

ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL
Chairman's Report - 27th May 2008

Good evening everybody – welcome to our Annual Parish Meeting when we look back at what the Parish Council has achieved during the last year.

This has been my first year as Chairman. I would like to start by thanking all our Parish Councillors and our Clerk for their support during the year, without which, the job would have been far more difficult. There are inevitably time constraints on all of us, especially those of us who have full time jobs, and I really appreciate the effort that you all put in on behalf of the Parish Council. I would also like to thank the support we have received over the year from both our County Councillors and our District Councillor. Thank you very much.

One major achievement this year has been Alconbury Parish Council's submission to achieve the status of a Quality Council. This has meant an enormous amount of work, not least by Sue who successfully gained her Certificate in Local Council Administration, which enabled our application to go ahead. We await the final outcome of our application over the next few months. To gain Quality Status means that residents can be assured that their Parish Council acts in a proper and efficient manner in all aspects of their work.

In September of last year, the Parish Council in conjunction with ENCAMS, organised a brook clearance. The morning was a huge success, and it is hoped it might become a regular event. It was so encouraging to see so many people who obviously care about their environment enough to volunteer their help. Thank you to all the Parish Councillors who were involved and all the members of the general public who participated.

The Youth Group in the village continues to thrive. There are now 177 registered members, with an average of 55 attending the junior group and 60 the senior group. Again, my thanks go to all those volunteers who spend so much of their time and effort to run these sessions, not least of all Nigel Murphy who continues to help in spite of the fact that he works away from the village.

The Parish Council is very fortunate to have a planning expert on the team which has enabled the Council to make more accurate and informed responses to the District Council. This has proved invaluable, especially when dealing with matters such as the airbase and any future development to the old Truckstop site. Both these areas are being carefully monitored by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council has also been vigilant with the proposed development of the A14. It has voiced its concerns to the Highways Department and the main contractor of the Scheme because of the impact on volumes of traffic and pollution this development could have on the village and its residents. At least all parties are now aware of concerns in the village. The Parish Council will continue to monitor this situation.

Although in its infancy, another initiative that has been started this year has been a working party to deal with emergency planning. The need for this first came to the attention of the Parish Council when many residents were left vulnerable after the theft of telephone cables in the area. They have begun to work with the District Council to get an emergency plan in place, and it is anticipated that lots of other groups within the village will also become involved.

The Parish Council continued to publish its bi-monthly Newsletter throughout the year, and has gained very positive feedback from the community. This will be an on-going publication, promoting the Parish Council's desire to communicate as much as possible with its electorate. The website has also been enhanced to include current events within the village, and also now has the facility to link with websites of other organisations offering a service to Alconbury residents. The Parish Council is keen to encourage any such organisations to request these links.

Of tremendous importance to the community is the retention of its Post Office. We are awaiting a decision as to whether Alconbury will be on the list of closures. Should this be the case, the Parish Council will do all it can to lobby for its retention.

The Parish Council has continued to financially support various groups within the village. Of particular note this year has been the donation of £600 given to our local primary school to help with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Life Education Centre – commonly known as “the drugs bus” together with a Drugs Information Evening. Money has also been given to CARESCO, the WEA Alconbury Branch, The Poppy Appeal fund, Victim Support and the Over 60s Club. I would like to encourage local groups to continue to ask the Parish Council for financial assistance as money is set aside for such requests.

I've enjoyed my first year in the Chair. The Parish Council has many commitments, not just the initiatives I've outlined tonight, but all the day to day running of the village that goes on behind the scenes like the grass cutting and general maintenance and repairs. I think the village is very fortunate to have a team of people who are extremely willing and able to donate their time voluntarily to their community, and I am very grateful for their support. Thankyou.