

CRA NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2020

Dear Residents,

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We trust that this Newsletter finds everyone in good health and positive spirits in spite of the continuing impacts of Covid-19. Understandably the pandemic has stymied most of the Committee's plans including those for our October AGM, however, I am delighted to tell you that all our current Committee members, and our recently co-opted member Malcolm, have agreed to continue in their roles until the government gives the green light for larger group meetings. Sadly, that seems some way off at present.

We are most grateful to Malcolm for his work as our "webmaster" and for his ongoing review of the structure and content of the CRA website. The site is now much improved so if you haven't visited it lately please do take a look. One objective is to make the site a major source of relevant information for residents so if you have any ideas or suggestions please let us know.

Life continues, of course, and your Committee has stayed in touch using a WhatsApp chat group, supplemented as necessary with occasional ZOOM meetings. In this way we have been able to manage our short-term actions and maintain our longer-term planning. Many thanks to Gordon, Chris and Zachary who joined members of the Committee for our recent road cleaning event, and many thanks also to all of you who had cleaned your own frontages in advance. Your efforts enabled the working party to focus on other areas so that, together, we have made Chalklands a noticeably cleaner and tidier place to live.

RESURFACING, AND KERBS, PAVEMENTS & DRIVES – AN IMPORTANT UPDATE

These improvements are a top priority for the Committee but there have been several challenges. Our past surfacing contractor has sold up and it has been difficult to find a reliable company that can offer the same standard of highways specification work at an affordable price. In addition, we were also hoping to find a company that could replace damaged kerbs and pavements - a source of constant complaints and a problem that many residents consider more of a priority than the state of the road. The CRA does not have the resources to maintain any more than the actual roadway so kerbs and pavements are regarded as the responsibility of each individual homeowner. However, we have long hoped to negotiate a group rate for replacing pavements that would encourage residents to upgrade their frontages with concrete kerbs and paths to a standard specification, so we have redoubled our efforts as it clearly makes sense to replace the crumbling cast concrete kerbs as part of this road surfacing project.

Having surveyed the whole estate, we have decided to continue the road surfacing northwards from the point we reached last time ie, midway between 'Pond Corner' and the roundabout. We can afford to extend the asphalt up as far as the roundabout (about 100m at a cost of approx. £20,000), a section of the road that has sixteen frontages with failing kerbs and poor pavements. Happily, we have now found a firm that has two divisions which are capable of carrying out both aspects of the work – one division to replace the kerbs and pavements, and a second that will plane and repair damaged sections of the road's concrete plates and then surface the whole section with 40mm of highways specification asphalt. The company, Gibbs Surfacing Ltd, has large scale contracts with local authorities, and we are confident of its viability and the standard of its work. Following provisional online estimates, representatives of both divisions carried out a site inspection and discussed our specific requirements. The firm has recently provided more detailed illustrations of their prices and we are pleased to report that, in our view, we have negotiated a real value for money package. We are presently calculating the likely cost for each of the frontages involved and these proposals will be put to the individual homeowners shortly. We will let you know the details of our finalised plan once everything has been agreed. Subject to collecting the homeowner contributions for the paths, we would hope to start work in about three month's time. We are most grateful to Tim for all he has done to get us to this point.

DRAINAGE

Our various efforts over recent years to reduce the flooding at 'Pond Corner' have been largely successful but recent deluges have overwhelmed the capacity of the two underground chambers that were designed to cope with surges in rainfall. These chambers are prone to silting up so a group of volunteers has recently spent several sessions digging out the chambers and levelling the adjacent bank which, as you will have noticed, had been cleared of its overgrown vegetation. The objective was to stop soil washing into the drains by reducing the height of the bank and then grassing the whole area. More than 25 barrowloads of silt and soil were transferred to local gardens in the process. The total cost was a mere £12.99 for seed but it took a lot of effort and sweat so a big thank you to the volunteers who went into the chamber and flattened the bank. We have also asked our local Councillor to push Bucks CC into cleaning the drains in lower Goddington as these can overflow in heavy downpours with the excess running down into Chalklands and into our drains. All these actions may help but with bigger and more frequent downpours we may be forced to consider a third surge chamber to minimise flash flooding.

Photos on website

PARKING

Complaints about inconsiderate and sometimes dangerous parking continue to be raised with the Committee. This is a problem which affects us all and requires concerted and continuing efforts by residents if we are to make any progress. The complaints fall into two main categories:

- Parking on corners, dangerously obstructing the view of circulating traffic. This problem is particularly acute by the alley, and also at the top of Chalklands around the opposite corner.
- Parking on kerbs and pavements – this not only damages our fragile concrete but sometimes forces pedestrians to walk in the road which is obviously dangerous, especially after dark.

Please be aware of these issues when parking your own cars, and please advise your visitors accordingly.

SECURITY

It's that time of year, with longer hours of darkness and a higher risk of unwelcome visitors, but there are some simple crime prevention measures that we can all take to keep ourselves and our properties safe:

- **ENSURE SIDE ACCESS TO YOUR HOUSE HAS A GATE WHICH IS KEPT LOCKED**
- **LOCK UP ANY SHEDS WHEN NOT IN USE, DAY OR NIGHT**
- **DO NOT LEAVE LAPTOPS, ETC IN FULL VIEW THROUGH WINDOWS**
- **USE TIMERS TO LIGHT YOUR HOME WHILE YOU ARE AWAY**
- **ALWAYS ASK FOR IDENTITY PROOF FROM TRADESMEN AND VISITORS AT THE DOOR**
- **BE VIGILANT FOR STRANGERS AROUND THE STREET**
- **WATCH OUT FOR SUSPICIOUS VANS, DELIVERY OR OTHERWISE, CRUISING THE ESTATE**

Note: There have been recent reports of packages being stolen from doorsteps and external letter boxes being searched. Please arrange for "safe space" or neighbour delivery if possible.

ANY HELP NEEDED?

Remember, if you or a neighbour needs any form of help please contact one of your Committee members.

STAY SAFE, STAY WELL and thank you all for your continued support.

Your Committee

Chairman: Bill *Secretary:* Margaret *Treasurer:* Jennie/Matt

Tim / Pam / Brian G. / Brian J. / Paul / Clark / Laura / Avril