

Shrawley Parish Council

Chairman's Report – 2012 / 13

1. Composition of Council

The seven councillors have served throughout the year, namely Pippa Armstrong, Anna Dorrell, Chris Freeman, Barbara Jones, Tom Marsden, Mike Partridge and myself. Chris Freeman decided to resign at the end of March after 9½ service and we are in process of finding a replacement. Susan Gill is our Malvern Hills District Councillor serving until 2015 whilst Phil Grove has recently been elected our County Councillor, following Alwyn Davies's decision to retire after 20 years of service. I am sure we all thank Susan and Alwyn for all their hard work whilst welcoming Phil and also thanking Chris for all her efforts.

2. Meetings

The Parish Council has met 6 times during the year. Your Parish Councillors have a combined attendance of 79%, compared to 84% last year, with two recording 100%.

Office holders were:

Chairman	Richard Tesh
Vice Chairman	Mike Partridge
Clerk to the Council	Mark Keld
Footpaths / Rights of Way	Don Barton
Website	John Mills
Internal Auditor	Chris Evans

3. Governance

There have been no reported breaches of the Code of Conduct adopted in 2002 and it has again not been necessary to consult the file of Standing Orders. The Council does not make any Councillor allowances including for the Chairman.

4. Speed Limit Review.

It is salutatory that the initial correspondence regarding the speed review along the B4196 was a letter from Peter Blake, Head of Integrated Transport dated 21st October 2009, some 3½ years ago. It was 2 years since this meeting had a massive turnout about the proposal to raise the limit along stretches to 40 mph. Various proposals either have not happened, because the money ran out, or were delayed due a failure of communication within the County Council.

But more about this later. Nevertheless we did get the road repaired and resurfaced although it was delayed by the adverse weather. We remain concerned about the very heavy lorries, some with trailers, coming through the village, a significant proportion being foreign.

5. Broadband

The Worcestershire County Council project to ensure 90% of residents and businesses have superfast broadband and 100% at least 2M speed by the end of 2015 is progressing slowly. Some think it is too slow and the whole project is taking too long. Again more later.

6. South Worcestershire Development Plan

After a hiccup at the end of 2012, the plan has now been submitted to Government and there should be an enquiry later in the summer. As far as Shrawley is concerned, there appears to be little change from the previous local plan. This is in some ways disappointing as more flexibility may well be required to meet local needs and requirements. Nevertheless we need to be very wary of the application for 106 houses on the Astley / Stourport border as this scheme appears to be contrary to all the principles of the Development Plan

7. Planning

The Parish Council has a statutory right to be consulted on planning applications and we take our responsibilities seriously. In the last 12 months 16 planning applications have been determined covering 9 different properties:

- 8 Full, 3 Listed Building Consents and 1 Certificate of Lawfulness have been granted - plus one withdrawn by the applicant although the resubmission was then approved
- 2 were refused with now one having gone to Appeal and
- 1 withdrawn by the applicant.

There are currently no MHDC applications outstanding with the more recent ones having been determined in a timely manner, unlike several during 2012 which took far too long.

The position on the Rose & Crown is that Listed Building Consent was given on 17th September to convert the existing building into 2 cottages, although it has to be said the scheme is not very ambitious. However, the application to build one dwelling at the front of the car park was refused in February due to an inadequate flood risk assessment, the design not reflecting the existing street scene and an overbearing impact on a neighbouring property. There were also issues relating to the bus stop and road - now partly resolved - with the security fencing at the present time broadly at the edge of the highway land.

8. Precept

The Parish Council has again maintained its 2013 / 14 precept at £5,500. At the end of the 2012 / 13 financial year we had balances of a little over £7,500 or some 1.35 times the precept.

The Parish Council received an unqualified audit for 2011 / 12 from the external auditor. Our Internal Auditor has made some useful comments about 2012 / 13 although it was comforting to note there were no significant issues affecting the reported accounts. A new external audit regime comes into force this year which hopefully be at no cost to us.

9. Consultation

It is again pleasing to report the volume of paper received from the various bodies continues to reduce whilst the number of “comics” of dubious value has indeed been all but eliminated.

10. Other matters

- The Diamond Jubilee was marked with a picnic in the field opposite the Village Hall.
- a plaque commemorates the dedication of the new trees at the War Memorial
- 78 commemorative Diamond Jubilee mugs were given to the children and 44 sold
- A barbecue was purchased using funds from the MHDC ward member scheme
- The vehicle activated speed sign has been deployed on several occasions
- Wheelie Bins introduced for recycling with exemptions for appropriate dwellings
- Continuing problem of litter along the B4196
- An area MHDC needs to consider greater funding.

11. And finally

Thanks are expressed to my fellow Parish Councillors, County Councillor Alwyn Davies and District Councillor Susan Gill for helping the village in so many ways, our Clerk Mark Keld, CS Garden Clearance who are our Parish Lengthsmen as well as our Footpath Officer Don Barton, Web Master John Mills and Internal Auditor Chris Evans.

It is with sadness to note that John Plumridge, our Clerk for 5 years until June 2011, died at the beginning of April after a long illness. John served with distinction not only as Clerk for Shrawley but also Little Witley and Great Witley Parish Councils