



2020 Newsletter

Chairman's Statement— *John Hargreaves*

Dear Resident may I introduce our 2020 newsletter that I hope you will find informative and helpful. There are a number of challenges and issues that are confronting the Parish today and hopefully the articles here will provide you with some insight into what your council are doing. We only have limited powers of course but we are a statutory body and will fully utilise the tools we do have to ensure that any new development will be sensitive to existing residents.

Neighbourhood Development Plan— NDP

The NDP is designed to reflect the wishes of the local community when areas within the parish are considered for development and as such is an important document in planning terms. It does need to follow planning policy that is determined by the local authority and can be over ruled by planning inspectors but it still carries significant weight when planning applications are being decided upon.

Ashchurch Rural Parish is likely to experience significant development over the next 15-20 years and ARPC have now developed a draft NDP plan to ensure that any development is sensitively designed to integrate within the existing environment and that new development will reflect and enhance the existing rural character of the parish where possible.

There is a legal process to complete and we are part way through this and are now at the stage of what is called Regulation 14 whereby our draft plan is published for residents to comment upon. Full details are on our web site www.ashchurchruralpc.org.uk and leaflets summarising the detail are being delivered to households. We welcome your feedback and look forward to hearing from you.

Garden Town

As you may be aware Tewkesbury Borough Council have applied for and been awarded Garden Town status for planned development that is largely within the parish of Ashchurch. This will include the building of around 10,000 dwellings and employment facilities within what today is a rural parish.

This does not mean that the development will definitely go ahead but it is clear that there will be significant development over the next 30 years. ARPC are actively engaging with the Garden Town team to try and ensure that any development is sensitive to the existing residents and character of the parish.

This is a long term project and there will be various stages along the way but your local Parish Council is determined to ensure we mitigate the effects on the existing community as much as possible

You may be aware of the plan to build a new bridge over the railway to the north of the parish to replace the level crossing on Aston Fields Lane. The subsequent road that will be constructed will connect the B4079 with the B4080 over the M5 and up Hardwick Bank. We understand this is to help open up land north of the MOD site for housing and employment development and is part of the Garden Town project however we note that there has been minimal consultation and have objected accordingly

We are obviously concerned as to the effects on the Carrant Brook flood plain in this area and the transport infrastructure and as such will continue to challenge the detail within both of these subjects.

New Retail Park

Many of you will have seen the plans for the new Retail Park south of the A46 towards junction 9 of the M5. We understand that there are significant road improvement works necessary as a condition of this development that will include improvements to junction 9 and particularly access to the south bound carriageway as well as improvements to the A46 itself.

We understand these infrastructure improvement works will commence in the coming months and closely followed by the construction of the Garden Centre and Retail Outlet Centre. Completion of the Garden Centre is expected around October 2022 and the Retail Outlet Centre around June 2023.

Fiddington - 850 new homes

Planning permission has been granted to Robert Hitchins Ltd to build these 850 homes south of the new retail park and we expect construction to commence around July 2022 and will probably take 5 to 10 years to complete.

ARPC objected to the application but equally recognised that there ultimately would be some development on this site. The Garden Town plan was for it to be employment land and following feed back from residents our preference was for housing instead.

Subsequently we actively engaged with Robert Hitchins Ltd to maximise the community facilities as part of this application and obtained legal agreements that a substantial Community Centre of over 520 sq m would be constructed and transferred to ARPC ownership.

The Community Centre design has yet to be finalised but will include group meeting rooms, indoor games areas, at least 4 sets of changing & shower rooms for 20 people in each and 3 multi use sports pitches (football/rugby etc) as well as recreational facilities. This is a significant concession and one that the local community will no doubt make full use of.

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME – LCAS – *Pauline Clarke – Clerk to the Council*

The Parish Council is in the process of applying to become a Quality Council under the Local Council Award Scheme.

To meet the minimum criteria of the award at Foundation level, the Council must demonstrate that it has the required documentation and information to operate lawfully and according to standard practice.

Over the past few months, the Parish Council has produced policies to cover all aspects of Parish Council governance and I am working towards supplementing my qualification by achieving a module in the General Power of Competence which allows the council to have the power to do anything that individuals may do as long as they do not break any laws.

I have also set up a training package of sessions that includes administration, planning and accounting.

