

# **Chineham Parish Council APA 2023**

**Speakers** – Cllr Paul Miller, Cllr Sue Fuller, Anna Bolton (Chineham Conservation Group) & Jonathon Jenkin (Chineham Repair Café)

**Apologies** – Amanda Owen (Clerk)

Cllr Paul Miller opened the meeting at 19:00, welcoming everybody and explaining that the Annual Parish Assembly is a statutory meeting which is to take place annually within a couple of weeks either side of the local elections for the Chairman to make public statements to those who attend.

Cllr. Miller thanked our guest speakers for attending and gave the fire safety information to our visitors.

Cllr. Miller then gave an overview of the Chineham Parish Council and what has happened over the course of the past year. The Chineham Parish Council saw a changeover of its paid Clerks. Cllr. Miller introduced Ellen Harmon as the Assistant Clerk and notified them that Amanda Owen is the new Clerk who is the responsible financial officer for the Chineham Parish Council.

It was also discussed that over the course of the past year we have seen multiple Councillor's step back from the Parish Council due to work commitments, ill health, and other personal circumstances, but the new Clerk's have settled in well.

The Clerk Amanda Owen has introduced a new accounting package, which has enabled the Councillor's to have a much clearer view of the accounts and audits. We've just gone through our most recent audit with just two minor issues with how the accounting was presented, but these issues have been rectified already and we otherwise passed with flying colours as we do every year.

This past election only 4 Councillor's submitted their paperwork, and we are currently going through the process of scrutinising 6 applications for co-option to fill the 5 vacancies currently open with the Chineham Parish Council and hope to return to a full complement of Councillor's soon.

Cllr. Miller touched on the fact that he also chairs the Planning Committee which is one of two committee's which meet on a regular basis – these committees being the Planning Committee and the Recreation Committee. The Planning Committee meets twice a month and the reason for this is due to the Planning Application Cycle from the date of application, to when they are processed by the borough and the Parish has to scrutinise the applications and offer our feedback and comments to the Borough. Here at the Parish Council, we are not the Planning Authority, but we take a look at the applications and give feedback based on our Planning Reasons which will go back to the Borough.

Cllr. Miller then highlighted that the majority of applications go through the Planning Officer, but on the occasion the application goes through to the Borough Planning Committee, this is when all comments from the Parish Council would be printed off and included in the full

report which is presented to the full committee. On average about 12% of applications in total go to the full Borough Planning Committee if strong objections are made by members of the public, they are otherwise dealt with by the Planning Officers.

It was noted that one thing the Chineham Parish Council has committed to, is objecting to any Planning Application for housing developments which are larger than 10 dwellings. We've had regular applications for large housing developments on the principle that our infrastructure is sorely lacking. Large housing developments are at risk of putting further strain on our medical facilities, schools, community centres. Due to being made promises from developers which they have not kept to, we now in principle object to any of these applications due to these issues. All surrounding Parish Councils agree with us in this decision and very much follow suit where their Planning Committee feedback comes into play for the Borough as well.

Cllr. Miller then went on to speak about a personal discovery he made in regard to Chineham which he was not previously aware of. Whilst going through the process of a house sale, Cllr. Miller came across information about a local nature reserve within 154 metres of the house – after looking into this further, it was ascertained that this area is part of the Chineham Woods, which is composed of the Great Sorrells, Tollhouse, Guinea, and the Long Copes'. They are all ancient woodland and are all SINCS (Sight of Importance for Nature Conservation) and attract a certain standard of protection from the County Council. Cllr. Miller feels a discussion needs to be had between the Chineham Parish Council, The Chineham Conservation Group, and the Borough as to what we can do with these areas in regard to some sort of management plan.

The full details of Cllr. Miller's speech can be found in appendix A.

Cllr. Miller handed over to Cllr. Sue Fuller to discuss Recreation Committee matters from the past year, before opening up for any questions.

