



## Newsletter Spring 2009

### Bulb Planting in the Village

At this time of year the village comes to life with a show of daffodils along all the grass verges of the roads. These have been planted over recent years by the Cub Scouts and Beaver groups in the village and previously by members of the Council and interested residents. Last year an organised planting day took place in late October and was carried out by members of the Scout groups aided by members of the Village Volunteer group. The areas planted were the grassed area around the Library, the bank on the approach to the Railway Station car park and an area of Bramhall Drive near Ravenscroft.

We would like to extend a **'Big Thank You'** to everyone for all their efforts.

### Police Community Support Officers\*

The Parish Council has been involved in the scheme of supporting a Police Community Support Officer in the village for two years now. Perhaps this is an ideal time to remind residents of the Officer's role and responsibilities. An extract from the original guidelines, sets out the following:

"PCSOs are uniformed staff employed by the Police Authority to work alongside police officers. They work within dedicated local teams developing ways in which the local policing team can prevent and reduce all aspects of crime and disorder. They work with organisations and individuals in the local area to devise and implement strategies that benefit that particular community."

"As well as providing a visible and reassuring presence PCSOs are equipped to deal with a variety of anti social behaviour and community issues affecting the quality of life of residents, visitors and business."

"Amongst other things, Police Community Support Officers can:

- Confiscate alcohol from underage drinkers
- Combat illegal parking
- Deal with dog fouling
- Address cycling on a footpath
- Issue Local Authority tickets for litter offences
- Issue Local Authority tickets for graffiti and fly-posting
- Seize vehicles being used in an anti social manner

"The PCSO's role is considered to provide a cost effective method of addressing those issues in the community that directly affect the quality of life of local residents." \*

It is pleasing to learn that in Holmes Chapel, the appointed PCSO is considered by many to fulfil this expected role. At recent meetings, it has been brought to the attention of the Council that PCSO James Cornish is doing much work in relation to several of the points above. This particularly relates to young

people in connection with underage drinking and to culprits being given the opportunity to remove graffiti which had been defacing walls clearly visible to the public.

Although the PCSO does not have the power to arrest an offender, because of the close liaison with Police Officers, his assistance has been called upon in situations where an arrest has been necessary by a Police Officer. To many residents, the PCSO may well be the most visible Officer that is seen in the course of a week. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that we have one PCSO operating within narrow guidelines and he cannot replace an expected police presence to deal with problems over a full 24 hour period, 7 days a week.

Within the next year the Parish Council will have to consider whether or not to continue our partnership in the Service Level Agreement and residents of Holmes Chapel will have to decide if they wish us to continue this arrangement which costs the community, via the Parish Council precept, £11,000 each year. With this in mind, it is necessary to have everyone aware of the positive as well as the negative responses to the role of PCSOs that have been so contentious in the past. The Council would like to know whether or not residents feel that 'police presence' has been improved in the village and if they consider that the use of a PCSO has resolved issues of concern, in particular anti-social behaviour. Anyone who would like to express an opinion should make it known by writing to the Clerk of the Council at 1 Church Walk, Holmes Chapel, CW4 7AZ or e-mailing [office@holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## Garden Competition

The Parish Council will again run the front garden competition this year and the judges look forward to a pleasant walk around the village admiring everyone's efforts. Last year's winner was Mrs Amy Bowyer of Macclesfield Road who put on a fine show for all residents.

For those not familiar, there is no need to enter the competition. The judges walk around the village in June and again in August and choose a winner from all front gardens. The only requirement is that the garden can be seen from the public road and therefore be enjoyed by those passing by. An award is also made for the best garden maintained by one of our senior citizens. The awards will be made to the winners at the Library in early October.

Enjoy your gardening and see you at the awards ceremony.

## Where Do You Park?

In order to hear the views of various groups and organisations throughout the village, the Parish Council called a meeting, specifically for the Shop Owners/Traders in the village centre. Over fifty letters of invitation were distributed so that views could be aired in connection with issues which the Council may be able to assist in some improvement or resolution.

Although the attendance was very limited, the meeting was constructive and it was possible to make the Council aware of matters that can cause some concern. One major issue of concern was, not surprisingly, car parking within the village.

Most car parks in the village are in private ownership and, generally, the owners are extremely generous in allowing the use of the space not only to their own shoppers, but also to those visiting the Village Centre. This arrangement works to everyone's advantage in most circumstances.

The 'George and Dragon' pub and restaurant is very helpful in allowing their private parking to be used for parents bringing their children into the village to walk them on to Holmes Chapel schools at the beginning of the day. They also have an arrangement for Sunday mornings to allow those attending the Methodist Church to leave their vehicles in the car park and walk across to the Church service.

