

# Voice



Gerrard's Cross  
Parish Council Newsletter  
January 2012

## Your library needs you!

Late in 2010 Buckinghamshire County Council [BCC] announced they were closing 14 Libraries including ours in Gerrards Cross. Following an Open Meeting at which residents made it clear they wanted the Library kept open, the Parish Council took on the challenge of finding the necessary money and volunteers to run it. To date the Parish Council has:

- Formed a Charity – the Gerrards Cross Community Library – to take over the Library, the Trustees of which are local residents
  - Negotiated a grant from BCC of £30,000 a year for five years to help cover the costs
  - Applied for and received a grant from the Tesco Fund, also towards the costs
  - Arranged an assignment of the lease of the Library premises from BCC to the Charity at a peppercorn rent.
  - Set up a Working Group of local residents to organise the transfer from BCC to the Charity in the Spring.
  - Asked for Volunteers to help in the Library and for financial contributions
  - Established a website - [www.gxlibrary.org](http://www.gxlibrary.org) – where Volunteers can register and all residents can make financial donations.
- The Libraries in Chalfont-St-Peter, Farnham Common, Chalfont-St-Giles and Little Chalfont are already run by their residents. The Gerrards Cross Library is far more

complex, being very much larger. It had a footfall of 85,000 in 2010. To ensure its future our Library needs:

- Volunteers to work in the Library half a day once or twice a month. Already around sixty have volunteered but **we need more**. Duties are issuing and returning books and DVDs, advising residents on their choices, returning books to shelves etc. Training will be given and an experienced 'someone' will always be on hand to help. Register at [www.gxlibrary.org](http://www.gxlibrary.org).
- Money to cover the day to day running costs and secure its future when the BCC grant ceases. 'Friends' donating individually £15 per annum [or £25 as a Family] and 'Benefactors' donating a one-off sum of at least £100 are urgently needed. To date £1,655 has been donated, Chalfont-St-Giles with far fewer residents receives an annual income of £4,500 from its Friends. More Benefactor and Friends are therefore urgently needed – please register at [www.gxlibrary.org](http://www.gxlibrary.org).

The Library is not only used by readers of books. It is used by:

- Young children at the pre-school story telling sessions
- Children from local schools whose teachers bring them to the Library to hear a story and learn what the Library has to offer

- Students needing research books
- Residents to use the four computers, all with internet access, or, for beginners to learn how to use them. Instruction is given free by a resident.
- Residents to read the newspapers and magazines.

The Parish Council and Working Group are working hard to keep our Library open. We also have later plans to extend the opening hours and make the Library a centre for the community by having information on local activities and making it available to local organisations for meetings. **We cannot do this without the help of you, our residents. Please access [www.gxlibrary.org](http://www.gxlibrary.org) to register how you can help, or, if you don't have access to a computer, phone the parish office 01753 888018.**



### Planning news

**Waitrose store** – Opening now currently scheduled for June 2012 with the Flats above due to be completed in July 2012

**Tesco store** – Applied for permission to open from 6am until 10pm during periods when they feel demand warrants it. The Parish Council has opposed this.

**Former Martins, newsagents, shop** – Application for change of use from a shop rejected by South Bucks Council in agreement with the Parish Council

**Madeley House** – Application for change of use from offices to a restaurant made to South Bucks.

inside...

**How Tesco's  
£100k has  
been spent and  
highway news**

# Traders' plans to improve the village centre

Thanks to a substantial grant from the **Tesco Community Fund** the Gerrards Cross Traders plan, starting this year:

- To have hanging baskets each summer throughout the Village centre
- also Celebration Flags – The Union Jack, the Cross of St George and those of Scotland and of Wales, a total of 8 flags plus a Gerrards Cross flag specially commissioned – to be flown on Flag poles attached to the street lights on the Packhorse Road on appropriate occasions.

This Christmas residents will have noticed that there were many more Christmas Lights; both Christmas Trees decorated with lights and other designs. The wiring was also improved – all made possible through another grant from the Tesco Community Fund.

