

FM Summer 2015

I hope everyone is enjoying the Spring conditions and making the most of the countryside and open air facilities we have available in the Parish. It is always pleasing to see a surge in use at the Playing Field this time of year, although it is extremely disappointing that despite notices on every entrance about dogs being banned, there are still people who are blatantly ignoring this instruction. This is so inconsiderate, and I looked up The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) safety note about dogs being in children's playgrounds and sports pitches nationally and the major health and injury hazard it presents:

- over 350,000 tons of excrement is deposited each year
- over 100 people, mainly children, have eye diseases caught by swallowing the Toxocara egg each year. This is caused by the parasitic roundworm in dog faeces
- There is evidence that dogs also carry e.coli and hepatitis in their faeces.
- 1600 children are taken to hospital casualty departments with dog bites

The Playing Field in Flitton is used regularly by both adults and children, playing and relaxing and if anything the dog problem seems to be getting worse and has forced us to report it to the new CBC Dog Enforcement team who have promised to increase visits from now on. We are also ordering new signs so that nobody can be left in any doubt about the seriousness of transgression. This will reinforce the total dog ban in the Playing Field 365 days a year. The signs will also be placed in areas in the village where some dog walkers are failing to "poop and scoop" after their dogs. Particularly bad areas include Joes Close along by the allotments and Flitton Moor along by the river bank. I would ask all residents to be vigilant in this respect and to please let me or any other parish councillor know the names or car registration numbers of any people failing to adhere to this very reasonable request. Fines can be as much as £1000 and the Council will press for this maximum fine to be levied on anybody who infringes.

As mentioned in the last FM, following the elections on May 7th a new Parish Council has been formed and whilst the 5 Flitton councillors have remained, there are 2 new councillors in Greenfield and I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Jen Fisher and Simon Mason. It is particularly nice to have some younger members and this shows that it is possible to be a councillor whilst still working. Despite the addition of Jen and Simon we are still a Greenfield councillor short which is such a shame. I would therefore ask Greenfield residents to consider putting their names forward to either the Clerk to the Council or to me (details on the Parish website). It really is not too onerous a commitment and in fact can be very rewarding. There are only 6 full meetings each year and you will get an opportunity to have a say in how the village is run.

Going back to fresh air and exercise I would like to mention that there are a couple of allotments vacant in the Parish and if anyone is interested they should contact Gareth Ellis gareth.ellis@flittongreenfield.org.uk Rates are very reasonable and there is a nice community feel to both Parish sites, one in Joes Close Greenfield and one on Flitton Hill.

In the meantime we continue to be plagued by lorries using the village as a short cut and I know how annoying this is. It is worth pointing out that the 7.5 tonnes weight limit on vehicles which are not being used for delivery into the area, applies to the whole Parish and so vehicles should not just be passing through our roads. This was discussed at our recent Parish meeting and it is always helpful to have proof of the companies which are breaking the ban with details of number plates and times, so that they can be contacted direct to report the infringement.

As the new financial year starts and the Council has its budget for 2015/16 I would also like to mention the modest local Grant funding which residents or groups can apply for to fund projects which are deemed to benefit the community or may be run by volunteers from the community. Details are on the website for anyone interested or I would be happy to advise on a potential application <http://flittongreenfield.bedsparishes.gov.uk/funding/>

Finally the Council has a list of plans and ideas to implement throughout the year including the installation of bench seats and picnic benches, more notice boards, outdoor gym equipment at the Playing Field and possible Highway improvements at Flitton Hill (dependant on our bid for funding being successful). Watch this space for more details or come and get involved yourself.

Nick Thompson
Chairman of the PC

