

North Crawley Parish Council

Bulletin - January 2025

Hi Folks, Steve here again - and may I start by wishing you a very happy and healthy New Year on behalf of your Parish Council. And we start the year with plenty on our agenda already!!

Firstly I'm delighted to confirm the winner of the Village Champion prize for 2024 is Chris Stapleton. It was a pleasure to present her award and medal at the Carol singing where she was busy providing free sausage rolls, mince pies and mulled wine to the gathered throng - exactly the sort of generous community spirit that has earned her the recognition she richly deserves.

We are very aware that the verges in Gog Lane and Folly Lane are still churned up following heavy traffic usage on a couple of occasions over the last year. MKCC are aware of these and intend to inspect them and produce a work plan once the better weather is with us in Spring. We will keep reminding them of this commitment until it gets done. We have two Ward Councillors helping us keep pressure on MKCC - thank you Keith McLean and Debbie Whitworth.

We have also received correspondence from residents regarding the amount of traffic using these two single track Lanes with suggestions such as speed bumps, reduced speed limits and restrictions. We have had a response from MKCC explaining that they cannot restrict traffic that is not in breach of regulations. They point out that because of SATNAV it is no longer only locals who know the shortcuts. But of course, SATNAV doesn't forewarn of the type of road conditions drivers, who are unfamiliar with the route, will face.

The issue of lower speed limits (such as 20mph) is being considered by the PC. From what we've seen so far it looks likely that the High St might be the area most likely to be approved given the high level of pedestrians crossing the road (especially school children). Getting a change of speed limit will involve the Police, Transport Operators, Emergency Services and, of course, Highways Dept at MKCC. It will also need the demonstrable support of the local community. So, as you can imagine, not a quick fix, but it is a project we intend to embark upon.

As you may know, the 3 year long Public Inquiry into the travellers' residential use of Brook End Nurseries found in favour of MKCC and gave the travellers 9 months to vacate the site. They are entitled to appeal against this decision and have decided to do so. This will involve Courts assessing the merit and weight of their appeal before granting or denying it. We will let you know about any developments.

You may have noticed some shiny metal posts around the village - they are the new posts for the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). It's taken a long time to get them installed but we are wasting no time now and have placed the order for the first tranche of SIDs, Solar Panels

and batteries (the panels will charge the batteries which should mean minimal involvement by volunteers to keep the SIDs working). To start with we will have 3 SIDs, 1 at Brook End, 1 on the High St near Nixey's Walk and 1 on the High St at the Cranfield end of the village. These are all being purchased with the kind donation we received from a resident last year. We have submitted an application for Community Funding to match 50/50 with us to provide the other 2 SIDs and Solar Panels for Chicheley Rd and Folly Lane. We are hopeful these will be installed in May, subject to our application being successful of course. This will then give us permanent SIDs at all 5 key points in our village.

We have completed our budget for the financial year beginning April 2025 and, as I mentioned in previous bulletins, we have had to increase the precept (the level of funding MKCC pass to the PC to provide all our local services to you). This is due to a much-reduced level of income from our work with the cemetery (but no reduction in maintenance costs) and the need to spend around £3,500 to pay our half of the total bill for the installation of improved drainage in the kiddies play park. This should cure the squelchy mud patches which, if left, would just get worse over the years. This should be a one-off increase and still means it costs a total of only £1.50 per week for each household to benefit from grass cutting, tree maintenance, play park maintenance, Ford maintenance, cemetery maintenance, Fun Days with free activities, the free MKPA play sessions, the subsidy scheme at the Institute, defibrillator maintenance, website maintenance and SID provision and data management. Your Parish Councillors are all unpaid volunteers and only our hard-working Clerk and Village Warden receive a modest salary.

We're pleased to report that the gate at the Broadmead end of the Ford has been repaired and re-hung after it was seriously damaged by the recent flooding. Vehicles are not permitted down the Ford and horses should only be ridden down it if the rider has properly assessed the risks, especially at the narrow bridge section. For these reasons the gates at either end are important to protect against inappropriate use. It also preserves the Ford as a pleasant and well-maintained area to walk through as so many of us do.

As you might have seen in the latest SCAN, the village hall is getting insufficient use to make it viable. The owners, North Crawley Estates, would welcome approaches by any individual or organisation who could use the premises on the basis of a commercial rent. A coffee shop, a non-food shop or even an office are possibilities that have been suggested by the owners. It is a landmark building on our High St, and it would be great to see it actively used. Please liaise directly with North Crawley Estates if you have any interest or queries as this is not a Parish Council property.

Well, that's it for now - stay safe and warm during this winter weather and please keep an eye out for anyone who may be vulnerable at this time. But don't forget - it will soon be Spring and it's so uplifting to see lots of bulbs starting to poke their heads above the soil ready to burst into flower over the next few weeks.