The Traders are planning to have trees planted in the Centre; 'pigeon unfriendly' trees so residents can sit and walk safely beneath them! Trees will be planted in smart cast iron planters.

## GX Youth Club – A New Beginning

With the dramatic reduction in state provision of Youth Services, the Gerrards Cross Youth Club faced almost certain closure. Thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of some willing volunteers, however, the Club has been saved and is going from strength to strength.

Based in the Memorial Centre, the Youth Club provides a safe space for young people to socialise and learn new life skills, supported by the CRB cleared Youth Leaders and visiting specialists. The young people are expected to play a big part in deciding how the club develops - it is the young people's club. A tuck shop, computers, internet, table tennis, table football, air hockey and pool are available year round. In the summer there is a great open area for outdoor games, or just relaxing.

The club has also organised knee boarding (water skiing on your knees!) and a barbecue in its short life so far.

# How Tesco's £100,000 has been spent

## GERRARDS CROSS PARISH COUNCIL

TRADERS ASSOCIATION – UPGRADE CHRISTMAS LIGHTING	£1,200
TRADERS ASSOCIATION – HANGING BASKETS	£8,391
TRADERS ASSOCIATION – FLAGS POLES AND FLAGS	£4,762
YOUTH CLUB MANAGEMENT – REPAIR OF YOUTH CLUB ROOF	£6,750
GX & FULMER FOOTBALL CLUB – TO IMPROVE PITCH	£500
GERRARDS CROSS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – GRASS PROTECTION TO ENLARGE CAR PARKING	£2,500
GX AND FULMER SCOUTS YOUTH SHELTER	£3,147
TRADERS ASSOCIATION – ADDITIONAL COST OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTING	£8,000
TRADERS ASSOCIATION – ADDITIONAL SAINTS DAY FLAGS	£3,836
NEW SHED TO STORE EQUIPMENT USED TO MAINTAIN THE COMMONS	£13,000
CHAFONT OTTERS SWIMMING CLUB – MARKETING	£4,600
BOLLARDS ON PACKHORSE ROAD TO STOP PAVEMENT PARKING	£400
GERRARDS CROSS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – ESSENTIAL REPAIRS TO THE BUILDING	£6,250
LIBRARY – CONTINGENCY FUND	£17,500
	£19,000

and a barbecue in its short life so far.

During term time the club is open on Monday night from 19:00 until 21:00 for years 9, 10 and 11. On Thursday night from 18:30 until 20:00 for years 6,7 and 8. All young people are welcome.

The Club is indebted to the Parish Council for allocating funds from the **Tesco Community Fund** to repair the Club roof.  
**Stephen Fryer, Youth Club Chairman**

# Commons Committee



The Parish Council has approved the provision of a youth shelter on East Common. The location has been discussed and endorsed by the local police. It was felt that the provision of this facility would be a positive move in providing more facilities for young people in the area. Installation of the new shelter is expected to take place in January of 2012.

The Commons Committee are also considering the provision of wooden, fixed, exercise equipment at various locations on the Common. We would like to get feedback from residents as to whether or not they support this idea, and will be happy to listen to any suggestions as to where the residents would like this equipment to be located. If anyone has any ideas, please do contact the Parish Office.

Work has recently been carried out on West Common to remove some dead and dangerous trees and overhanging branches. This has been carried out in order to keep the pathways safe for pedestrians.

The football pitch on West Common is in excellent condition at present. This is mainly due to the hard work put in by Phil Mooney and his colleagues at Gerrards Cross and Fulmer Football Club. Phil does a tremendous amount of work in both maintaining the grass on West Common and in running the junior football teams for the local children.

The Parish Council gave a grant of £500 out of the **Tesco Community Fund** to improve the pitch.

