

Parish power and energy neighbourhoods

This is the time of year when we seem to have very little energy – and our homes and businesses seem to be using ever increasing amounts of it! The Parish Council is working with Severn Wye Energy Agency and Stroud District Council to try to put Cam in the lead when it comes to reducing energy use (thus saving both money and the environment!).

The Council is paying for Energy Surveys to be carried out at community halls and schools in Cam, which will look at how energy is being used now and provide a report on how improvements can be made. This might be through a combination of various measures, such as improved insulation, a more efficient heating system or even locally generated energy through solar panels or PV cells. Support will then be given to the managers of these facilities to decide which measures will be best for them and to apply for grant funding to make them possible.

Energy used in private homes, and the cost of this, has not been forgotten, and all homes will have received a questionnaire in the last edition of this newsletter which, when completed and sent back to SWEA, will have resulted in a similar report on how energy efficiency in your home can be improved. **If you did not receive a questionnaire or have mislaid it and would like to take part, please contact the Council Shop.** The Parish Council now intends to contact all those who did respond to find out how useful the report was to them and what further help they might need to make the necessary improvements. Energy meters are also available to borrow from the Council Shop, which help to show which appliances etc use most power – and therefore which should be used sparingly and be switched off when not in use.

Another scheme which it is hoped will bring benefits to Cam, and publicise the need to save energy, is Energy Neighbourhoods. This is to be run as a competition, with groups of houses in different communities across the county competing with each other to demonstrate the biggest reduction in energy use. Each group of homes will be metered over a set period to find out how much energy they are using. They will then get advice and guidance on how to reduce this over another set period, following which they will be metered again over a similar period as before. Those showing the biggest reduction in energy use will be declared the winners. There will be a good deal of publicity attached to the scheme, and it is hoped that Cam will be part of it, and will be able to use what is learned from the project to help more homes reduce their energy use. The scheme is still being developed and more information will be released shortly.

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Cam

parish newsletter

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A new heart for Cam!!!!

At long last agreement has been reached for the redevelopment of the land off Chapel Street to provide a new heart for Cam. A developer has been selected, who will start on site during the summer of 2008 to provide a new Community Resource Centre and cafe, shops and 14 homes. The scheme should take around 12 months to complete.

Detailed plans for the shops and homes have yet to be agreed, but the intention is to produce a scheme as shown here, with the Resource Centre/cafe and shops grouped around a central village square and a separate area of housing providing much needed smaller units. The village square will be managed by the Parish Council and it is hoped will attract such things as farmers' markets, street performers and so on. Parking will be provided on the site for the houses, with the District Council car park remaining as it is to cater for parking for shoppers etc

The Community Resource Centre will provide office and meeting space for the Parish Council and others, which will make it possible for more services and advice to be delivered locally. The meeting room will also be available for local organisations and businesses to use and will be equipped with data links and a hearing loop. The building has been designed very much with energy efficiency in mind and will be constructed with a timber frame and highly efficient glazing. Possibilities for generating some of the electricity needed to operate the building from PV cells on the roof and to heat the building using a ground source or air to air heat pump are also being explored.

The cafe will be operated as a commercial enterprise, but under a legal agreement with the Parish Council designed to ensure that it will meet the needs of local people. A local team have already been identified as potential operators and discussions are continuing to design the



inside the building and produce the necessary agreement for its operation.

It is also hoped that both parts of the building will be able to offer training opportunities for local people in such areas as office administration, customer service and catering.

In this edition

- Exciting new attraction for Jubilee Field
- Spotlight on Allotments
- Computer use for everyone
- Drains, footpaths and hedges
- Cam's future - get involved
- Reduce your energy use - Parish power

Climbing stones

The Jubilee Playing Field will soon have an exciting new addition – a climbstone circle like this!

The stones will be around 3 metres high and we hope they'll be something different and challenging for older children and teenagers. This has been made possible by a successful Lottery bid from Stroud District Council, together with funding from the Parish Council. It was one of only four schemes across the District chosen to benefit from this funding and is part of the Parish Council's plan to make the Jubilee Field a more inviting attraction for local people of all ages and abilities. Other things in the pipeline include extending the surfaced path around the whole site to make this stunning area more accessible for everyone,



provision of a 'dirt' bike track to complement the existing skatepark, plans for new changing facilities for the sports clubs who use the site – and more! If you would like to have your say in how this great asset for Cam is developed, you

are very welcome to join JPlay, the group which is working to co-ordinate the whole process. For more details, please contact the Parish Clerk (Tel. 548884), Cllr Miranda Clifton (Tel. 545512) or Nigel Ledoux (Tel. 841309).

