

# **Stock Parish Council**

## **Chairman's Report 2009-2010**

### **Council Membership**

This has been a stable year for the Parish Council with all councillors serving for the full year. This has provided a good base level of commitment and experience and representation for the village. The areas that the Parish Council are now consulted continues to grow with a very great emphasis on use of email for communications.

### **The Village Environment**

Upkeep of the village to maintain and improve its appearance continues to be an important priority. We are hampered currently with the large volumes of construction taking place in the village and the toll this is taking on the verges and lanes. The cooperation of developers in the reinstatement of the verges at completion of their project is greatly appreciated.

Footpaths are an important feature of the village and their upkeep is monitored. Cycling on footpaths is prohibited and extra signs erected to this effect. Dog walkers have an important part to play in keeping our footpaths clear by clearing up after their dogs. Sufficient bins are available and this anti-social activity by a few can spoil matters for the many.

The Parish Council has been successful in grant applications to refurbish the bus shelter by the war memorial and for the replacement of the shelter opposite the Hoop. This work should be completed during the summer.

Another successful grant application has enabled fencing to be erected around the children's play area on the common. This consists of a high level fence facing the cricket pitch to protect children from well-hit cricket balls, whilst the ends will be fenced to keep out dogs/foxes to keep the area clean.

The Parish Council is pursuing the opportunity to purchase the old library building for general use within the community now that the new library is located at the school.

### **Roads and Traffic**

Traffic issues on the B1007 continue. The Speed Indicator sign has been installed and its location is rotated to either end of the High Street as planned. Essex County Council is now giving consideration to another sign so both directions of the road can be addressed simultaneously. A further location is planned for Mill Road so that the main roads in the village are covered. Outside the village Downham Road must not be ignored and representations about speed limits have been made so far without success.

A bid by the Parish Council for an additional pedestrian crossing on the High Street, by the Bakers Arms, has been approved by Essex County Council. When this is installed it is hoped it will have some measure of slowing traffic as it enters the village from the north.

The condition of the roads continues to be a concern after the hard winter. Many roads still have many potholes requiring attention, with Common Road a particularly bad surface over almost its entire length. There is possibly some good news. The Parish Council understands that Essex County Council is giving serious consideration to resurfacing the High Street with a red surface as a traffic calming measure. We will await developments.

### **Planning Matters**

Planning issues continue to take up a large amount of time and energy. The Parish Council exercises its duty to represent the views of the village in all applications with considerable diligence. The desire to maintain an even balance, and a strong village atmosphere, with a mix of housing styles/sizes etc cannot always be achieved and we must accept the final responsibility rests with Chelmsford Borough Council. In the last year over 60 planning applications were commented upon by the Parish Council.

### **Parking in the Village**

Some limited use of parking at the village hall has been of small benefit to the village. We are informed by the Village Hall Trustees Committee that this has been achieved without any detriment to the hall users. Any small measure is worth having as pressure for parking space will only increase.

### **Other Matters**

The annual Bin it Day was very poorly supported in 2009 so will not be repeated this year. Equally, the manned vehicles that Chelmsford Borough Council provides on a regular basis for the collection of large items of waste are being discontinued through lack of use.

The PCSO's continue to attend most Parish Council meetings and are active around the village. We are grateful for their contribution.

The Parish Council has decided not to enter the Best Kept Village Competition, but will continue to support the Stock in Bloom competition in conjunction with the Gardening Society.

### **Summary**

My thanks go to all Parish Councillors for their efforts throughout the year. The Clerk continues to provide detailed support and information which is invaluable and appreciated. Equally, Borough Councillor, Ian Grundy, works very hard on behalf of the Parish in his duties with Chelmsford Borough Council and his support to the Parish Council is much welcomed.

John Dixon

Chairman, Stock Parish Council

March 2010