**Peter Grimes, Chairman**

**Do you have any thoughts or comments on issues raised in this edition of The Voice? Please let us know via the feedback button on [gerrardscross.gov.uk](http://gerrardscross.gov.uk)**

# Packhorse Road traffic lights

Following the outcry by our residents at the design of the new traffic lights on Packhorse Road, it was agreed by Bucks County Council, Tesco and the Parish Council that the traffic light design is fundamentally flawed, posing a significant risk to pedestrians and particularly to the disabled.

After almost 12 months of ongoing discussion, the net result is that Tesco has paid for the traffic lights to be re-synchronised to optimise traffic flow. However, this does nothing to resolve the pedestrian safety issues.

We have met with our MP, with our County Councillors and with the Head of BCC Highways as well as many other County



Council, Tesco and Costain representatives, all of whom have agreed that there are serious safety issues.

The Parish Council is pressing for the removal of the traffic lights at Station Road and the reinstatement of the pedestrian

crossing outside Boots. We would also like to see the two pedestrian islands at the top of Station Approach combined into a single refuge on level ground. Finally, we would like to see the removal of the crossing outside Hamptons, where the footpath is far too narrow.

As the Highways Authority, only the County Council has the power to address these issues. Tesco has indicated that they would consider funding the changes if the County Council would give them a plan. However, unless and until our County Council takes our concerns seriously, we cannot take this forward.

**Chris Brown, Chairman**

## Other highways developments

### Mill Lane

We met with independent traffic engineers in August to examine fresh ideas for improving pedestrian safety over the railway bridge on Mill lane. One of the least expensive suggestions from them was that traffic lights could be installed and footpaths



laid across the bridge on the West side. We are currently finalising a contract for a report and design for this.

### Road Resurfacing

The following areas in the village have now been resurfaced:

- West Common
- Mill Lane
- Oak End Way
- Howards Wood Drive

and the following is planned:

Windsor Road – to be carried out at the top of Packhorse Road and the intersection. If you see a large pothole please report it to [tfb@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:tfb@buckscc.gov.uk).

### Parking Violations

The parking violation scheme has been extended to all residents, so if you see vehicles:

- parked on double yellow lines
- parked on a single yellow line
- exceeding the parking bay time limit

- parked in front of a driveway
  - on the pavement
- please report them to [communityparkingwatchscheme@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:communityparkingwatchscheme@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk).

Those of us who have been involved in the trial have found it useful to take a photograph. Those involved will receive letters from the police and persistent offenders will receive a police visit.

### Street Light Switch Off/On

In our Parish, BCC switched off lights in the following areas during the trial period:

- it has been confirmed that the following lights will be switched back on: On the A413 between Kingsway and the railway viaduct
- We are still awaiting a decision on A40 Oxford Road between Gerrards Cross and Tatling End and between Potkilm Lane to the west of the Gerrards Cross boundary.

### Bull Lane Speeding

The data collected from the road tubes BCC placed at our request in Bull Lane and in response to residents' requests showed the 24hr Mean Average is only 29mph and the 85 percentile speed over a 24 hour average is 34mph.

BCC policy states that a VAS, as a form of traffic calming, may be appropriate if the measured speeds are 20% or 7mph (whichever is greater) above the signed

speed limit. In a 30mph area this means any form of traffic management i.e. a VAS may be appropriate if speeds exceed a mean average of 37mph.

Both we and residents felt the results did not reflect what actually happens, so another set of road tubes will be installed at a different, and more appropriate site, and the results compared.

**Mike Lawson, Chairman**



### Gerrards Cross Parishioners Electronic Database

We are establishing a database for use by the Parish Council, and no one else to record the names, postal address, telephone number and email address of Parishioners. We will ask you to log on to the database and record your details. The objective is to allow the Parish Council to communicate more quickly and more cost effectively with you for distribution of the newsletter and planning application issues. We would appreciate your feedback and comments on this and any other Highways issues outlined above, by email of course, if possible.



