mobile Police Unit say 'use it or lose it'? Surely its presence shouldn't be dependent on crime figures.

A. C.I. Wrigley felt that this was probably a marketing ploy left over from a previous year and assured the audience that the Mobile Police Unit was safe.

Q. Could there be a police presence at the Great Chesterford railway station at night to coincide with train times, as the location of the station is somewhat remote.

A. C.I. Wrigley made a note of this request.

Q. Is it possible to state how much contact officers have with the village?

A. C.I. Wrigley stated he was concerned about visibility and was looking to increase it as he appreciated that it is this that makes communities 'feel safe'. He added that officers were visiting during the night when most people were in bed, and so would not be aware of this.

Q. The Parish Council has wished to resurrect the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the village, but unfortunately has so far failed. Could it be explained how the Neighbourhood Action Panels differ.

A. C.I. Wrigley explained that Neighbourhood Action Panels were more of a lifestyle document in which a community stated the things that concerned them, for example speeding traffic. It would then go on to state how it would help to address these concerns, for example set up a Community Speed Watch scheme.

Q. With the news that Hexcel at Duxford were to be receiving 2 deliveries a day, by road, of the chemical Acrylonitrile, what arrangements, if any, have been made with the police to ensure its safe transportation.

A. C.I. Wrigley will look into this matter and report back via the Parish Council.

At the end of the session, Howard Rolfe thanked C.I. Wrigley for attending the meeting and agreed that the Parish Council would look into producing a Neighbourhood Action Plan, and the setting up of a Community Speed Watch scheme.

3. Minutes of the 2007 Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the 2007 Annual Parish Meeting were approved. Peter Fentem updated the meeting on the following topics:

- **Part Night Initiative** – The Parish Council was now confident that although not yet put right, the problem with their erratic behaviour was now understood and it was hoped to have the street lights working correctly soon. The trial is due to last a year with a review due in the summer.
- **Station Parking** – Work on a station car park was due to start in the current financial year, however this has not yet taken place and Lorries are still experiencing access problems. This will need to be followed up.

4. Parish Council Q & A Session

Q. A resident of School Street wished to raise concerns over the traffic flow and safety issues, caused by both the school bus and the number of cars that attended twice a day. A proposal to provide off street parking for the bus had been submitted in 2002; however no response has been received. The resident saw the advantages of off street parking to be that:

1. Teaching staff would have full control over the children getting on and off the bus.
2. It would enable the possibility of 2 way traffic flow in School Street.
3. The bus would not necessarily have to negotiate around parked cars.

The current parking spot for the school bus meant that diesel fumes regularly entered his property with the vibrations possibly damaging the structure.

Julie Redfern responded by saying that she had recently met with the chair of the school governors to discuss the traffic problems. The school was reluctant to lose valuable playground space simply to enable the bus to be off the road. They had initiated a walking bus from the Crown and Thistle pub; however this was not being used as much as it could.

It was appreciated that the problem also extended to the adjoining roads with many examples of inconsiderate parking. Howard Rolfe agreed to contact the police regarding this matter.

Q. Why has the kerb, adjacent to the bollard in Newmarket Road (near to Eastgate), not been built up, allowing Lorries to mount the kerb and potentially put pedestrians at risk.

A. Howard Rolfe said that a request for this to be done had previously been made and will be done so again.

Q. Could an update be given on the progress of installing the CCTV system at the Recreation Ground, for which the Parish Council should be congratulated.

A. The Clerk reported that work on installing the cameras and equipment at the Community Centre was mostly complete. A trench was due to be dug the

following week, after which the remaining remote cameras will be installed. It is hoped to have the system up and running very soon.

Q. Were the Parish Council aware of the poor state of the village bus service to Saffron Walden and Cambridge. Buses were missing certain stops out, and in some cases not arriving at all.

A. Peter Fentem replied that the Parish Council had been made aware and had obtained a number of complaint forms for users of the service to complete. As these forms have all been taken, more will be obtained

Q. Why were the multi-sports lights often on when in fact no one was using the surface.

A. Russell Pope reported that the lights were operated by a switch and that they were set up to go out at 10pm if users of the surface omitted to switch them off themselves. It was appreciated that the system was not ideal however a better system would involve some investment which the Parish Council would need to allocate funds for.

5. Chairman's Concluding Remarks

The Vice Chairman thanked everyone for attending and stated that the village needed to be alert to the following issues:

1. The storage of acrylonitrile at the Hexcel plant in Duxford which posed a very real risk to our community.
2. The proposed changes to airspace in the region, together with the application for a second runway at Stansted
3. The possibility of a wind farm being built close by.

6. Refreshments

The audience was invited to stay on for refreshments and informal discussions

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.