Spotlight on council services – allotments

In each edition of the Newsletter, we hope to highlight one of the services provided by your Parish Council – this month we are looking at allotments:

Allotments have been provided by the Parish Council for many years. This is one of very few things which a Parish Council actually has a duty to do, if there is enough demand for it. Plots of various sizes are available on two sites in Woodfields, one in Upthorpe and one at Ashmead. Despite having more allotments than most Parishes, all of ours are occupied and we have a growing waiting list.

The cost of renting a plot in Cam is currently £10 per year, which is well below the national average. There are some rules and regulations about how plots are used, mainly to comply with Allotment Law, but basically you are free to grow any produce which is for the benefit of yourself or your immediate family; you may also keep



chickens, but you must not sell any of the produce of the plot on a commercial basis. The Council deals with the overall management of the sites, including the provision of water, and the allotment rent is based on approximately 50% of the cost of this. It would be possible for the

management of site to be taken over by an Allotment

Association made up of the plot holders themselves and the Council would be happy to discuss this if the tenants of any site requests it. The Council is not able to dispose of or sell allotment land without the consent of the Secretary of State, and this is unlikely to be given unless there is proof that the

sites are no longer required or that they will be replaced elsewhere in the Parish, so the land is effectively protected for the benefit of local residents, both now and in the future. For more details about allotments, or to be added to the waiting list for a plot, please contact the Parish Clerk.

Computer access

Are you are frustrated by advertisements and news items that ask you to look at a website for more information – when you don't have internet access at home? Do you want to produce a professional letter, CV, school or college assignment or report but don't have the equipment? Would you like to be able to keep in touch with friends and family by email? Do not despair – there is an answer in Cam! The Council Shop in High Street has computers with broadband internet access and a printer available for public use. Staff will even help out anyone who feels less confident with these technologies. The service is available during opening hours (Monday – Thursday 10am – 1pm) or at other times by appointment – contact the Parish Clerk for more details.



Drains, footpaths, hedges etc

As we splash our way through yet another period of extreme weather, it is a good time to remind people of what they can do to help themselves and others get around and avoid problems. Firstly, on the matter of drainage, any of you who have ditches or water courses on your property or for which you are responsible (and this may include watercourses etc at the end of your garden) have an obligation to keep these clear to allow water to flow away unobstructed. This is extremely important in preventing flooding – which could affect your own or others' properties. Where there are problems with watercourses or drainage on property which is not your responsibility, please let the relevant authority know as quickly as possible. For watercourses this is usually the District Council (766321), for rivers Floodline (0845 988 1188) or for highway drains Gloucestershire Highways (08000 514514). If you're not sure, contact the Council Shop and we'll point you in the right direction or pass the message on.

Also important in making sure that we can all get around the areas safely are the maintenance of public footpaths and of boundary hedges. Whilst the actual surface of public footpaths is the responsibility of the County Council, cutting back of hedges and undergrowth to the side of them which could obstruct people trying to walk on them is the duty of the owner of the land on which the vegetation is growing. So if there is a public footpath or pavement next to your property, please make sure that trees, bushes, plants etc from your garden are not obstructing the path. The Parish Council is aware that the County Council finds it difficult to keep the surface clear on all of the hundreds of miles of public footpaths in Gloucestershire, so it organises clearance of well-used paths within Cam several times a year. It has recently been able to negotiate a payment of £500 per year from the County Council towards the cost of this, so reducing the burden for local Council Tax payers.

Parish plan

The article on Climbing Stones lets you know how you might become involved in shaping the future of one part of Cam, but perhaps you are more interested in other issues – support for older people, protection of the environment, local transport for example, or about the future of Cam as a whole. If so, you are just the person needed to join the Parish Plan Steering Group. If local people want to influence how their community develops in the future – and we're talking about services and facilities as well as whether or not we want new homes and so on – then it is important that they produce a proper Plan which demonstrates this. The 'powers that be', including the Planning Authority and various sources of funding, can then use this when considering matters that will affect the Parish, knowing that it represents the wishes of the community. It is hoped to start work on the Parish Plan from the 'bottom up', getting individuals and small groups involved in looking at particular issues which concern them. This will then be pulled together by a co-ordinating committee to produce the final document - our 'Cam Parish Plan'. Local people can play as small or large part in this as they wish and according to the time they are able to give. This may mean just a few hours to examine one issue, or an ongoing role during the whole year or so that it will take to produce the Plan. If you are interested in being part of this, and shaping the future of the place where you live, please contact either the Parish Clerk (Tel. 548884) or Nigel Ledoux (Tel. 841309).