Cllr. Fuller notified all those in attendance that the Recreation Committee meets roughly 5-6 times a year and whilst we don't have any powers to make decisions ourselves, we do have regular discussions about things we can do within the Chineham area which we then take back to the Full Council for approval. One of the things we have done this past year is place a couple of benches throughout the Parish, one of which being the lovely wooden banana bench in the Moat Park. We plan to eventually have a plaque put onto this bench, but it is something we need to discuss and agree upon in the near future.

We also purchased a bench to commemorate the Queens Platinum Jubilee but haven't been able to have it installed as of yet due to issues obtaining permission from the local authority who owns the land, we would like to fit it on. We have now dealt with this hurdle and have obtained a quote from the Parish Lengthsman and look forward to the bench being fitted along Petty's Brook in the near future. These are all a part of the other benches we have fitted over the past couple of years, and we have an allocated fund to continue doing this

over the next couple of years. With that being said, we are looking at perhaps doing something slightly different in celebration of the King's Coronation and planting a tree to commemorate this event. This is something we need to discuss in more detail as to where and what type of tree would be most suitable to plant and are thankful to have the Chineham Conservation Group to hand to offer advise with this.

Cllr. Fuller then went on to mention the Chineham Community Orchard which we manage. Cllr. Fuller often takes time out of her week to go and ensure they have been watered and fed, but noted we are really keen to find anyone who might have a wider range of knowledge with fruit trees to help advise us on the proper care of the trees. We initially asked the nursery who provided the trees for assistance with maintenance, but it was unfortunately not a service they provide going forward. So if anyone has any particular knowledge of fruit tree's/apple tree's and might be able to volunteer some time to help advise the Councillor's, or even go down to the Community Orchard and assist with the maintenance please contact the assistant Clerk on [assistantclerk@chineham.gov.uk](mailto:assistantclerk@chineham.gov.uk).

Aside from this, we are pleased to see that the tree's always provide an abundance of apples and the Community are making the most of these.

We will also be attending the Four Lanes Fayre, where we will have our Gazebo up. We encourage Chineham Constituents to come and visit us and provide us with any feedback and ideas they may have for the coming year.

Cllr. Miller thanked Cllr. Fuller and provided a financial update before moving on to our guest speakers. It was noted that as a Parish Council we are very healthy where finances are concerned and this is widely down to them being ran so well over the years, so much so that we have been able to freeze the precept for, yet another year and we hope to be able to maintain this so long as finances enable us to. One of the key things we need to have in mind is that a lot of maintenance requirements come down to us as a Parish Council to fund due to the Borough Council not having the budget or the funds to always carry these out. We are very lucky to have an extremely Rapid Response Warden who provides us with a monthly report which is very detailed report as to where these such issues are, which enables us to report them as needed or arrange maintenance where necessary.

Cllr. Miller stopped to ask for questions. There were no questions.

### **Chineham Conservation Group**

The Chineham Conservation Group provided us with a Power Point with their presentation which will be available to view for more detail.

The CCG speakers were Anna Bolton,

The Chineham Conservation Group are a group of about 15-20 regular members who volunteer their time to focus on conservation within the Chineham area. The CCG operated previously but has been dormant for a few years due to previous members moving away and they are now just getting re-booted. Whilst they usually have 15-20 people, the last few meetings they are proud to say they have had on average of 20-30 people.

They have an active Facebook page and email account where they issue newsletters.

The Chineham Conservation Group aims to be as accessible and diverse as possible to people from all backgrounds, age groups and abilities and are always keen for more volunteers. They pride themselves on their ability to include all members of the Community and to pass down this wealth of knowledge to the younger generation. They focus their meetings on the Spring and Winter months.

There are many community events hosted by the Chineham Conservation Group, such as a nature walk due to take place on 17<sup>th</sup> June @ 10am and a bat walk which is set for 4<sup>th</sup> August @ 8:45pm.

They work closely with the Rangers who work for the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council but focus on bringing the community together to do something worthwhile for both the environment and people's wellbeing.