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

# News from the County Council

The new Leader and Cabinet at the County Council have been working hard since June to deliver on a new set of priorities for Buckinghamshire. Our overriding aim is to improve the state of our roads. It is a long job to tackle the underspend over many years, but at least now we have made a start and I hope residents are beginning to see the benefits. About 100 major resurfacing schemes have been completed across the county since July, with another 150 to follow next year, and Gerrards Cross is definitely getting its share of the budget. We are also changing the maintenance policy from tackling single dangerous potholes to repairing wider areas of damage which lead in due course to additional dangerous potholes.

During the summer and autumn Martin Tett, the new Leader, has been very active

in promoting the case against **High Speed 2**, not least because of the damage the proposed route would do to our precious Buckinghamshire countryside. We want to keep Buckinghamshire special and we have been prepared to take the lead in arguing the case against HS2.

In the village we have all been frustrated by the uncoordinated traffic lights installed by Tesco, which has led to delays and an increase in "rat-running". As the developer, Tesco is responsible for undertaking the works on the highway associated with the store (including traffic lights) installed in accordance with the planning consent. It is very disappointing that the setup is completely wrong and it has taken far too long to address the problem. In the summer, the County Council employed traffic signals consultants at Tesco's expense to report

on the changes that needed to be made to get the lights properly coordinated. These changes have now all been made and hopefully we are seeing a significant improvement. The software learns as it goes so things should improve further in the next month or so. However, traffic signals can only do so much to regulate the flow of traffic. Clearly the presence of a large (and for many people unwanted) supermarket in the middle of the village in itself does not help the flow of traffic through the village.

One final issue. There is currently a consultation taking place on charging for home to school transport. It is vital that all those affected participate in this consultation. You can find details on the "Have Your Say" page on the Bucks County Council website.

**Peter Hardy, Bucks County Councillor**

## Disability Access Group

The South Bucks and Chilterns Disability Access Group has been in existence for approximately ten years. The group work to advise, highlight and lobby on issues that arise for people with disabilities, including the hard of hearing, blind, partially sighted and those with limited mobility who live in South Bucks or Chilterns Districts. They have enjoyed many successes to date. The main emphasis of the group is to raise the profile of issues relating to safe and easy access to buildings, facilities, goods, services and the general environment.

The group are seeking to recruit new members to join them and help with the work they do. Contact [goodaccess1@gmail.com](mailto:goodaccess1@gmail.com)

**We'd love to hear from you, it's your community, your views.**   
**Please contact us on 01753 888018 or email us at clerks@gerrardscross.gov.uk**

## The Finance and General Purposes Committee



The Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee generally meets three or four times a year and it is made up of every member of the Parish Council. As its name suggests its purpose is to consider all financial matters, including grant applications which crop up over the course of a year.

Beyond the full meetings of the committee, its chairman and at least one of the two vice chairs meet monthly prior to the Full Parish Council meeting to scrutinise invoices for all payments being made that particular month to outside contractors, paid council staff, purchases, utilities and grants. These are then ratified for payment during the course of the Full Council Meeting.

### Parish Precept

Another important task of the F&GP Committee is to set the precept for the Parish Council for the following year. You will have noticed this within a breakdown of figures on your general council tax bill. The committee will consider what budgets have been proposed by the Council's Highways and Commons committees, whether there are likely to be any extraordinary demands

on the Council's resources and the state of the financial balances or reserves.

For 2012/13, largely due to the Council having been prudent with budgets, the Parish Council is in a good position regarding balances. It was proposed at the last F&GP meeting on October 31st 2011 that the precept should remain frozen at £198,738 for another year with no increase to be made. This was later ratified at the subsequent Full Council Meeting.

### Grants

At the same meeting the committee considered all applications that had been received and agreed the following grants.

St James Church Yard	£1,000
Bucks Age UK	£500
Air Ambulance Bucks	£2,000
GX Community Association	£2,000
GX Youth Centre	£5,000
Padstones	£750
GX Junior Squash Coaching	£250
The Guide Association	£300

Applications for grants are still being received and this list is likely to grow a little over the next few months.

**Nick Moss, Chairman**