

CHIPPENHAM COMMUNITY AREA PARISH FORUM

Chippenham Community Area Board Update April 2016

The Parish Forum has met on two occasions this year, their January meeting in the Goss Croft Hall, Upper Seagry and March meeting in Grittleton Village Hall. Both have been well attended and have covered a number areas of concern, particularly relating to highways and streetscene and they were pleased to welcome Mr Bill Parks, Wiltshire Council Head of Service - Local Highways (North) and Mr Chris Clark Wiltshire Council Local Highways Area Manager (West) as their Guest Speakers to the January meeting. They updated the Forum on the restructuring of Highway services in the County and advised that the Parish Steward Scheme was to be re-introduced in April 2016 and all Parishes should appoint a local contact for the Steward. This news was well received by Forum members who also heard that Mr Richard Dobson had returned as the point of contact for the Chippenham Community Area. The Forum congratulated Mr Parks on the "Bill and Adrian Newsletter", which was written in a helpful manner, and it was hoped that this would continue and it was noted that in the January edition an article advised that it was possible for local Agreements to be made direct with The Landscape Group for additional services to be funded by each Parish. A major part of the discussion evolved around the MyWiltshireApp reporting system, which all considered to be a failure to date. All agreed that the whole system needed a re-think. The Forum was advised that a Wiltshire Council Task Group was considering options. Many felt that the MyWiltshireApp system should be closed down until problems were resolved.

Forum members raised issues relating to consultations being carried out on possible changes to the Freedom of Information Act, where the view was taken that the status quo should be maintained and proposed changes to National Planning Policy, which could impact on Affordable Housing, Section 106 and the CIL. Another area of concern was the issue of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan and recent correspondence with the Examiner. Members who had attended the Examination, which had been suspended, shared the Examiners criticism of Wiltshire Council and which could now lead to a lengthy time delay creating the opportunity for developers to take advantage of the situation, as it was now likely that any draft/final report might not be available until December 2016

Other discussions at the January meeting related to issues raised and information received by Parish Councils from Wiltshire Council since the previous Forum meeting and included Briefing Notes 268, 270, 274, 276 relating to the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan Examination update, to Surface Development Restrictions for Hydraulic Fracturing, the f40 group – fair funding campaign and the Wiltshire Online Programme – Broadband Update. Of particular concern was the Bus Service Consultation closing on 4th April 2016.

A Consultation was also being carried out by the Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner on the cost of policing in 2016-2017 and with this in mind the Guest Speaker at the Forum's March meeting was Mr Angus Macpherson, Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire and Swindon. who updated the Forum on his role and duties as Commissioner. His responsibility for producing the Police and Crime Plan, to monitor the performance of the Police Authority and to hold the Chief Constable to account and for financing policing through raising a Precept, following public consultation, which at the present time is the lowest in the South West of England Region. With financial challenges ahead there is a need to seek efficiencies through better communications and restructuring to meet a requirement of £2.5 million in savings. He advised that he had no role in operational matters, which fall entirely with the Chief Constable. He stressed that Neighbourhood Policing is a high priority. Angus highlighted the introduction of ICE Cards, a Wiltshire initiative that could be used Nationally.

Members raised issues relating to the Local Youth Network (LYN), having heard from Mr Richard Williams (Community Youth Officer) at the Forum's November 2015 meeting, and noted that the LYN Questionnaire circulated to Parish Councils had been intended to target children living in the rural areas but there was a need to reconsider some of the questions as they referred more to town children who could access town facilities more easily. An issue raised by Chippenham Without Parish Council was of particular interest and concern to all members as the Council wished to discuss Highway/Verge/Ditch reinstatement in Chippenham Without Parish and adjacent Parishes. All Parishes had similar concerns and there could be an opportunity to raise the issues at the

Wiltshire Council Parish and Town Council Involvement Evening in April. Another topic raised concerned SIDS and whether any Parish Councils had considered taking on SIDS since the change in Wiltshire Policy in October 2015. It was clear that few had considered taking this forward because of the practicalities and costs involved.

Other discussions at the March meeting related to issues raised and information received by Parish Councils from Wiltshire Council since the previous Forum meeting and included the invitation by Community First to a Wiltshire Neighbourhood Planning Roadshow, a reminder on the Wiltshire Council Bus Service Consultation, the Local Youth Network (LYN) Young People's Questionnaire, Bill and Adrian's Local Highways Newsletter (Feb 2016) and the Wiltshire Council Parish and Town Council Involvement Evening invitation.

The Community Area Parish Forum meets again on Wednesday 4th May 2016 in the Union Chapel, Kington Langley.