



## Newsletter Summer 2011

### New Council

You may not have noticed but on May 5<sup>th</sup> a new Parish Council was elected. With 12 vacancies (the whole council needed to be elected) and with 12 candidates no ballot was held. We thank the retiring councillors, Alan Rickards, Alan Pierce and Kevin Brownlow for their time and effort and welcome two new councillors, Margaret and Steve Ranger, and welcome back John Latham. I would also like to thank the other 8 councillors for their continued efforts. In this era of cynicism towards politicians of all shapes and sizes, we should remember that Parish Councillors offer their time and energy for no reward, save the satisfaction of a job well done, for which I, for one, am grateful.

The Council have a busy year ahead of them as they continue to work on major projects such as the Dane Valley improvements (with Cheshire East Council and Cranage Parish Council) and the Play Area improvements (with Holmes Chapel Partnership), preparing to provide Local Services being transferred or devolved by Cheshire East Council (see below) and beginning to prepare to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, in addition to all the regular business of a Parish Council, such as considering planning applications (see Sanofi Aventis site article below).

*Nick Guthrie*

Chairman, Holmes Chapel Parish Council

### Local Service Delivery in Holmes Chapel

A group of Councillors has been considering the issue of Local Service Delivery and the response to be made to the Cheshire East Council (CEC) proposal to stop delivering certain service in the village and offer the Parish Council the opportunity to take them on.

Even though the time for making comments has arrived, CEC have still not produced all the information promised, so while the Parish Council are not happy with the situation they have produced a holding statement of intent which is set out below.

It is still not clear how much money will be forthcoming to set up these services so the Parish Council will have to look at all funding options, including raising its Council Tax precept, in order to meet the cost of these increased services. It is considered necessary to do this in order to provide necessary services and standards in our growing community.

### Statement of Intent - Formal response to Cheshire East Council (CEC)

The Council has not received all the information it would have wished from CEC. Nevertheless it is necessary to make progress to safeguard services in HC and the following statement of intent is made.

Christmas tree and lights:

- Accept CEC proposals to transfer the service to the parish council

## Hanging baskets and floral displays

- Accept CEC proposals to transfer the service to the parish council
- Need to consider whether CEC will continue to provide plants and remove waste

## Benches planters and street furniture

- Accept CEC proposals to transfer the service to the parish council, subject to agreeing a list of items with them

## Public conveniences

- Accept CEC proposals to transfer the building and service to the parish council provided that the building is brought up to a satisfactory standard (in line with the information already submitted) unless a satisfactory alternative is provided
- This would include the transfer of staff who look after this specific building but no other staff

## Play areas and open space

- Accept future responsibility for play areas on Elm Drive and Middlewich Road

## Areas of land to purchase for a nominal consideration

- Site of public conveniences and adjoining green area
- Sites of play areas and land at the top of the Dane Valley adjoining Elm Drive play area
- Open space area on Strathmore Close

## Other conditions:

- No staff transferred other than in connection with public conveniences
- CEC indemnify HCPC in respect of any claims made by staff for redundancy or unfair dismissal
- CEC hand over any surplus equipment and material used in connection with the above services
- CEC to continue to maintain all other open space areas not handed over
- Agreement of provisions for satisfactory management and maintenance of the Dane Valley (west side of the village)

## **Development of the Sanofi Aventis site between London Road and Marsh Lane**

At its meeting on 23 June the Council considered the outline planning application for the Sanofi Aventis site between London Road and Marsh Lane, probably the biggest development in Holmes Chapel since the development of Bridge Farm nearly 20 years ago. The Council resolved to make the following comments to the Planning Officer at Cheshire East Council

