

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL REPORT 2013

This is the final report from the previous Council as nominations were sought for the new Council which started its four year span last week. When lists closed for the new Council there were only five nominations, all of whom were existing Members which means that either people are disillusioned with local politics or think that the Council has done a worthwhile job over the past five years – we hope it is the latter. At last week's meeting we were able to co-opt a further five members – three of whom were on the previous Council and who for various reasons failed to register their nomination.

So what did the Council do during the past year and how was the money spent? Well we met every month in the Village Hall and all the meetings were open to the public and anyone from the community was welcome to attend and question Members on aspects of Council work and during the year ten people took advantage of this offer.

The Council's responsibilities included the over sight of:

Planning:

All planning applications for development throughout the Parish are brought to the attention of the Parish Council and in the past year a total of 16 applications have been studied and commented on. We have also been in discussion with Shropshire Council and the developers regarding the proposal to build an additional fifty houses on land alongside the A53 opposite Rapra. This was outlined at last year's meeting and we understand that a planning application is likely to be applied for during the next few months. As part of this application land adjacent to the Farm Shop is being donated to the football club for the development of a football club providing facilities for all age groups. We also understand that the suggested commercial development on the approach to the village has not materialised.

New School

Close contact has been maintained with Shropshire Council and the Head Teacher of the new school during the transition period. The Council has been given the opportunity to comment on and amend some of the plans for the road improvements, which have taken place as a result of the decision to combine the two schools on to one site.

The Council also worked closely with Shropshire Council who funded the new pathway from the Council car park across the playing field to the school.

Children's Play Areas;

The Council owns the children's play area on the playing field site; the one at Erdington Close and the Cycle Dirt Track. All areas are well used and we have needed to carry out

remedial work on both play areas this year and this will probably be an on-going cost as the areas age.

Street Lighting:

The Council is responsible for over 90 streetlights in and around the parish and has to pay for the electricity to power them and the annual maintenance costs. For the past seven years the maintenance has been carried out by a company called NWP but they ceased trading at the end of April and last week we accepted a quotation from Eon to take over the maintenance. Regular inspections are carried out but if faulty lights are noted these can be reported to the Clerk who will pass the details to the maintenance company.

Lights on certain estates and on the Wem Road have been adopted by Shropshire Council and it is responsible for the maintenance of those lights

Police Reports:

The Council takes a keen interest in the policing of the area and has close contact with the officers responsible for the parish. At each meeting the Council considers a written report provided by the police, indicating the number of recorded crimes within the whole parish during the previous month. The total for the past year was:

Anti-social behaviour 6; Theft 8; Vehicle Crime 8; Criminal Damage 3; Assaults 3;

Robbery 2; Burglary/Attempted Burglary 12; Threat to Kill 1; Firearms Offence 1

Many of the burglary offences relate to farms and garden sheds etc. and this has been highlighted by the police. It is pleasing to see a considerable drop in the number of recorded anti-social behaviour offences.

These figures indicate that the Parish is a relatively low crime community.

RAF Shawbury:

The Council maintains good links with the personnel at RAF Shawbury and welcomes the support both the Council and the local community receive, as well as acknowledging the economic value the base brings to the area.

An officer sits on the Council as a co-opted representative and attends most meetings, which allows for a valuable exchange of information

The Glebe Area:

After lengthy and detailed negotiations with the Diocese, the Council finally signed the lease for the extended area of the Glebe, between the playing field and the river. There are some exciting plans for developing the area and we have just been informed that we have been successful in getting a lottery grant to assist with the development work.

Richard Bailey has agreed to oversee the committee formed to manage the site for the Council..

The Moat Area

The Council continues to give full support to developments in the Moat area and has close links with English Heritage who have overall responsibility for the site and provide some grant aid. The site is well managed by a small committee headed up by Adrian Brown and together with some volunteer help they have transformed the site over the past few years.

Insurance:

As with all organisations, the Council has to take out various levels of cover and this is a substantial cost in the budget. Because of several high profile accidents nationally, caused by falling trees, insurance companies now insist on regular inspections of trees to identify possible danger. This is done on a by our tree officer but every four/five years we have to employ a professional to carry out a detailed inspection of every tree. This has been done this year and resulted in the need to fell one tree and carry out remedial work on several others. This can only be done with the agreement of Shropshire Council.

Burial Ground:

During the past year new pathways have been created in the extended area of the burial ground and the regulations regarding burial on the Council owned site have been amended and refined. Copies of the regulations are available from the Parish Clerk or the Vicar.

Parish Paths:

Although not responsible for the parish pathways, the Council maintains a keen interest in the efforts to keep them open and well maintained. A small group, ably led by Richard Bailey does sterling work throughout the year which enables many people to access the countryside for regular walks.

Litter and Dog Fouling:

Council Members receive many complaints about litter, especially dog fouling. Mr. Creber works hard throughout the week to keep the parish clean but the answer lies with those people who are too lazy or inconsiderate to dispose of waste properly or to clean up after their dogs. The Council has asked Shropshire Council's team of wardens to be extra vigilant and not to hesitate in fining or taking to Court identified offenders. Unfortunately this seems to be the only answer.

Floral Gateways

These gateways give a pleasing appearance to the entrance to the Village and the playing field and the Council is grateful to Richard Bailey who maintains them and to the local companies who sponsor them.

Audit:

Each year the Parish Clerk has to produce sets of documents for two audits. One is carried out locally and the other by a National company. Again this year the accounts and the administration of the Council have been complimented on passed without any queries being raised.

Web Site:

The Council maintains a web site and this is administered for by Mr. Ruck and the Clerk. Details of meetings, minutes from meetings, policy and financial documents are all posted on the site and this can be viewed at www.shawburypc.gov.uk

Jubilee:

With the help of a financial grant from Shropshire Council, the Parish Council was able to present every child under the age of eleven with a Jubilee mug at last year's celebration and thanks to a committee of Members led by Jill Manley, a very successful Jubilee Day celebration took place in the Parish with many organisations involved. Thanks to everyone's support and the skills of the organising committee no cost accrued to the Council.

Firework/ Bonfire Evening:

Once again this was a great success and our thanks are extended to Richard Bailey and his band of helpers for providing the community with an excellent evening's entertainment. This event takes a great deal of organising and supervision and appeals to people from a wide area and manages to generate sufficient income to ensure that no cost falls on the Council.

Finally I should like to extend thanks to all the Members who have contributed to the smooth running of the Council for the past year – Members all do much work and this is done on a voluntary basis and the Council has again decided that Councillors should not claim allowances for their involvement. Particular thanks to those Members who have decided not to continue to serve on the Council - their presence will be missed and we wish them well in the future.

Our only paid official is the Parish Clerk who is responsible for the oversight of all the administration of the Council and Jack is always happy to hear from residents and discuss issues with them. His contact is 01743 236810 or shawburypcclerk@tiscali.co.uk