



Chalfont St Giles Parish Council – Taking on Devolved Services.

May 2024



Since 2016 Chalfont St Giles Parish Council has taken on responsibility for certain services within the parish boundary under a devolution scheme agreement with Buckinghamshire Council. These services are grass cutting within the 30mph limits, siding out, graffiti removal, sign cleaning and minor repairs, epicormic growth on trees in verges and weed spraying.

Initially we used a contractor to complete the grass cutting. We already had two groundsmen for our recreation ground and green space maintenance. In 2023 we purchased a new ride on mower which gave us time savings on our workload that then allowed them to carry out the additional devolved services. Increased precept was used to add funds to the unitary authority payment. This allowed for the additional equipment. Chalfont St Giles Parish is 5.13 miles². In 2022-23 we received £6,718 and added £7,500 to our budget from the precept.

Taking over these services means that we have more control over how our Parish looks. For example, grass is neat, signs are clean and graffiti is removed. We can also respond quicker to public complaints and queries than the unitary authority.

Any local councils considering similar services should be prepared to add to the unitary authority budget. They do not give enough money for the job to be done to Parish standards! However, when the Parish have control of these areas, public approval increases. This also gives you flexibility to adhere to 'no mow May' and other initiatives that help to improve biodiversity. There is also an admin cost to the devolved services – do not underestimate how much time is taken in the office as well as outside!