

CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT 2025

THIS REPORT COVERS THE PERIOD 1st APRIL 2024 to 31st MARCH 2025

Thank you and welcome to all who have joined us this evening for the Annual Parish meeting of Chappel Parish Council. I am pleased that this year we are back to having this meeting jointly with Wakes Colne Parish Council.

Chappel Parish Council – we meet on the second Monday of every month except August. Helen Cook, our clerk, who has been with us for 13 years continues to steer us through the many rules and regulations that govern Parish Council and which become more and more each year. Her commitment to the role is outstanding and which as Councillors we all thank her whole heartedly. I would like to welcome Nigel Lippiatt who we co-opted as a Chappel Councillor at our February meeting. He joins myself, Peter, Nick, Amber and Patrick.

I wish to congratulate Tony Langley for being awarded the Wakes Colne 2024 Award for his contribution to the villages over the years. Tony was a Chappel Parish Councillor for many years and his knowledge has been invaluable.

Agenda items over the past year have included Planning including Local Plan consultation, Speed Watch including installation of the Vehicle Activated Sign, Play Area, Allotments and the Parish Field, Grass Cutting, Street Lighting, Adoption of Parish Council Procedures and Policies, Grants and Financial Matters.

Planning appears on every Agenda as new applications are received. The Parish Council's role is to provide local knowledge, raise areas of concern and represent local views. Comments are sent to Colchester City Council Planning Department who make the final decision. Much time is given to appraising each application before commenting. The new Local Plan is still awaiting consultation. If Colchester City Council do not have a Plan in place it could leave villages very vulnerable due to changes in Government policy. In the current Local Plan, Chappel has an allocated site for 30 houses which has not yet reached planning approval. In the new Plan this has been increased to 35. Wakes Colne has a proposal of 200 houses. A further vote is due to take place by the Local Plan Committee on the 7th May.

I am pleased to report that after many years of discussion and obtaining the correct licences the Vehicle Activated Sign on Swan Street was installed on 4th April 2024. Our thanks to Councillor Lewis Barber and Councillor William Sunnucks for their support and grants that were given in order to assist with the purchase of the equipment. Thanks also to Councillor Patrick Dent and Paul Stocker who extract the data each month for our meetings. Patrick also continues with Speed Watch duties with his band of volunteers as and when possible.

Continuing on the Highways theme Councillor Peter Neubauer attends Highway Briefings and as a Council we log and report Highway accidents that occur within the village.

The Play Area has had repairs undertaken during the year and continues to be popular. Comments from both residents and visitors are positive which is always good to hear. Thank you Nick for continuing to monitor the equipment and keeping bark tidy. Thank you to Wakes Colne Parish Council for their annual grant to support the area.

The allotments are all being worked and look really nice this year. May I thank Vicky Wing who has helped prune the fruit trees on the Parish Field and identified apple saplings this year. Vicky has her bee hives on the field.

JPB Landscapes continue with their grass cutting schedule around the village. A&J Lighting Solutions look after our street lights and TBS Hygiene empty our bins each week.

You will have noticed the clearance around and under the viaduct. This land belongs to National Rail. Councillors had become very concerned regarding the safety of users of the play area, visitors to the Millennium Green and footpath walkers. We were also concerned with the general upkeep of the Grade II listed structure as loose brickwork and cracks were visible, together with ivy growing on the arches of the viaduct. A further letter was sent to Network Rail together with Heritage England, Bernard Jenkins and William Sunnucks. The work was undertaken by Contractors who we feel have made an excellent job.

As we enter into our new year, our AGM takes place in May, the Government's plans for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation is underway. As yet we do not know how this will affect Parish Councils. We will keep you advised.

Pressure on funds and resources have increased. Chappel is a special place to live and the Parish Council work quietly and hard behind the scenes to keep our assets safe and looking nice to all to use and enjoy.

We have our website page www.chappel.org and a Facebook page. Please follow us and let us know if you have any queries or comments. We would love to hear from you. We are currently short of one Councillor. Come to a meeting. See and hear what we do. You may like to join us keep Chappel special.

Sue Chamley – Chairman, Chappel Parish Council

If this is your first meeting I will just explain that this is not a Council meeting but our chance to look back on the work the Council has undertaken during the year. You may follow our activities by attending meetings, reading our Minutes or updates which appear in the Village Reporter.

As a Parish Council we strive for good practice and transparent decision making.

Chappel Parish Council receives funding from the local Council Tax known as the Parish Precept. The Council are responsible for administering funds received through the Precept for the benefit of the local community. Councillors are very aware of the trust placed in them by you to spend public money wisely.

Role of Chappel Parish Council:

Represent the views of residents

Liaise with Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council

Receive copies of all Planning Applications and make comment on them

Maintain the children's Play Area, Allotments, Parish Field and Sports Field

Arrange grass cutting and hedge cutting by Contractors

Monitor and maintain the footpath network

Maintain the Parish Council Website www.chappel.org and Facebook page

Grants to Village Hall and Essex & Suffolk Community Rail Partnership – Jubilee Flower display

Speedwatch and VAS projects. Patrick Dent and his small team of volunteers undertake speedwatch sessions when time and weather permit. The team have been out and about in both villages for 7 years now. We thank Patrick and all his team for their time and effort in this

cause. Several years ago in this report I described Patrick as “a dog with a bone” where Speedwatch and Highway issues are concerned. I can report – nothing changes. Patrick will give a more detailed report shortly.

Accidents along the A1124 at Rose Green and Broom House corner are being recorded and reported. Potholes and in particular the sunken drain on the A1124 continue to appear each month. With the support of Lewis Barber our Colchester City Councillor we aim to have these problems resolved.

Our wonderful Play Area remains a big attraction to residents and visitors alike. Nick Ingram is our Councillor who monitors the area and keeps it topped up with bark. A native Oak Tree has been planted and a commemorative bench to mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee is about to be installed. We thank Nick for all the time he gives to this asset of our Village. I would also like to express our thanks to Steve Bennett for his work and support with regard to both the Play Equipment and benches which he has mended, repainted and reinstalled.

Each year this meeting celebrates our two villages and those who work to make and keep them places where people wish to live and visit. Many thanks are due to those who work behind the scenes and support us who sit on the Council.

Chappel Parish Council continues under the guidance of Helen our Clerk who joined us in October 2012. Helen is invaluable to the Council for her knowledge and work undertaken on our behalf. She has guided us this year to Online Banking which was no mean feat!!!!

To Peter, Nick, Tony, Patrick and Amber who all have their areas of expertise and ensure the smooth running of each Council meeting. We continue with our Contractors Jack Perfect-Brown and his team for grass mowing, Jonathan Doe for hedge cutting, Tom Leggett for tree work and bark supplied for the Play Area. David, Roger and Ross Barron for being here when we need them. Cathy Beard with Jim as support for emptying the play area bins, litter picking and extras they both do. Angus Forrest for support when needed. To all who make Chappel a wonderful place to live.

We do have two Councillor positions vacant. Please come along to one of our monthly meetings held on the second Monday of each month (except August); see and listen to what we do. 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