



## Newsletter Spring 2008

### Chairman's Report

As we come to the end of another Parish Council year, and indeed the end of our four year term, it is pertinent to assess what we have achieved. Most notable was the completion of the project to refurbish the major part of the Village Centre, but there are other projects that do not have such a high profile. For example, the successful launch of the Parish Plan Steering Group which, thanks to many able volunteers, is doing admirable work in putting together a Plan for the future of the village in consultation with other groups and individuals in the community. Alongside this project the Parish Council has produced its own vision for the future entitled Holmes Chapel Looking Forward 2008 – 2021. This highlights many of the needs and concerns of local residents and identifies areas to which resources must be assigned. It is planned that these two documents will come together in the future to produce a plan for the village which has full support of all those who have an interest in Holmes Chapel and its future. The key message in this is that addressing the identified needs will involve not just the Parish Council or the Steering Group but other public bodies and, indeed, you the residents of the community who really have the power to make things happen.

Another report about the "Dane Valley" sets out initial ideas for developing this area into an excellent nature and leisure facility for the village which can be used by all, and be a focal point for community events. In parallel with this we have identified the need for a focal point within the village for Community use similar perhaps to those within neighbouring communities. We hope to convince those developers who wish to build within our community that they have a major responsibility in ensuring that these things happen and that their developments are sustainable. This will be a major challenge for the future.

I have seen letters and press articles which suggest that we may be "out of touch" with reality or acting irresponsibly and it saddens me to think that the people who write these letters choose to devote their time to criticism rather than active participation. I can assure you that we are neither "out of touch" nor do we act irresponsibly and we have and will continue to consult on all issues that affect you. After all we are here to represent your views and implement your wishes in a democratic way and we cannot be diverted by minority views.

It has been said that we are a progressive Council, very proactive and with a clear vision, and we are very proud of that.

There is not enough space to go into the many issues that will face the new Council after the May 1<sup>st</sup> elections but you can learn more in my full report and at the Annual Parish meeting on 10 April.

For now, I wish to thank our Clerk and my fellow Councillors for their dedication and commitment to Holmes Chapel because I know what time and effort they expend on your behalf and this thanks extends to the many others who give us their help and advice throughout the year. May I offer you all my best wishes for the future for you and your families and hope that you will continue to support us to make this a better village for everyone and to stress that we are always open to any creative help and suggestions that you would like to make.

David Savage

## Holmes Chapel Parish Council Budget

At the Council meeting on 31 January 2008 the 2008/9 budget was approved and the precept requirement fixed in the sum of £66,527. This will represent an increase in Council Tax for the year of £8.06 on Band D properties.

Within the figures there is provision for extra policing with the continuing contribution towards the employment of a Police Community Support Officer. We have also allowed for the appointment of an assistant to the Clerk to improve the Council's contact with the community and in preparation for increased responsibilities likely to arise out of the creation of the Cheshire East Unitary Council.

Following on the village centre refurbishment new schemes are in preparation, estimated expenditure on which the Council is providing for in a Capital Programme. This establishes provision over the next few years for improvements in the Dane Valley, Cranage playing fields (in partnership with Cranage Parish Council) and to footway lighting, the cost of which has now been returned to the Parish Council.

---

## “Holmes Chapel Looking Forward 2008 – 2021”

Over the past few months the Parish Council have taken time to consider and report on how we would like to see Holmes Chapel develop in the future. This was prompted by the imminent acceptance by Congleton Borough Council of a new Local Development Framework which will include two sites for housing and commercial development within the Holmes Chapel boundary. This could result in an increase in population of 12 to 14% over the next few years with consequent impact on the village. The report covers a number of issues connected with the village infrastructure which are already causing concern including parking, leisure facilities and heavy traffic through the village.

A number of recommendations have been made and these will be progressed over the next year.

The Parish Council consider that it is important to consult the residents of Holmes Chapel about housing and business development and the desired development and aesthetic control of the existing village centre. To avoid duplication, it is hoped any consultation will be carried out in conjunction with the Parish Plan Steering Group which is currently preparing a questionnaire to obtain the views of residents on a wide range of issues as reported in the last newsletter.

---

## Improvements to ‘Our’ Dane Valley

The River Dane forms the northerly Parish boundary and a stretch roughly from the end of Ravenscroft in the west to Moreton Drive in the east has been open to public access since the 1970's. It includes woodland and grassland and a long stretch of river bank and thus provides a wide range of wildlife habitats. The Parish Council want to maintain this natural environment but at the same time improve access. The broad aims of the work would be:

- To provide good access to an area of local natural landscape along the Dane Valley. Footpaths already extend into the area but these have been allowed to deteriorate over the years and need upgrading. There is also a need to provide vehicular access to the valley floor which will require improvement to the existing hardcore route.
- To provide better access for the less able.
- To develop an educational aspect to the area. The valley is rich in wildlife and is a fine example of a meandering river within a floodplain. The intention is to provide interpretation boards throughout the site and to involve the local schools in aspects of the site development.
- To provide a link to Cranage via a footbridge. Cranage Parish Council have for some time wished to provide a safe route into Holmes Chapel via the Dane Valley. The development of footpaths on the Holmes Chapel side of the river would link with the bridge.

