

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Tuesday 20th March at which the Chairman gave an account of Council business over the past twelve months. Chairman's Address:

"Good evening everyone and welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting. I am Alan Brett, Chair of Rainow Parish Council.

I will present an overview of the varied activities of the Parish Council since the last Parish Meeting in April 2017.

At the Parish Council meeting in May 2017, I was elected to the position of Chairman with councillor Alan Taylor appointed Vice Chairman. There have been no changes to the team of councillors serving the Parish.

The Council precept for 2018/19 was set at £11,000, the same as for 2017/18. It was noted that increases may be required in the future as the responsibility for funding some functions is transferred to Parish Councils.

As examples of the increased call upon Parish Council finances, the Council is providing funding for two initiatives previously supported by the police. In the first example we have teamed with Adlington and Pott Shrigley Parish Councils to share the funding of the operation of two speed indicator devices (SIDs) that are being used on a rota basis across the three parishes. We are jointly funding the employment of a contractor to install and move the SIDs in accordance with an agreed rota and to provide us with the outputs from the devices. This enables us to monitor traffic speeds on the B5470 and refer any problems identified to the police. In the second example we are supporting the rural policing activity through funding for rural policing kits, with funding again shared with other parishes. The support for both these activities will continue through 2018/19. The Parish Council welcome the work of PC Richard Walker and PCSO Sarah Wilson, who have overseen a significant increase in rural policing in the Parish and surrounding area, with specific initiatives dealing with issues such as theft of livestock.

Road maintenance remains an ongoing issue in the Parish, particularly with regard to potholes and drainage problems. At most PC meetings current issues are identified and reported to Cheshire East Highways for action. A particular issue during the year was the sudden and complete closure of the B5470 near Lidgetts Lane as result of a partial collapse of the road. This led to considerable disruption with traffic being diverted onto narrow routes such as Blaze Hill and Bull Hill.

The issues around the emergency closure of the B5470 led to the Parish Council setting up a team to look at resilience planning for the community. The intention is to establish a process to help deal with emergencies and disruptive planned events such as road closures, extreme weather and interruption

of utility supplies. In the first instance the team is establishing a communications structure to enable information and advice to be supplied to the community quickly and efficiently.

Councillors met with the Cheshire East Council (CEC) winter maintenance officer to discuss gritting routes and provisions of grit bags and bins. CEC no longer support the provision of grit bags so locations for additional grit bins were discussed and a request for these subsequently submitted to CEC, further progress is awaited.

The council has undertaken a number of projects during the year. A grant application was successfully submitted for funding for training associated with the development and maintenance of our website. A team of councillors regularly inspect and maintain the Jubilee playground, where repainting has been approved in addition to general maintenance. The Council has also undertaken improvements in the Memorial Gardens, with a plastic grid installed adjacent to the paved area around the War Memorial to provide a firm surface, particularly for the Remembrance Day service. A new noticeboard to an improved standard has been ordered for the Pleasance and the condition of the other noticeboards is being monitored. Whilst there was no Best Kept Village competition this year, the relevant team continued to look after the appearance of the village, including a litter pick organised in May. The council continues to monitor and maintain the three defibrillators in the village.

Other ongoing activities of the Council include reviewing planning applications and liaising with CEC regarding issues on the footpath network. Considerable time has been spent reviewing the proposal for a housing development on the former bowling green in Ingersley Vale. Footpath issues have included an ongoing drainage issue on the Gritstone Trail (FP28) behind the former Cheshire Hunt, a possible mapping error with regard to FP15 near Kettleshulme, and a number of issues with stiles and fallen trees.

The award-winning Parish magazine the Raven continues to be produced quarterly by an independent editorial group and is supported by the Council. The distribution rounds for the Raven were revised to take account of additional volunteers and to ensure that every household received one copy of the magazine. A change of printer enabled the Raven to be produced in full colour at reduced cost. The arrangements for invoicing for advertising have been changed to reduce problems with late payers and the Parish Clerk is now responsible for issuing invoices.

In September Rainow Parish Council held its annual Civic Service. Among the guests were the Mayor of Cheshire East, the Deputy Mayor of Macclesfield, the Deputy Mayor of Poynton, Ward Cllr Hilda Gaddum, Mr David Rutley MP, the Town Mayor of Bollington and representatives from neighbouring Councils and village groups. Bob Langstaff was presented with an award for his services to the community through activities including the history group and the Raven.

The Parish Council was well represented at the Remembrance Day Service in November, which was blessed with fine weather. In December the Council and the Church jointly organised the Christmas Tree and Crib lighting service which was well attended. This year the Council used the existing tree in Trinity Gardens as it had grown to a suitable size.

I'd like to thank Hilda Gaddum (Ward Councillor) for her continued high level of support to the Parish Council, providing excellent advice and helping make sure things happen! I also thank Sarah Giller (Clerk to the Parish Council) for all her hard work and commitment keeping the Parish Council operating effectively throughout the year.

Lastly, thank you to all my fellow Councillors for their hard work, support and advice throughout the year..."