

## Parish Council Chairman's Overview of the Council Year May 2024 – May 2025

Buckland & Chipping Parish Council has had another busy year.

Often things do not change significantly from one year to the next, but last year had a notable exception. Buckland and Chipping benefit from the wonderful Church at St Andrews, but we do lack a Village Hall. Without a hall, the size and type of events we can provide are limited.

Last year we had the opportunity of applying for a East Herts District Council funded grant available to Parish councils for providing meeting facilities and equipment for the benefit of the local community.

As we had no land or budget to build a community centre, the Council agreed to the grant could extend to Gala Tents, Table, Chairs, refreshment facilities, Commercial grade BBQ equipment, Sound systems, staging and food storage containers to the sum of £10,477.58 a significant sum for a small parish council.

This time last year Village life was briefly interrupted by the sudden appearance of the Women's Ford London Classique bike race that came rushing through Barway and Chipping in May. Although the ladies passed by in a matter of moments, it brought some welcome benefits. Some long-awaited road repairs and the complete replacement of the Chipping Milestone all arrived ahead of the event, so let's hope the event happens every year.

The Parish Council's events year began in June with the national celebration of D-Day. The parish Council had a Village beacon constructed especially for this event at minimal cost using 100% recycled materials. It set the scene for an act of national remembrance and a centre piece for a well-attended event with free lunch to all those who attended. All to a backdrop of vintage news broadcasts and Glen Miller.

The second running of the Harvest Fayre Summer Event was planned over the summer and took place on September 14th. It was the perfect opportunity to use our newly acquired equipment. Once again Jason Noy was kind enough to provide the use of his land to run the event. The weather was just right in September allowing the Dog Show to take place as well as live music, food stalls, craft stalls and a mixture of classic tractors, cars and motorbikes.

The event was not without its challenges. Loosing the fairground rides the night before certainly caused some stress, but nothing that some ingenuity and hard work and ice cream couldn't overcome. The tractor rides were a great hit.

As the clocks went back and 2024 drew to a close, we once again held our Bonfire and Fireworks event. Always a village favourite and such a contrast to the Harvest Fayre just a few weeks before. Torches and coats rather than shorts and sunglasses. Like all events we rely on enough people helping to run these events safely. It was only 2 years ago that we had to cancel the Bonfire & Fireworks, so thank you to those who spare their time.

We closed 2024 in the Village with a local Remembrance Day Ceremony in St Andrew's Church on 11<sup>th</sup> November closely followed by annual Carols by Candlelight service again here in St Andrew's on the 21<sup>st</sup> December. For those of you who haven't attended before, I can recommend it as a perfect lead into Christmas.

Now winter is passed we have already begun in 2025 with 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE-Day on 8<sup>th</sup> May. Once again, we arranged free food and music. The music was a little louder as VE Day is a celebration and the beacon was lit along with others throughout the country. Unfortunately, the event was not well attended, but those who came had a lovely evening and were kind enough to help with the packing away too.

You may well notice that the Parish Council is running very low on councillors. Both Debbie Thompson and Simon Dela-Nougerede had to leave last year, so new volunteers to take up positions are most welcome. We already had to cancel one parish meeting in January due to insufficient councillor's being available, so please feel free to approach us after this meeting if you would like to know more.

I will close with a thank you to my fellow councillors past and present. Debbie Thompson worked extremely hard last year alongside the Events committee coordinating the Harvest Fayre. Penny Newman in her first year as Vice Chairman and always ready and willing to do whatever hard work is required. Jeff Kenyon with the years of Parish Council experience finally Helen Dauris who has managed to juggle Parish council work with the commitments of working abroad.

The last thanks must go to our Clerk Caroline Scott who has worked tirelessly to not only complete her training but successfully update all our policies and procedures and a multitude of other Banking and local authority paperwork. Well done, Caroline.

Robert Arkle