



Chorleywood Matters



Issue No 8 Spring 2007

News & views from Chorleywood Parish Council

COME AND TALK TO THE EXPERTS AND GET THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Meet the Cattle on Chorleywood Common

**SATURDAY 14 APRIL
11 AM - 3PM**

The South Herts Common Grazing Group is organising a series of road shows in April, commencing with Chorleywood. There will be rare breed cattle and sheep with an experienced local farmer on hand to tell you all about them.

One of the main aims of the road show is to talk to people about reintroducing grazing to the commons. In the past, cattle would have been seen on Chorleywood common. Unfortunately this ceased around the time of the Second World War, and as a result the landscape began to change. Trees began to take over where once there were wild flower meadows and lowland heath. No one really noticed this was happening until it became clear that we were losing significant amount of these precious habitats.

The Parish Council wishes to readdress this balance and, as part of a consultation exercise, invite you along to this fun and informative day out. At the Road Show you will find an exhibition about grazing, and information about access gates and the type of fencing that would be used.

Along with the Parish Council and the Countryside Management Service, it is hoped that representatives from Natural England, the Chiltern Commons Network and Friends of the Common will be attending together with other voluntary organisations.

This event will be held in the first fire ride by the Lorry Car Park just off the A404.

The Precept 2007/8

On your Council Tax demand you will see an item covering expenditure by Chorleywood Parish Council. This is known as the Precept and is the sum set by the Council to finance its functions. It is collected by the District Council on our behalf as part of the Council Tax.

Over the past year the ever-increasing pressure to comply with new Government legislation and the cost of implementing this continues to rise. The Parish Council is now required to carry out risk assessments on all its activities, including health and safety and fire safety legislation. In order for the Village Halls to be allowed to operate under the new licensing legislation, we have had to pay for two officers to be trained to become licensees. Insurance and audit fees have doubled over the past three years. All these extra costs have an impact on the Precept, and the Council has been forced to raise it considerably this year in order to be able to meet the demands which are being placed by central government on local government.

The Precept covers running the Council's office and the work carried out by the Council over the year, including maintaining the Common, the Village Halls, the allotments and the cemeteries. The Office has a staff of four, including the Clerk, and we employ three full-time Rangers. Also, the addition of the newly refurbished Bullsland Hall to the Council's management has necessitated the appointment of a second caretaker to our staff.

Additionally, we have two large capital items this year, namely, major repairs to the roof of the War Memorial Hall and, in order to meet the Government's disabled access requirements, we will have to tarmac the paths in the new section of the Lawn cemetery. Nevertheless, all this work will be done at the cost to each household (based on a Band D payer) of less than £1 per week.

The Council's 17 councillors receive no remuneration for their services.





Satellite Mis-direction

The Council has been forced to install a barrier at each end of the track between Shepherds Bridge and Artichoke Heights to protect the Common from vehicles. Many satellite navigation systems appear to think this track is a road and drivers are being directed along it. When they discover they cannot get through, instead of going back, they are then driving on to the Common, where they get lost or, when it is wet, bogged down. The Rangers have had to pull any number of vehicles off the Common in the past months and the damage caused to the grassland has been considerable.

Satellite navigation systems are creating so many problems by sending vehicles down inappropriate routes that the Government has initiated a consultation on the matter to which the Parish Council has sent a strong response.

Cricket on the Common

Some of you will be aware that the Cricket Club approached the Parish Council requesting that 11ft high netting be put up for the whole of the playing season around the edge of the pitch opposite the A404 to prevent balls flying into the road.

The Parish Council unanimously support the continuation of cricket on the Common and sympathise with the Cricket Club's problems. However, the Council must obey the laws that govern Common Land, not just the byelaws but the Acts of Parliament. There are also strict planning restrictions on what may or may not be done in the Conservation Area.

