

## Parish Assembly Report March 2011

The last year has seen a number of achievements, disappointments and challenges.

First the highlights. Last summer we were presented with the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village award, for which we should all be very proud. But to top that, we were also presented with a new award: following the withdrawal of the main sponsor for the national village of the year competition, BALC decided to run a local competition for the best community and Cheddington was the first winner.

The Council was last year again successful in its bid for the Perfect Village Sunday which was held on the green in July. This provided a wonderful Sunday afternoon for all members of this community. Unfortunately due to funding cuts this will not be happening next year.

In January the final stage of the footpath was completed with funding from the Parish Council, Local Area Forum and COMMA. This completes the four phase project to link Cheddington to Cooks Wharf.

I am also pleased to be able to report that the Council has been successful with the management of the budget. This has enabled us in the last year to fund projects like the footpath. It has also allowed us to provide financial support to the Village Hall, Youth 4 Youth, Pre-school, History Society and others.

Allotments continue to be very popular with the Council again opening up additional plots in the last year. We have also opened up some orchard plots which have proved to be very popular.

But the year also held disappointments. After many years of investigating the possibility of speed calming in the High Street, we consulted on chicanes. Although we had consulted on these before, this scheme was in a different location. This consultation was agreed after speed cameras, mini roundabouts, and vehicle activated signs had all been ruled out. Unfortunately there was insufficient support to pursue this scheme, which the council found very disappointing.

One of the other disappointments was the burst water pipes that occurred to the recreation ground Pavilion at Christmas. Although the damage was covered by insurance the loss of this facility to the local community was a blow.

One of the challenges is housing provision for the more senior members of our community. Residents have made representation to the council over what they see as deficiency in this area. Following the survey in the newsletter there is a mandate to address this issue, although we want this to be a rural exception scheme so that current residents get priority.

Leading on from this, one of the key challenges we are about to face is a result of the localism bill. Whilst the exact details are not yet clear, the Parish Council is going

to have a greater involvement in planning. We have started some tentative steps towards a local plan which will need to include how we as a community want the village to develop. And this will have to include house growth to cover housing for the elderly.

I would like to thank the Clerk, Stefanie who has proved to be an asset to this community, sourcing funding for the footpath and completing all of the paperwork and forms for the Best Kept Village competition and Perfect Village Sunday, and for producing meaningful and accurate minutes from the meetings. And as this is the last Parish Assembly before the elections in May, on behalf of the village I would like to thank the other councillors Tiffany, Christine, Deborah, Chris and Simon for their service to the village.

I would also like to mention Pat who has served as a councillor for 32 years, which is quite some achievement, however you chose to measure it. Pat's memory for detail has been a huge benefit to all on the Council. But Pat's service to this village has not been limited to the Council, for many years along with husband Ian she has maintained the war memorial and put out the flag on the dates required. In addition to this she was involved in the early days of the Village Hall including fundraising for the construction and serving as the booking clerk for the hall in the early years. And she has served as a trustee on the Town Lands Trust.

Serving on the Council is not a glamorous task and I don't for one minute say that it is the only reason that Cheddington is a wonderful place to live but it does contribute along with all the other groups in the village to make this the community we live in and enjoy.

And finally at the start of the year when I was voted in as Vice Chairman I did not expect to be here today delivering this report as Chairman. So I would like to end by saying a few words about Stuart. Stuart was on the Council for six years before he moved away from Cheddington and decided to resign. His unique method of chairing some of the meetings could leave people lost for words, but his leadership and commitment to serving this community was never in doubt and the footpath would not have been completed without his persuasive techniques at the Local Area Forum to secure funding. Whilst he is a loss to the Council he is maintaining his links to Cheddington by staying on as Chair of the Youth Club, serving as Vice Chair to the Village Hall Management Committee and now volunteering to become a governor at Cheddington Combined School.