- There is general support for the development of this site and for the grant of outline planning permission. However, there are a number of items which need further investigation and which should be picked up by way of planning conditions, reserved matters or a section 106 agreement (a means of providing compensation to the community)
- There is support for the reduced number of houses – 231 being much less than earlier numbers proposed by the developer
- The Council supports a maximum of 55% of affordable housing on this and other large sites to fit in with the infrastructure of Holmes Chapel
- The Council objects to the access road proposed on Station Road and supported the original proposal for an access opposite to Manor Lane with roundabout control.
- Also there is need for an additional exit route for the housing land as previous developments in Holmes Chapel have shown. Residents have to live with the consequences of the outcome of planning applications and local experience is that the theoretical reports have not provided the correct answer. Regard should be had for the position on Portree Drive Holmes Chapel

- The existing access on London Road for the commercial part of the site only is supported, but with roundabout control and a design to prevent a rat run between Station Road and London Road
- It is accepted that the provision of a large amount of office accommodation on the commercial part of the development is not required but there needs to be a careful review of the type of commercial / employment uses to make sure that the provision is right for the needs of Holmes Chapel and the Borough as a whole
- Conditions should be imposed to deal with screening, landscaping, the protection of boundaries and obscuring the view of adjoining commercial uses; also to deal with contamination on site and flood risks
- There is need for a substantial contribution to the village infrastructure based on:
  - the need to review the amount of open space provision on site and consider how it can be maintained. The present layout shows an increased amount of open space but this is amenity space and not suited for play or recreation, which is an acknowledged requirement in the village. Because of the present economic climate it would be better to improve existing play areas in the village rather than create large new ones so there should be a substantial contribution to cover this aspect. Furthermore there must be provision to maintain the large amount of open space
  - providing funding for the improvement of existing facilities in the village
  - providing land for long stay car parking near the Station
- Again it must be emphasised that local people have to live with the consequences of this development which will have a considerable impact on the village population and infrastructure. The point in time when planning permission is granted is the time to deal with local requirements, not afterwards when it is too late to have an input from the developer
- The development generally must adhere to the concept of being sustainable in the local community.

## Benchmark Survey – Assessment of Health of Village Centre

Last year Cheshire East Council sponsored a 'benchmarking' exercise in Holmes Chapel to measure the conditions of retail and business activity in the village. The aim of this is to provide a base line for measurements in future years to see how the village is performing relative to the benchmark. Members of the Parish Council carried out a number of surveys in the village including:

- Numbers of people walking through the village centre (footfall)
- Level of car park occupation
- Numbers of vacant shops
- Range of businesses
- Views of business owners
- Views of visitors to the village

This information has been analysed and compared with national and regional figures. The results are to be reviewed in detail by the Parish Council but initial conclusions are that the village is in a reasonable state considering the economic conditions we are experiencing. It provides us with clear evidence about car park overcrowding and the views of business owners and visitors help to clarify the important issues for these groups.

# Holmes Chapel Parish Council

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

## Action on Litter Hotspots

The Village Volunteers organised a Holmes Chapel Clean-Up Day on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> July. The aim was to get the whole village to join together for an hour or two to remove any litter. CEC supplied litter pickers, plastic bags and gloves and several local organisations put together small teams. Fiona Bruce, our MP, was one of the first to volunteer to help us. Thank you to everyone who took part.

There are some litter hot spots in the village such as around the bench outside the Library even though there are litter bins in the immediate vicinity. Please spread the word that this is anti-social behaviour and the culprits should not be surprised to receive on-the-spot fines from the Community Wardens who may operate unseen.

## Holmes Chapel & District U3A

The U3A Registration and Enrolment Event will take place on 31<sup>st</sup> August 11.00 – 3.00 at the Victoria Club, Holmes Chapel. On this day you will be able to enrol for an Interest Group and renew your Membership or join the U3A. To find out more about the U3A and details of the new Interest Groups that they will be starting in September and information on the current Interest Groups that have vacancies, please visit their web site [www.holmeschapelu3a.org.uk](http://www.holmeschapelu3a.org.uk). Or come and see them on the 31<sup>st</sup> August at the Victoria Club.

## Officers and Members of the Parish Council with contact details

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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

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