



CHILHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Monthly newsletter March 2023

March is here already, and it is a pleasure to highlight the [COSY youth club](#). The parish felt that the lack of youth facilities was something we needed to rectify, and the parish councillors and volunteers have worked hard to get the club up and running. It now has some 60 members, with lots of exciting plans for the future. Thanks to you all.

Community acts to keep our parish clean and tidy have shown that the young people are taking the initiative and picking up litter. Well done.

Parish Councillors have replaced the bench, which had been vandalised, situated by Taylors Hill Toilets. It looks rather splendid.

It's only 2 months until Charles III's Coronation, and the plans are going full steam ahead, it should be a wonderful day to remember. Thanks go to the Events Committee and their volunteers for their hard work.

Unfortunately, at present there seems to be a problem with dog mess in Felborough Close, the recreation sports field and Old Wives Lees, with owners not clearing up after their animals. Free dog bags are available from the Post Office, so please make use of them.

Chilham Parish Council works as a team and all members are valued for their efforts.

GILL SCHOFIELD
Chair Chilham Parish Council

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Focus on caring for our local environment and open spaces



One of the powers and responsibilities of parish councils is the care and maintenance of open spaces and recreational facilities. Here in Chilham the Parish Council has a working group which looks after this function on behalf of the community.

Late in 2022, routine inspection of play equipment in Old Wives Lees revealed the need for some maintenance and replacement parts to ensure high standards of safety for users.

Last month the Parish Council contacted and met with the contractors who carried out the planned maintenance and refurbishment. The Environment and Open Spaces working group is delighted to be able to say the play equipment is now fully up to scratch with the required safety standards and waiting to be used - especially now the days are getting longer and the weather warmer!



If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns about open spaces and recreational facilities, Chilham Parish Council will be very pleased to hear from you.

Public conveniences for the village and its visitors...



Another responsibility and power of parish councils is provision and maintenance of public toilets - something it's very easy just to take for granted. Chilham Parish Council looks after those in Taylor's Hill car park. Council's budget (precept raised through council tax) provides for maintenance, utility bills and cleaning etc. to make sure Chilham has public toilets that are pleasant, safe and hygienic for our residents and visitors to the village alike. In February 2023 Parish Councillors decided to undertake a project to replace missing tiles and fix finger guards to doors. By giving their time, this has saved approximately £1,500 - the Parish Councillors are very well aware of the current financial climate and endeavour to carry out as much voluntary work as possible,

Finally, to complete the makeover, a vandalised bench outside the toilets in Taylor's Hill car park has been replaced by a splendid new one.



Village spring clean - young citizens are taking the lead

11 year old Bella wants to volunteer at an animal charity. She loves animals and wants to help them have healthy and happy lives. Since Bella can't fulfil this ambition until she turns 16, she decided to raise money for her chosen animal charity by litter picking.

This is what Bella wrote on her fundraising page:

"I'm raising money for Happy Endings Rescue and any donation will help make the animals there happy and healthy. I will be doing a total of 10 hours of litter picking to make a difference to our world and all animals."

So far Bella has collected 16 bags of rubbish (including 162 cans) during 6 hours of litter picking. She has litter picked in Old Wives Lees twice, Seasalter, Perry Woods, Selling and Sheldwich. She plans to come to Chilham next.



Look out for news of the village spring clean and how you can get involved - coming soon!



Blake was very keen to tidy up the village after he'd noticed so many fast food wrappers being dumped on Shalmsford Road. "It really bothered him that people were so careless", said his mum.

He really enjoyed feeling that he was doing something positive, and he loves living here so he really cares about taking responsibility for the environment. It didn't take long to collect two large bags of rubbish just on Lower Lees Road (and a big thank you to the lady who put one in her wastebin - the litter picking bug is contagious and very social).

Blake who's 7 years old had borrowed the litter picking equipment (including the vitally important hi-visibility vest for safety) and will need to return it - but don't worry, Blake. Chilham Parish Council has gear available for loan to willing litter pickers who volunteer their time and energy.

Chilham's coronation celebrations

Plans are progressing well for Chilham's celebrations of the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

We look forward to an enjoyable programme of events that will be remembered for many years to come, and form part of the history of the villages of Chilham, Old Wives Lees and Shottendedn which make up Chilham Parish.

