



Hazlemere Parish Council

Welcome from our Chairman

Hazlemere Parish Council is delighted to support Hazlemere Fete, a wonderful opportunity for the community to get together each year. The Parish Council has a small grants fund, and at this year's Annual Parish Meeting, we enjoyed hearing from the wide range of local organisations we have supported, including the Fete – an inspiring reminder of the community spirit in Hazlemere and the reason why I am honoured to have been re-elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the year ahead.



Below you will find a summary of the main activities of the Parish Council over what has been a busy and productive year. Do have a look and remember that Council meetings are open to the public – you can find details at www.hazlemereparishcouncil.org.uk, or on Parish Council Noticeboards. Please come and say hello at the Parish Council stand at the Fete!

Cllr Milly Roberts

What does the Parish Council do?

Our role is to manage on behalf of Hazlemere residents all our community assets including playgrounds, recreation grounds, the closed churchyard, allotments and community buildings. We also represent Hazlemere to the local authority and District Council, at various local forums such as the Bucks and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils [is there a more compelling eg?] and in planning decisions, although our role in planning is advisory only. You can see our response to the High Wycombe local plan on our website.

Councillors are generally elected every five years – last time it was 2015. We are all volunteers, who receive no remuneration, but we are ably supported by the Parish Clerk, Ali Banham, and two part-time staff, who operate out of Cedar Barn. We are very grateful for their hard work.

We would also like to record our thanks and appreciation for the work of previous councillors, and in particular to David Cox, a previous councillor and Chairman who sadly died earlier this year.

Improving our playgrounds

The playground at Hazlemere Recreation Ground received a complete makeover last year, with a particular focus on making it accessible and enjoyable for people with disabilities. The new facilities include a ground level trampoline and roundabout, both of which are wheelchair-friendly, the only ones in the immediate area. A new hard pathway is making access easier for people with pushchairs and wheelchairs. For older children, the new kicking wall is well-used, and we have also installed a 'zip wire'. Sadly we have had a couple of incidents of vandalism, and we are grateful if members of the public could bring any problems with the equipment to our attention.

On our agenda for this year is an upgrade for the Rose Avenue Recreation Ground. We invited the public's views on the proposals, and as well as updating existing equipment we will be installing new equipment aimed at older children. The picture shows the upgraded facilities.



Improving our streets

Bucks County Council has responsibility for streets and pavements, but lack of funding means that they are not able to take on all the upgrades that residents ask for. One aspect of our local environment that the Parish Council is particularly concerned about is accessibility, and we are looking into securing the funding for dropped kerbs to improve access to the Community Centre.

The Parish Council is responsible for the street lighting in the Cedar Avenue and Rose Avenue areas. This year, we are completing our three-year programme of installing energy efficient lighting, which saves around 30 per cent in energy and maintenance cost – a saving which we are starting to see in areas already converted.

Bus shelters are our next street project! Two new shelters are being installed in response to requests from local residents. One will be in Rose Avenue, just off the Penn Road, for members of the public travelling to High Wycombe, and the other one will be in Holmer Green Road just below the

Park Parade shops, for people travelling to Holmer Green and Chesham.

Improving our green spaces

We have a rolling programme of improving our wild areas, and over the past year have been working with Chiltern Rangers to manage Holmer Green Woodland in an environmentally friendly way, thinning non-native or invasive plants and planting native species such as hawthorn on the boundary.

As well as maintaining the green spaces we own (such as the Recreation Ground and Rose Avenue), we are now responsible for maintenance of some areas owned by Buckinghamshire County Council and Wycombe District Council, as a result of their policy on devolution. This is inevitably having a knock-on effect on our costs, as we are having to employ contractors to carry out this work.

If you are wondering why a particular area is not as well-kept as you might wish, please bear in mind that Hazlemere is a patchwork of green spaces, trees and hedges, with responsibility shared between a number of individual owners and local councils – and sometimes nobody appears to have responsibility! Whilst we try to track down the owner and request proper maintenance, we do not have powers to enforce this.

Improving community access to our buildings

The Parish Council owns three buildings that are available for hire by members of the public.

The Cedar Barn is an attractive venue for hosting business meetings, presentations, parties, family occasions, classes and other groups. This year an extra meeting room is becoming available, so that two break-out rooms are available for conferences. The building is accessible to wheelchairs and pushchairs, and room hire includes free parking and the use of a fully equipped kitchen, 60 comfortable chairs and a number of tables. Hire charges are £18 an hour (£15 an hour for parishioners).

The Stable Block (on the same site as the Cedar Barn) includes a large meeting room for up to 60 people, with three cloakrooms and a large kitchen. Hire charges are £12 an hour (£10 an hour for parishioners).

For more information or to make a booking, please contact Rachel at the Parish Office on 01494 715548 or email cedarbarnbookings@btconnect.com.

The Hazlemere Memorial Hall on the Recreation Ground is managed by the Hazlemere Memorial Hall Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to whom it is sub-let. The CIO has recently appointed three new Trustees following an open recruitment process, and the Council has been working with the Trustees to improve the availability of the building.

The Hall has a Club Room (with a bar), and (at weekends) a large function room available for hire. For more information, see page 74.

Improving our finances

The Parish Council is funded mainly by a precept (raised with your council tax), a council tax grant, and by income from renting out community facilities. Where possible, we apply for grants from bodies such as the Big Lottery for major projects, and we also get part of a community infrastructure levy charged to developers, however these are very difficult to predict in advance. Our council tax grant is also falling, by 17.5 per cent this year.

In the meantime, our responsibilities are growing, with the devolution of local services from the County and District Councils. We are also determined to maintain our programme of local improvements set out above, and our grants programme (up to £250) to support local community groups.

These factors explain why, reluctantly, we took the decision to increase our precept this year – although this amounts to just £6.22 a year for a Band D household. However, Councillors remain keenly aware of their duty to manage their finances responsibly, and to do their utmost to contribute to Hazlemere as a well-kept, friendly and active community. Do please take the opportunity to talk to Councillors at our stand at the Fete, and contact us throughout the year.

Opportunities for sponsorship

We are considering how we can make Hazlemere Crossroads a bit more appealing. Are there any local businesses that would like to sponsor some flower containers?

After 1st September, all the pavement lighting columns in Hazlemere Parish should have been converted to the new LED white lamps. If you spot any of the old Sodium yellow lamps then please notify Ali, our Clerk, on 01494 715 548.