Unfortunately, this first proposal which the Cricket Club brought to the Council and the Planning

Rights of Way

At last! At the end of last year, Herts CC finally produced an up-dated version of the Hertfordshire Rights of Way Definitive Map for the Chorleywood area.

This now includes the footpaths and bridleways in Chenies Ward, which up to now have remained on the Bucks Map. These paths have now been re-numbered into the Herts Map, so that we no longer have three footpaths with the number 2 in the Parish. We are immensely grateful to Cllr Peter Kemp for having undertaken the task of completely re-surveying our Rights of Way network and, on the basis of his report, the Council will now be up-dating and replacing the signage where necessary. Once this has been completed, we hope to bring out a leaflet detailing all the footpaths and bridleways in the Parish.

Authority did not comply with these constraints and therefore had to be refused on legal grounds, but the Parish Council and TRDC have continued to discuss with the Cricket Club possible ways forward which would be within the law.

The Council is willing to bund the edge of the Common along the A404 opposite the cricket pitch as a preliminary measure and the Club are undertaking to carry out a survey during the season to determine precisely where the balls fly. With this information it is hoped we can find a solution, which will achieve the necessary degree of protection for the Club and the public while complying with the legal and planning constraints which protect the Common.



Adopt-a-Path

The Council would like to update its list of path wardens. Some years ago we invited those who walk a path regularly to adopt their path. The task is not onerous. We would like you to keep an eye on your path and let the Council Office know if it needs any work done on it. The Council maintains the paths on a regular basis but things like a sudden spurt of nettle growth or damage to signage may not be picked up immediately and information from our path wardens is invaluable and much appreciated. However, there are gaps in the network which we would like to fill so, if you would like to adopt your favourite path, please call the Parish Office on 285594 to see whether your path needs a warden.

VILLAGE DAY

Please note that Village Day this year will take place on Saturday 14 July.

Have you seen a Dingy Footman on the Common lately?

Or perhaps a Ruby Tiger, July Highflier, Burnished Brass or Merveille du Jour? They are all some of the hundreds of moths identified in a recent Invertebrate Survey carried out on the Common and funded by the Friends of Chorleywood Common. The survey recorded 56 species of hoverfly, 81 species of beetle and over three hundred species of moth. This study has added valuable information to the species' lists which we have for the Common and has been forwarded to the Herts Biological Records Centre to be added to their bio-diversity database. The full list is available to view in the Parish Office. Our grateful thanks go to the Friends for arranging the survey.

We would also like to express our thanks to Bill Cattle, a long established resident of Chorleywood, who generously provides us every year with a list of the butterflies seen on the Common and in Chorleywood House grounds. These are also forwarded to HBRC.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

In spite of the unsettled weather, this year's Christmas Fayre attracted a good attendance. The new Christmas lights, partly funded by the Parish Council, were very favourably commented on and the shops, especially those selling food, did extremely good business. Our congratulations to 'Catch of the Day' for winning the prize for the Best Dressed Window with their splendid Antarctic display.

Police Community Support Officers

You will be pleased to hear that the second Parish PCSO will be commencing their Foundation Training on Monday 26th February 2007. Following the successful completion of this aspect of their training, they will commence their patrols in the first week of April in the Parish of Chorleywood.

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

The Parish Council is to hold a Photographic Competition entitled 'Images of Chorleywood'. The competition will be open to two categories: • **Under 18s** and • **19 and Over**. The prize in each category will be a £50 voucher and the awards will be made at Village Day on 14 July.

Winning photos will be used in future publications of Chorleywood Matters and on our new website which is in the process of being created.

For application forms or further information, please contact the Parish Office.
Closing date: 1 July.

And finally - Parish Puppies

We are proud to announce that our canine Ranger, Chip, often seen escorting the Senior Parish Ranger on the Common, and his lady friend Billy are now the proud parents of Woody and Archie, born in late January. *(A note to all parishioners: although the staff numbers have thus increased, there will be no additional charge to the precept!)*