Once the criteria of the Foundation level have been achieved, the Parish Council will then move towards, the Quality level. This award demonstrates that the Council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement, by going above and beyond in their legal obligations by leading the community and seeking opportunities to improve and develop even further.

To reach the necessary standard to become a Quality Council, the Parish Council has to satisfy an independent panel of experts that it provides services beyond those of a normal Parish Council. It does this by producing evidence to show that:

- It acts in an open and transparent manner
- It is accessible to members of the public
- It is democratic and operates within the law
- It is properly managed with a suitably qualified Clerk who along with the Councillors uphold a high standard of conduct

Therefore, it provides assurances that the Parish Council is up-to-date and progressive by the standards set by the sector.

www.ashchurchruralpc.org.uk

Have you tried the ARPC website? This source of information on the parish in general and the operation of the council in particular is kept up-to-date. Not only can you find when meetings are to take place you can also see the agendas and minutes for them. Planning applications and development activities affecting the parish are listed.

There are details on local amenities and links to useful websites. Parishioners can submit their own items to be placed on the News & Events page where you can also find advance warning of road works and closures for example.

If you would like to find out a little more about the area we live in there is a parish map and brief descriptions of the different communities. There are also links to much more historic detail

Corona Virus & The Community

During the corona virus pandemic the parish council have been delighted with the community spirit of residents who have shown care and consideration to others and who have volunteered to take care of the vulnerable.

The parish council would like to continue the good work being achieved by parishioners. We are inviting parishioners of all ages to remain involved with the community and help create new local projects. These projects will help to maintain current projects and spread new facilities through the parish, for the community and themselves.

The parish would like to encourage residents from all areas of the parish, being both the existing and new developments, to come and share their ideas about community facilities in rural life with the parish council and other residents.

At present the parish council run and fund a number of projects to enhance the community and would like to expand facilities where it is practical and the council is able to do so.

Taxi Voucher Scheme

A taxi voucher scheme is available to assist our most vulnerable residents with a degree of funding to aid mobility. This project was offered because of a lack of public transport within the most rural parts of our parish for residents who suffer personal mobility issues and social isolation.

The parish hopes that it continues to be a lifeline to those needing doctors and other medical appointments. If you feel that this may be applicable to yourself please visit our website or contact our clerk for the criteria and details of the scheme.

Defibrillators

The parish is also in the process of funding two additional defibrillators to add to our existing defibrillator based at the Ashchurch village hall.

The additional defibrillators were requested by parishioners expressing concerns about possible difficulties negotiating the A46 to gain access to the existing defibrillator. The locations for the new defibrillators will be included on our website once the machines are installed. Going forward, the parish council aim is to create further coverage of defibrillators throughout the parish to reduce travelling time for residents.

Grass Cutting

A long-standing project of the Parish has been grass cutting throughout the summer months to improve the visual appearance of the areas leading up to Ashchurch School and St Nicholas Church and for improved visibility.



We have now negotiated with County Highways to cut the grass verges of the many lanes and B roads within the parish. This will allow us to control when the verges will be cut and the frequency.

Parish Council

The parish council is run for the benefit of the community and to represent the concerns and aspirations of parishioners within local government. All the parish

councillors are volunteers and give their time to achieve this goal.

Please feel free to bring your own voice to the conversation and help our community grow. Meetings are held each month and the agenda and minutes are published on noticeboards and the web site www.ashchurchruralpc.org.uk

Your councillors, contact details and area of responsibility are as follows:

John Hargreaves – Chairman - johnhargreaves@ashchurchruralpc.org.uk

Tel: 07747 182580 – Fiddington

Tony Davies – Vice Chairman – tonydavies@ashchurchruralpc.org.uk

Tel: 07764 932870 – Walton Cardiff

Angela Brown – angelabrown@ashchurchruralpc.org.uk - Aston on Carrant

Brian Cook – briancook@ashchurchruralpc.org.uk – Claydon

Dave Garnett – davidgarnett@ashchurchruralpc.org.uk

Tel: 07980 833228 - Natton

Gordon Shurmer – gordonshurmer@ashchurchruralpc.org.uk - Pamington

Dave Street – davidstreet@ashchurchruralpc.org.uk – Ashchurch Village

Pauline Clarke – clerk@ashchurchruralpc.org.uk

Tel: 07763250289 - Parish Clerk