On Sunday 7th May 2023 we shall be closing off the village square to traffic for a big street party as part of the national Big Lunch initiative to bring communities together. Starting at 2pm and ending at around 11pm there will be tables and seating in the square - you can bring your own picnic but we'll also have some great local food and drink vendors on hand - from the hog roast to the ice cream van, cream teas and waffles.

There will be a special party for children of the parish starting at 12 noon through until 4pm with food, fun and traditional games culminating in handing out of special commemorative coronation gifts to treasure for many years to come.

To help get things off to a flying start in the square, we are pleased to welcome the community choir *Ashford Sings* - with their upbeat style, be warned - they will get everybody in the square joining in and singing along together with them!



On the big stage we'll have live bands performing from 6pm until late.

To record how Chilham parish celebrated the coronation of King Charles III there will be a group photo taken of everybody celebrating in the village square during the afternoon.

Street entertainer Magic AI will be in the square to amaze and amuse from 6.30 until 8.30.

Plenty of other activities are being planned - the Chilham Parish Council Events Working Group will keep you all informed as the programme is finalised.

The next planning meeting will take place at 7.30PM on Wednesday 15th March 2023 in Chilham Small Village Hall. Everybody in Chilham Parish is invited to attend and get involved in preparing to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III - please feel welcome to just come along or contact us - thank you!

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Chilham Parish Councillors, Events Working Group**

Monday 8th May sees the nationwide **Big Help Out** when everybody is encouraged to roll up their sleeves and get involved in volunteering and service to the community and charitable organisations (for more information see page 5).

Kent County Council consultation on Home to School Transport Policy

Access to education is, without doubt, a vital asset in developing our future citizens. On January 25th Kent County Council launched a public consultation on its proposed policy concerning ages 4-16. A number of changes would come into effect from September 2024. The consultation closes on 25th March 2023 - to have your say - especially if you are affected by this policy, be sure to visit the KCC website at

<https://news.kent.gov.uk/articles/consultation-opens-on-kccs-home-to-school-transport-policy>

Chilham Parish Council meetings

Chilham Parish Council usually meets on the first Thursday of each month, either in Old Wives Lees Hall or Chilham Village Hall. All members of the public and press are very welcome to attend.

Next meetings are scheduled for 2nd March (Chilham), 6th April (Old Wives Lees) and 11th May (Chilham). Agendas are posted on the local village noticeboards and the council's website at least 3 working days in advance. Minutes are posted on the website in due course.

For more information on Chilham Parish Council's meetings, along with agendas and minutes, visit its website at

<https://www.chilhamparishcouncil.gov.uk/agenda-minutes/>

Monday 8th May – The Big Help Out

This event is being organised by The Together Coalition and will include support from partners such as the Royal Voluntary Service, Faith Groups from around the United Kingdom and the Scouts. This initiative will highlight the positive impact volunteering has on communities and the satisfaction it can bring to people giving up their time to volunteer and bring about change.

Recalling His Majesty's lifelong dedication to public service, supported by The Queen Consort and other Members of the Royal Family, it is hoped that this initiative will provide an opportunity for communities to come together and support a whole range of volunteering initiatives to create a lasting legacy. More information on how people can get involved can be found here at

[The Big Help Out](#)

Local authority elections 4th May 2023

Parish Councils are elected to serve a four year term. On 4th May you have the opportunity to vote for Chilham Parish Council (as well as Borough Ward Councillors).

Have you ever considered becoming a Chilham Parish Councillor?

As a parish councillor you will represent your community by listening to its needs and then acting to make very real differences to our community. **Candidate nomination packs** can be requested by sending an e-mail to vote@ashford.gov.uk. The Clerk (clerk@chilhamparishcouncil.gov.uk) - will be happy to answer any questions you may have about standing for election to become a member of our parish council.

Remember the changes to election procedures and photo ID!



To vote in local authority elections (and general elections after October 2023) you must have photo ID – the parish Council will issue further news in due course to keep you informed.

In the meantime, information is available from the electoral commission at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID>

Are you registered to vote?

In order to vote in local and general elections, you must be registered with the Electoral Services Department of Ashford Borough Council. It's a good idea to check your entry in the electoral register well in advance. If you've never been registered before, moved house or changed name remember to register - it's quick and easy online (have your National Insurance number to hand!) at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

To be eligible to vote on May 4th 2023, you need to have registered by 11:59PM on Monday 17th April. *As a little bonus, being on an electoral register can potentially help boost your credit rating!*