



CHEARSLEY
YOUR VILLAGE

Reports to the Annual Village Meeting 2023/24

With reports from:

Chearsley Parish Council
Chearsley Village Historical Society

Chearsley Parish Council Annual Report

A word from the Chair of the Parish Council

I am delighted to present this overview of major events from the last year in Chearsley. There has been a great deal of activity, and the village and Parish Council together are making great progress, providing a benchmark for other villages in the area. The highlights of these achievements are set out below.

There has been much to celebrate in the last year, but some sadness too. We have recently lost both Keith Turnbull and Keith Wright. Keith Turnbull was a major contributor to village affairs, serving both as a Parish Councillor, and as a key member of the Village Hall committee. During his time in the village, he made a major contribution. Keith Wright, a local business man and long term resident, was also a major force of good in the village with his continuing support for the church and a range of village initiatives. To the families of both, we express our condolences but also our thanks for all of their hard work on our behalf.

I would also like to thank my fellow councillors and officers who, over the last year, have been a great support to me. I would draw particular attention to Ian Houseman, whose main responsibility was village trees and verges, and who decided to retire from the Parish Council in February of this year.

NicB

Nick Brown, Chair of Chearsley Parish Council

Events of 2023/24

The Parish Council exists to serve the interests of the village of Chearsley. To this end, it is a pleasure to report that the last year has been an eventful one for Chearsley, beginning in the Spring with the Coronation celebrations and the siting of a Coronation Bench, and the opening of the new Village Hall playground, followed up by two long awaited projects, the kerbing in Church Lane, and the project to protect the village verges from careless parking. In addition, the Parish council has been very active in moves to restrict the volume of heavy traffic passing through the village, and damaging kerbs and edges as it does so. These projects apart, there has been business as usual, with the continued vigilance of the Planning Group, ensuring that any new developments fit with the rest of the village, maintenance of pathways and by-ways, a new flagpole and flags and a number of other smaller projects. Work continues on tree cutting, clearance of drains and keeping the village in good order. This was acknowledged by the placing of Chearsley in the 2023 Best Kept Village competition. In the very near future, several of the 'Historical' signposts in the village will be replaced by traditionally styled signs.

The council has gone to great lengths to ensure that it and its officers meet the standards of behaviour expected of a public body, and to this end, it has adopted a series of policies and procedures, to provide benchmarks and guidelines to the standards expected.

There has been a lot going on and, as you will have seen from the recent publication, Chearsley Initiatives Update, there is much more to come. You will also see from the accounts, the Parish Council has been building up reserves in order to finance future projects, such as some work on the Horse Chestnut Island and future work to protect the sunken lanes and banks.

It is even more satisfying to be able to report that this has been achieved without an increase in Precept and this will stay at the same level for next year too, despite all the projects in hand. We, the Parish council, recognise that we must do our utmost to resist the upward pressure on costs and we will continue to manage your resources as effectively as we can.



MP Gregg Smith opens the refurbished village playground, May 2023



Cecily and Sam Church

Winners of the Chearsley Historical Society

Treasure Hunt, 2023

Precept

The precept, ie funds provided by Bucks CC, (but sourced by the village ratepayers), to enable the Parish Council to carry out its obligations, for 2023/24 was £38,000. For this, the village monitors planning applications to avoid development which does not suit the village, maintains its own verges and banks, keeps pathways clear, supports local initiatives and represents the village in wider meetings. The accounts are attached to this report so that you can see where the Parish Council has spent your money. It is a matter of pride that in 2023/24 we kept the precept at the level of the previous year, and we shall do the same for 2024/25. This is particularly important given that the council has taken over several initiatives previously managed on our behalf by Aylesbury Vale/Bucks CC, such as grass trimming, kerbing, signage....

The Parish Council

The Council meets in public normally on the third Monday of every month in the Village Hall and the agenda for each meeting is published on both the village website and village notice board several days before the meeting.

Members of the public are welcome to attend these meetings and the Council looks forward to the regular input from parishioners. Full minutes of every public meeting are published on the Parish Council section of the village web site.

A list of Parish Councillors, and the support team, can be found on the same site. If you cannot attend a meeting but have an issue to raise, please feel free to contact one of these.

Please visit the Parish Council section of the village website www.chearsleypc.org.uk. Here you will find a list of Parish Councillors, Policies and Procedures adopted by the Parish Council, copies of minutes of meetings, and the Parish Council financial returns along with other information about the work of the Council.