However, during the week at busy times, it is noticeable that vehicle owners who are not using the facilities of the pub and restaurant are still making use of the parking, often causing obstruction so that customers are unable to park.

Other car parks, such as the Precinct, in front of Lovell Court and behind the library, are often full at busy times and a recent survey indicates that 30% of spaces are occupied for the full day. These may be people working within the village or drivers 'sharing' a car for their onward journey out of the village.

One car park owner has decided to restrict its use to employees of the business. One of the pubs is looking into car park charging. Further owners may decide on a solution to suit their needs which may not be to the long term benefit of the village.

The tricky issue of whether or not to charge for parking has been visited several times recently but this is costly to set up and run. One suggestion is that any parking fee could be subtracted from the bill if a village shop or business was part of the scheme. Alternatively, parking could be restricted to, say, 3 hours after which a penalty would be enforced. This could be self financing and would be of no cost to shoppers BUT a long stay car park would have to be established on the outskirts of the village.

It is very easy to complain about the lack of parking within the Village Centre, but not very easy to resolve. The Council would be interested in hearing the views of local people. They can write to the Office at 1 Church Walk, Holmes Chapel, CW4 7AZ or e-mail the Clerk at [office@holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## Parish Budget for 2009-10

At the Council meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January the budget was agreed for the coming year. Although allowance has been made for the cost of running the office in Church Walk and provisions made for funding capital projects in forthcoming years the precept increase has been kept down to 3.4%.

The overall budget is £71,900 of which £13,500 is for capital expenditure and £52,790 for revenue. The balance will be reserved for future capital expenditure on a 5 year plan which has been drawn up to cover projects within the village. These include work on the play areas, improvements to the Dane Valley area north of the village and improved street lighting along the footpath by the playing fields between Middlewich Road and West Way.

Details of the budget can be seen on our web site.

## Jumpers for Goalposts

This was the title of the email asking what could be done to provide young people with somewhere to play.

Holmes Chapel has a number of play areas and the Parish Council would like to refurbish them. Each year they are reviewed by Congleton Borough Council (soon to be Cheshire East Council) and each year there is a list of work that could be done, but so far they have never been so bad as to be top of the list when the budget is allocated.

The Parish Council have decided that they cannot wait for ever and so have put together a five year plan with a schedule for refurbishing the two main play areas, namely the one off Elm Drive and the one off Middlewich Road, and the paths in the Dane Valley. All of these are substantial projects that will take a lot of resources to complete and, therefore, a lot of time, but with a commitment from the Parish Council to set funds aside, and to seek grant funding where possible, we hope to be able to make a significant difference to all these areas.

In the mean time, the football pitch at the Elm Drive play area is in a very poor state of repair, being rutted and uneven, so we can make a big difference to that with just a small amount of money. Hopefully, this will create some improvement for our children, and they won't even need to use jumpers for goalposts!

# Holmes Chapel Parish Council

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

## Get Well Soon

Two members of the parish council have been unwell for some time now. Both John Norton and Patricia Cotton have been ill recently, but are now well on the way to recovery. Their fellow councillors wanted to send them best wishes and we hope to see them at council meetings again very soon.

## Parish Council Office, Meetings and Committees

The Parish Council office now established at 1 Church Walk will soon be open to the public at certain times including one Saturday morning each month. The Council has just issued a new calendar of meetings and is reorganising its committees. The Annual Parish Meeting will be held at the Victoria Hall on Thursday 7 May 2009. For further details of all these items please watch the web site and notice boards during April and May.

## Members of the Parish Council with contact details

	Member	Telephone	Email **
<b>Clerk of the Council</b>	David Cowgill	01565 631528	clerk@
<b>Assistant Clerk</b>	Nicola Clarke	01477 533934	office@
<b>Chairman</b>	Alan Ashworth	01477 537690	alan.ashworth@
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Alan Rickards	01477 534193	alan.rickards@
	John Clowes	01477 532266	john.clowes@
	Patricia Cotton	01477 537491	patricia.cotton@
	Les Gilbert	01477 544307	les.gilbert@
	Nick Guthrie	01477 549958	nick.guthrie@
	May Mackenzie	01477 532007	May.mackenzie@
	John Norton	01477 537189	
	Rab Parry	01477 533715	rab.parry@
	Alan Pierce	01477 533367	alan.pierce@
	David Savage	01477 537464	david.savage@
	Mike Street	01477 534745	mike.street@

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

**Parish Council Office – 1 Church Walk Holmes Chapel CW4 7AZ – Tel 01477 533934**