

DC report for East Challow Parrish Council 9th July 2025

Warm/ Community Space

The last meeting before the summer break took place on Friday June 27th. David Ilott gave a very interesting talk on the orchards of East Challow. The next meeting will be on September 19th.

Flooding the A417, Mellor's area

This remains complex with many things happening.

- (i) The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust together with West Challow Parish Council now have the money to build their weir which should then regulate the amount of water running down the ditch across the field. They were unable to start until an ecological survey has been carried out – this has now been done.
- (ii) The County Council have cleared the gulleys that run along the A417 east of Mellor's. These discharge into a ditch that runs north of the A417 towards Mellor's but this silts up quickly and needs to be cleared. They have also repaired the two inspection chambers at the end of the ditch running across the field.
- (iii) There remains a court case involving a landowner who has refused to clear his stretch of Childrey Brook.
- (iv) I met with three county councillors and two senior officers down at Mellor's last week "to review the situation". Interestingly there is old evidence that the brook used to run south of the A417 and under Silver Lane so it had been diverted under the road and back again some time in the past.
- (v) OCC have now also carried out an ecological survey of the stretch of the brook immediately west of the W&G estate and up to the canal (see above). There is evidence of water voles, newts and fresh-water mussels. The all clear has been given to the ditch east of Mellor's so OCC will be clearing this out soon which should reduce the risk of flooding at this part of the A417.
- (vi) I asked one of the officers what would be the strategy to desilt the brook given the protected species found but did not get a clear answer!
- (vii) Thames Water are looking at this area for natural flood management (flood mitigation measures) to both reduce localised flooding and reduce flooding in East Hanney.

Grove Business Park

There was a celebration last week of Grove Business Park, its success and coming expansion. I spoke to Oxford University Endowment Management (the landlord) who was disappointed that I had objected to the use of mains sewerage to take the sewage from the existing and new park. I still believe that objection was the right decision for myself and the parish council. Our MP and his team were given a briefing on the stages of the further development.

No 68 Community Bus

I used the first (8.07 a.m.) No 68 bus from Childrey the other day to see how many school children use it. There were 5 on the bus with 5 adults going to work. I rarely see it empty. I have also suggested that the route be changed to divert to a stop at the Mably Way surgery and somewhere on Seesen Way to allow patients to attend the hospital clinics. Transport say that this will not happen until the route is put out again for retendering. Shame!

Wantage Hospital visit

On June 24th Wantage Town Council Health sub-committee (on which I sit) had a tour of Wantage Hospital to see the planned changes which will include new clinics although we haven't yet been told what clinics will be based there.

Future Flood Resilience Group Meeting

On June 7th Barry Gooch of the Future Flood Resilience Group gave a presentation in Letcombe Regis Village Hall about the activities of the group, the background to local flooding and what they are trying to do. It was a fascinating meeting with about 25 people in the audience representing all of the main villages affected in this area. Barry mentioned a Wantage Town Council meeting to take place in the Beacon on July 22nd. This will discuss localised flooding and try to put together a local strategy involving our villages. Please attend if you can.

Policing Survey

Our local bobby, Jez Oldroyd is asking us to take part in a community policing survey. This can be found at <https://forms.office.com/e/h0s2Vp2d0S>.

I have still not yet arranged a date for Jez to give our villages an update. I hope to get this done in the next week or so.

Paul Barrow
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