



There's a lot been going on in the village during lockdown!

When I wrote my article in the last Castlethorpe News in March, I couldn't have imagined what would happen. We shut the Village Hall, including regrettably the very successful Tuesday afternoon "Communi-teas" held in January and February, and put notices on the outdoor play and gym equipment, actually a little in advance of the Government requiring us to do so. In the light of the then "stay at home" advice, we also decided to cancel the paper copies of Castlethorpe News.

I would like to thank the volunteers who have been shopping and delivering prescriptions for those of us who had to stay at home. It is an act of outstanding generosity.

It is obviously very good that Udi and Dina have been able to re-open the village shop after having protective screens installed and great that the school has been able to open in a limited way.

As well as the impact on our way of life, there is also a significant financial impact as the Village Hall is one of our largest costs and the grass at the Sports Ground has to be cut.

We were able to find grant funding for Castlethorpe Sports Association, CSA, (which leases the Sports Ground from the Parish Council on behalf of the football and cricket clubs and tennis members) and they were successful in applying for a grant.

Unfortunately, the Parish Council does not qualify for a grant for the standing costs of the Village Hall and these will have to be met from the reserves that all parish councils are required to maintain for emergencies.

While I mention the Sports Ground, football and cricket are not permitted at present but tennis is now allowed.

There is an annual individual membership fee charged by CSA. Use had rather dropped away but CSA are inviting new members to use these excellent facilities and the Parish Council is

Philip Ayles

Chair,
Castlethorpe
Parish Council



working with CSA to ensure that any remedial work is done.

The "wild life" area behind the football pavilion, after many years and some professional advice and help from a resident, Sharron Clegg, is looking good with fine grasses and wild flowers coming through and paths cut to the log seats. Have a look if you are walking that way.

From 1st April, Castlethorpe opted out of the MKC landscaping contract for grass cutting and hedge trimming within the village boundary. We worked with Hanslope to have our own contractor, RTM.

We are exploring the timing and number of cuts and will review at the end of the season. The dry weather has made the growth rather unusual, but the view seems to be that the village looks much better now the landscaping is under our control.

The Parish Council had also decided to install defibrillators at the Village Hall and the Sports Ground. We have continued with the grant process, led by Councillor Darren Merritt, and we believe these will be provided at no cost to the Parish Council in anticipation of social and sporting activities restarting at some time in the future.

The 20mph limit was installed in March. For reasons beyond imagining, MKC decided that Maltings Field was to be outside the 20mph zone although New Road, Bens Close, School Lane and arguably Maltings Court were in it.

I have spoken to the officer concerned who agreed to include Maltings Field in the 2020/21 programme but he requires a petition of Maltings Field residents which is difficult to organise in lockdown.

But, as it eases, I hope we will be able to do this and get the unnecessary 30mph sign removed from the entrance.

Unfortunately, one side effect of reduced road usage is that speeds have gone up. Councillor Dave Hinds and I continue to operate the Speed Indicator Device (SID) on our allowed exercise walks and the increase is very high. I am liaising with the sergeant of the special constables who are doing speed enforcement and sending him the data from our SID and he hopes to be able to do some enforcement in the village in the next rota.

Our Modified Neighbourhood Plan completed its consultation by the Parish Council on 11th March. Our thanks to those of you who commented. Most of the comments were in support and there were a couple of corrections.

We received an objection by the representatives of the owners of Gobbey's Field to its designation as a Local Green Space (LGS) and three landowners put land forward for housing.

The Parish Council considered these proposals and reiterated that it believed that Gobbey's met the criteria for an LGS and also its earlier decision, made on advice from MKC and our consultant, that there is no need to designate further land for housing at this time.

The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was then submitted to MKC. The process is that MKC now has to have a second consultation period. This was held up briefly by the lockdown until new government guidance allowed NPs to proceed and I would like to thank the volunteers who delivered the notification letters to all households.

At the end of this consultation, MKC will again consider any comments and then appoint an external Examiner who will decide whether it complies with the regulations. If it does, we hope it will go forward for adoption by MKC as

Continued on next page

Anyone for tennis at the Sports Ground?

The Sports Ground includes two full-sized hard tennis courts and access to the courts is for paid up members.

To enquire about membership email castlethorpesports@gmail.com and the team will email you with fee details, how to pay and all you need to know to start playing.

Although the football season came to a premature end, the youth teams of FC Castlethorpe enjoyed another excellent season with three all girl teams and five all boy teams

competing in the local leagues from under-9s to under-15s.

All the teams played to a high standard in a wonderful spirit in what is arguably one of the best football grounds for facilities and settings in the county.

When football is back to normal, why not pop down on Saturday mornings to take in one of the many games you will find on down at the ground?

And it is also worth a mention for

cricket during this summer. With the conditions perfect for bat and ball, it has been a real shame that no games can be played, understandably, in the current environment.

However, the ground is continuing to be maintained should the situation change and the hope remains that the wonderful summer sport of cricket will be possible in 2020!

Neil Humphrey
Castlethorpe Sports Association

Parish Council update

From previous page

Planning Policy without the need for a referendum.

We had accelerated the NP because MKC had lost an appeal (at Hanslope, as it happens) on the grounds that MKC did not have an adequate supply of housing land.

Although we are confident that the current NP would carry sufficient weight in planning decisions, this would have increased our vulnerability to unwanted planning applications.

However, two further appeals have been won on the basis that MKC does have an adequate housing land supply so we remain protected by Plan:MK.

I know, it is crazy that two Inspectors can come to different conclusions on basic facts but that's planning law.

We had to cancel the proposed presentation on MK Futures 2050 but we did get written guidance for our area and no major development is planned that would impact us.

Of course, the Parish Council cannot meet in person for its monthly meetings at the moment. These are important to authorise expenditure and to comment on planning applications as well as other decisions.

Government guidance allowed the Annual Parish Meeting (which would have been held on 6th April) and the Annual meeting of the Council (which appoints the Chairman and other responsibilities and which would have been held on 4th May) to be deferred until 2021.

However, the Parish Council met using video-conferencing in April, May and

June and intends to continue to do so until guidance changes and it is safe to meet again.

The meetings remain open to the public who can view using the village Facebook page. I am sorry that the June meeting broadcast failed for technical reasons but we have re-tested and are hopeful that July will work.

Being locked down has made me realise how lucky we are to live in an attractive village like Castlethorpe with amenities like Castle Field and Gobbey's Field to walk in and enjoy and a network of footpaths within easy reach. Hopefully, our play areas and outdoor gym will be allowed access too over the summer.

Stay safe.

Philip Ayles

Chairman, Castlethorpe Parish Council

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Keep up to date with the latest village news, local traffic and travel reports and useful phone numbers on the Parish Council website
www.castlethorpe-pc.gov.uk