Chearsley Parish Council

Year to 31 March 2024

Unaudited accounts

Income and Expenditure Statement

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
Opening cash			72,058	
Income		84,283		
Precept (i)	19,000		19,000	
Precept (ii)	19,000		19,000	
VAT refund	2,168		3,876	
Contribution from third parties	<u>260</u>		1,360	
		40,428		43,236
Expenses – see over for analysis (31,011)		(49,598)		
Closing cash		<u>75,113</u>		<u>£84,283</u>

Note that the closing cash is £75,113. Of this, certain sums have already been reserved or committed to ongoing and future village projects:

- Horse Chestnut Island work – £47,000
- Verge protection -£4,000
- Kerbing - £15,000

In the year, one of the reserves brought forward for the kerbing of Church Lane has been used, at a cost of £23,306 – see below.

Notes to the Accounts
Major expense categories

	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries	4,234	4,174
Administration	3,458	3,003
Grounds maintenance	7,440	7,778
Village furniture maintenance	909	755
Village events	1,766	2,067
Village grants/donations	100	1,200
Traffic calming/Kerbing	23,306	3,695
Other village projects	8,385	8,339
	<u>£49,958</u>	<u>£31,011</u>

Additions to village assets

	£
2023 Opening balance	97,779
2023/24 Disposals	
o Old flagpole	(319)
2023/24 Additions	
o Kerbing of Church Lane	23,306
o Traffic barriers, (cost so far)	4,818
o New flagpole	894
o Cheersley flag	226
o Coronation bench	772
o Garden machinery	1228
2024 Closing balance	<u>£128,704</u>

Notes to the Accounts

Analysis of the major movements in Income and Expense

Income

At £40,428 income for the year was slightly down on the previous year. The main reason for this was in the VAT recovered during the year, £2,168 compared with £3,876 last year. In addition, income from Other Sources was well down, £260 against £1,360. The only income in this category this year was the sale of Coronation mugs. (The cost of these mugs was shown in the 2022/23 Accounts). Income from the precept, a direct cost to the parishioners of Chearsley, remained at the same level as last year.

Expenses

- Salaries

Salaries are higher this year, as costs increase in line with nationally agreed levels.

- Administration

Administration costs are broadly in line, year on year, allowing for inflation. They include salary administration, insurance, internal and external audit costs, street lighting/electricity, and sundry costs. Almost every cost category has increased in line with the underlying trends, but the major changes, year on year, are in insurance costs and the (new) cost of maintaining the village website.

- Grounds maintenance

Grounds maintenance, cutting the Green and other village pathways, tree cutting and path maintenance, are lower this year. The Council supported the cost of widening a village pathway, £1,800 and paid for one gate on a village bye-way, in 2022/23, and this has not been necessary in 2023/24. This year, however, the Parish Council has invested in three pieces of garden machinery with a total cost of £1,228, to enable the village to meet its commitments to work devolved from Bucks Council.

- Village events

The main feature in this category is the cost of village events to celebrate the coronation of the King, £1,041 and the purchase of the village Christmas Tree.

- Donations

There was only one donation in the year, £100, to support the villagers working in the church. Last year, the Parish council made a significant donation to aid in the purchase of playground equipment for the Village Hall.

- Traffic calming/Other Village Projects

This has been an area of major expense, in part due to the fruition of longer term plans.

The kerbing of Church Lane has now been carried out at a cost of £23,306, and work has also begun on the installation of barriers to protect the village verges, £4,818. In addition, the Council has purchased additional/replacement flags, a new flagpole and a bench to celebrate the King's coronation.



Chearsley Village
Historical Society

Chearsley Village Historical Society Report to Annual Village Meeting (May 2024)

Committee Members:

Derek Allen, Graham Barry, John Howard, David Impey, John Lewis, Sian Lewis, Karen Vear, Julia Wood.

Work in last year has included:

Establishment of formal constitution/membership structure
Setting up of CVHS website and archive
Organisation of events

Events during last year:

June 2023:

‘Chearsley Pilgrims’ (film produced by North Marston History Club) + ‘Chearsley Village in the Swinging Sixties’

October 2023:

‘Chearsley Village Treasure Hunt’

February 2024:

‘Great Train Robbery’

May 2024:

‘Chearsley Village Pub Revival Day’

Future Events Planned:

November 2024:

‘Story of Bletchley Park’

Possible Future Events:

‘Chearsley Voices’

Visit to local venues (e.g. Rycote Park, Notley Abbey, Long Crendon Courthouse)

Farming & Traditional Crafts in Chearsley Village

‘Beating the Bounds’/ ‘Pilgrimage to North Marston’

Future Development Projects:

Historical archive

‘Heritage Trail’ in Chearsley Village

Any questions?