The Chineham Conservation Group focuses a lot on the traditional methods used as they can't use power tools to do their work and educating people on the work they are doing. For example, they use Coppicing which is an ancient technique – coppicing has a massive positive impact on the woodlands. Allowing light to reach the woodland floor and allowing for different species of flowers to grow, which then attracts the bugs and insects which in turn attracts the larger species of animals. It is vital for the health of the woodlands and the animals who reside within. They encourage people who may be interested to come along to one of their monthly sessions and learn more about what it is they do, how they do it and why it is so beneficial to the environment.

The Chineham Conservation Group looks forward to the ongoing relationship with the Chineham Parish Council, with future projects and planned discussions in the pipeline in order to maintain and improve Chineham's natural environment.

### **The Chineham Repair Café**

Jonathon Jenkin came in and spoke on behalf of the Chineham Repair Café which is also a group of Volunteers which is based at the Christ Church, it began with three founding members who are Jonathon Jenkin, Shane Bennett and Jonathon Clarke who is the reverend at the Church who are all very eco-minded individuals and strived to come up with a local, community-based project to save items from landfill. Prior to them starting up the Chineham Repair Café, they were unaware of the existence of the Hampshire Repair Network and therefore did not rely on their support to get up and running and really has been a team

effort between the co-founders and their group of wonderful volunteers. The first Repair Café session was hosted in January with a variety of different volunteers sourced on the Chineham Noticeboard Facebook page and others who are members of the Church where the event is hosted.

Jonathon then went on to give an overview of how the repair café functions – you show up to the café with your item and fill out some paperwork and they take a look at what it is you need doing whilst you relax and have a cup of tea! You will then go through to the repair room and will be shown to the most suitable volunteer to have a go and saving your item!

The Repair Café is fortunate enough to have a couple of sewing whizzes and some engineers, including a satellite engineer meaning they have a very wide skill set within their small group of volunteers.

The ultimate goal is to promote sustainability and save items from landfill – just because something is broken, doesn't mean it has to go in the bin!

Long term they want to grow their volunteer team. They recently were awarded a grant from the Chineham Parish Council and hope to be able to obtain more grants in future from other potential sources.

Jonathon then went on to touch on the issue of digital divide and how they plan to be able to reach other members of the Chineham Community so they can utilise the service that the repair café is providing, without people having to rely on social media in order to be able to do so. They plan to do a marketing campaign involving canvas banners for outside the church, flags of some sort and leaflets.

They also hope to become more streamlined and come up with some sort of ticketing system in the future, in order to make the whole process more fluid from start to finish with the ultimate end goal being to maximise their repairs and save more items from landfill.

The Chineham Repair Café took the time to thank all of their volunteers and to John Terry for donating them a gift card allowing them to purchase their first official Chineham Repair Café tool kit! They couldn't possibly do the work they are doing without you all.

Since learning about the Hampshire Repair Network, the Chineham Repair Café has been able to receive some much-needed guidance on how to approach potential volunteers, what sort of certifications they may need and things such as, so would like to extend appreciation to them as well.

They would like to welcome all to their next event. They operate every third Saturday of the month and are always keen for new volunteers of all skill sets and welcome all kinds of repairs.

Cllr. Miller queried more into how they intend to attract attention without the use of social media, due to this being an issue for both the Parish Council and the Borough Council. Jonathon discussed more about the use and placement of banners and the idea of a shared

leaflet with the Chineham Conservation Group to save on costs. These leaflets will be forwarded on to the Chineham Parish Council's Rapid Response Warden, who will post them on noticeboards around Chineham – so keep an eye out for these.

There was then an open discussion about the possibility of a local Chineham Podcast to reach out to those who may not use technology as much but might listen to the radio or podcasts. It was mentioned that there is a Local Radio station which will start broadcasting in the coming week from the Chineham Shopping Centre, called the Basingstoke Community Radio.

As a collective we hope to broadcast things such as the Chineham Repair Café, Chineham Conservation Group and upcoming plans and events of the Chineham Parish Council. We plan to have ongoing discussions between the three organisations on how to move forward as a partnership in these projects.

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