

CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT 2024

THIS REPORT COVERS THE PERIOD 1st APRIL 2023 to 31st MARCH 2024

Thank you and welcome to all who have joined us this evening for the Annual Parish Assembly meeting of Chappel Parish Council.

I would like to start by congratulating Chris Eaton for being awarded the British Empire Medal in the 2024 New Year's Honours List for his services to the Community in Chappel and Wakes Colne. Congratulations Chris; this is so well deserved. Enjoy the garden party this summer at the Palace.

I also wish to congratulate our own Parish Councillor, Patrick Dent for being awarded the Wakes Colne 2023 Award as the Speed Watch Champion for Chappel and Wakes Colne. I know Patrick will wish me to reiterate he accepts the award on behalf of all the volunteers who assist him. What a great way to start our Annual Report!

Onto business of the Parish Council. There was no contested election in 2023 and myself, Peter Neubauer, Nick Ingram, Amber Cox and Patrick Dent continue as Parish Councillors. Tony Langley who had been a Chappel Councillor for many years decided to retire gracefully at our April meeting. Tony is busy with his family, at the school and with the Millennium Green Committee. We continue to rely on his knowledge and thank him for his contribution in all matters.

Councillor William Sunnucks has been our Ward Councillor for two years and attends meetings whenever his schedule allows. Councillor Lewis Barber also attends our monthly meetings when possible and has assisted us greatly in our Speed Watch and Vehicle Activated Sign projects. We thank them both for their continued support.

In previous call for sites Chappel Parish Council agreed that infill sites should be considered, but were concerned about forming a ribbon effect into Great Tey. Smaller sized houses should be encouraged for starter homes and those in the community that wished to downsize. Chappel Parish Council will be discussing the new call for sites at forthcoming meetings. If you have a view please join us or let us know your comments.

The Role of a Parish Council with regard to Planning Matters is to represent local views and to provide local knowledge; raise areas of concern; inform and add value to the process and if felt necessary contact and involve Ward Councillors. Much time and consideration is spent prior to comments being forwarded to Colchester Planning Department.

Pylons – The consultation on the Norwich to Tilbury pylons continues. Chappel Parish Council has commented and has resolved to support neighbouring Parishes who are affected by this proposal. Our comments in July 2023 stated that Chappel is located in the heart of the Colne Valley which enjoys a regional reputation for being a “ribbon” of outstanding natural beauty and which Essex County Highways have designated as “The scenic route through the Colne Valley” with appropriate highway signage at the A12 junction. The proposal would have a devastating visual and economic impact to the communities located in The Colne Valley. A request was made for a fuller and more transparent appraisal of all possible options be undertaken. We will be discussing the latest consultation at the May and June meetings. Please let us know your views.

The Play Area continues to be popular with both residents and visitors. Over the last year two more benches and a new tractor rocker have been installed. A big thank you to Nick Ingram who checks the area regularly. I would also like to thank Stour Valley Tree Services for the bark which is topped up on a regular basis. Unfortunately the native oak tree which we planted has died. This will be replaced in due course.

Each meeting Patrick provides Councillors with an update on shifts undertaken by the Speed Watch team. We are saddened to hear of abuse that volunteers endure during some shifts. We fully support Patrick and his dedicated team and thank them all. The Vehicle Activated Sign situated on the A1124 by Wakes Colne Parish Council has made a difference in speeds. We are hoping that this will also be the case in Swan Street. We thank Helen, our clerk for her work and dedication in bringing this project to fruition. The siting and installation has taken many months.

There have been several accidents along the A1124 from Broom House corner to Rose Green. These are logged and reported by the Parish Council. An assessment has been requested by Essex Highways due to the increased accidents along this stretch of road.

Councillors met with Allotment holders in September to listen and discuss ideas. The plots are looking much neater. At present there is a waiting list of people requesting a plot.

The Parish Field now has two resident beehives. Vicky Wing kindly walked around the field with Essex Wildlife Trust in October who commented how wonderful it was to visit Chappel with its numerous green spaces – what a wonderful place to call home. Our plan is to undertake work in the coming year identifying trees and plants. If you would like to join us please contact us.

We continue to liaise with residents and local businesses on a regular basis. We supported the village picnic which formed part of the Kings Coronation event held at The East Anglian Railway Museum.

Councillors have attended Code of Conduct Training and Planning Training held by Colchester City Council. Councillor Neubauer attends the monthly Highway briefing meetings.

Each year I conclude this report with thanks and again I wish to thank all those who support Chappel Parish Council whether as a Councillor, Contractor or Resident. I especially wish to draw attention to Cathy and Jim Beard who have, for many years, without fuss undertaken many jobs without asking. We wish them both well. Our Contractors who remain with us and provide an excellent service.

Helen our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for her commitment, advice and guidance.

To Peter, Nick, Amber and Patrick. We have two Councillor positions vacant. Please come along to one of our monthly meetings, see and listen to what we do. Our meeting is held on the second Monday of each month (except August). You may like to join us and make a difference. Our contact details are easy to find.

Chappel Parish Council have a website www.chappel.org and a Facebook Page. Keep in touch with us. If you have an idea or comment we would like to hear from you.

Sue Chamley Chairman – Chappel Parish Council