- To develop managed habitats for a range of native species in conjunction with interested groups.
- To provide the opportunity to use parts of the area for village public occasions. The floodplain part of the valley is level and offers scope for communal social activities in keeping with the main objectives of the site. Improvements to the access route would be required.

The Parish Council have produced a report "Proposals for Improvements to the Dane Valley Public Access Area in Holmes Chapel" and we are keen to get the views of Holmes Chapel residents as we are at an early stage with this project. Once the scheme has been developed there will be a display in the library prior to seeking grants to support the work. There will be opportunities for volunteer work and we would be interested to hear from individuals or groups who could offer their services.

---

## A Report from our Police Community Support Officer

*The Parish Council contribute £11000 annually towards the cost of our PCSO, James Cornish. The report below gives an idea of his involvement with the community over the last year.*

My name is James Cornish and I would like to introduce myself and give the residents of Holmes Chapel an idea of the job that I do.

As a PCSO I am dedicated to Holmes Chapel and it is my job to try and resolve any issues or problems that a resident, trader, business or organisation may be experiencing. This can range from patrolling an area that has been suffering from burglaries, dealing with neighbour disputes to dealing with parking problems or anti-social behaviour. I have the contacts to get other agencies involved to tackle any problems you may be having.

I spend time organising community action meetings, which is where residents can come along and receive an input from different police or partnership agencies, vote on the priority that the police will focus on and have their say into what is bothering them and how the police can help resolve any issues. The community action meetings are advertised around the village or alternatively you can email me for details.

I help organise projects within the village, for example we have recently had a very successful day at Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School where we had different activities running to educate students in areas that could affect them as they get older. We had an activity to teach them the dangers of drink driving or getting into the car with someone who has been drinking and many others. I am currently in the middle of a project at the primary schools who have designed posters to try and deter people from dropping litter in Holmes Chapel, the winning poster will be produced into car stickers and distributed around the village.

I work all different shifts to enable me to tackle the different incidents that occur in Holmes Chapel, and can modify my shift where necessary to tackle specific issues.

If you would like to contact me you can do so either by contacting the customer service desk on: 0845 458 6382, or email me at [congleton.cat@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:congleton.cat@cheshire.pnn.police.uk). If you want to report an incident or contact the police regarding a non-emergency incident please ring: 0845 458 0000, or in case of an emergency always ring 999.

---

## Local Government Elections – Thursday 1 May 2008

On 1 May 2008 there will be elections in various parts of the country, including Holmes Chapel. Councillors, on this one occasion, will be elected for a three year term rather than four.

Parish Councils, traditionally, have been considered the grass roots of local democracy and this role could be even more important in the future. As the Local Government Review goes through, Congleton Borough Council and Cheshire County Council both disappear to be replaced by the Cheshire East Unitary Council. We will have far less Councillors covering a larger geographical area and the place of the local Council will be important both to carry out local schemes and also to keep a watching brief on

# Holmes Chapel Parish Council

[www.holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk)

the Unitary Council in all that it does.

Holmes Chapel is an active Parish Council. Apart from the various activities discussed elsewhere in this newsletter there are also schemes under consideration to improve the play areas in the village and to continue work on the Cranage Playing field project (jointly with Cranage Parish Council). In addition, the Council is working to attain "Quality" status.

Candidates wishing to stand for election must deliver valid nomination papers by **12 noon of Friday 4 April 2008**. As a matter of law you will be required to complete a declaration of acceptance of office, which accepts adherence to the local authority code of conduct.

There are no academic qualifications to become a Councillor although this Council does encourage members to be IT literate. So much information is circulated electronically and it is much easier to keep in touch if you can receive e-mails and access the internet.

There will only be an election on 1 May if more than 12 people stand, otherwise those nominated will be elected automatically and any vacancies would be filled by co-option.

There will also be elections on Thursday 1 May 2008 for the new Cheshire East Unitary Council.

Delivery of nomination papers and any enquiries about the mechanics of the Parish or Unitary Council elections, should be made to the Electoral Services Section of Congleton Borough Council at Westfields, Sandbach – telephone 01270 529529.

---

***All reports referred to in this newsletter can be obtained as hard copies from the library or in electronic or hard form from the Clerk of the Council or downloaded from our website.***

## Members of the Parish Council with contact details

	Members	Telephone	Email **
<b>Clerk of the Council</b>	David Cowgill	01565 631528	clerk@
<b>Chairman</b>	David Savage	01477 537464	david.savage@
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Alan Ashworth	01477 537690	alan.ashworth@
	John Clowes	01477 532266	john.clowes@
	Patricia Cotton	01477 537491	patricia.cotton@
	George Laws	07710 736 758	george.laws@
	May Mackenzie	01477 532007	may.mackenzie@
	Yvonne Moore	01477 537492	yvonne.moore@
	John Norton	01477 537189	
	Rab Parry	01477 533715	rab.parry@
	Alan Rickards	01477 534193	alan.rickards@
	Mike Street	01477 534745	mike.street@

**\*\* All email addresses have the domain name [holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk)**

**e.g. [david.savage@holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:david.savage@holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk)**

**For more details of items in this newsletter and for other communications, please see:**

- The Parish Council website ([www.holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk))**
- The Council notice board located outside the village library**