

BUILDWAS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

On Monday 16th March 2020 7:30pm at Buildwas Village Hall

Present: Cllr L Pratt (Chairman) Cllr J Heath, Cllr S Heath, Cllr V Morgan, Cllr R Wilcox

In attendance: PC M Milton, Mrs S Morris (Clerk), Cllr C Wild (Shropshire Council), 1 member of the public.

1) Chairman's welcome

2) Present and apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Grainger and S Ratcliffe.

3) Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th March 2019

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes and they were duly signed by the chairman.

4) Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

5) Police Report

PC Milton urged Councillors to sign up to the Community Messaging Service which gives the opportunity to report parish issues, to receive up to date information on parish issues, and information on upcoming events. He explained that West Mercia Police do not use or monitor Facebook pages therefore it is crucial that residents report any information directly to the Crimestoppers line.

Crime in the parish has been quite consistent, with a small number of groups targeting thefts, particularly from farms. PC Milton urged residents to continue to report any suspicious vehicles in the area.

Councillors asked whether there would be any increased local policing should the power station development be approved, given the significant increase in population. PC Milton recommended that the We Don't Buy Crime signage would be crucial to the Parish in preventing crime. The Parish would qualify for signage once 19 more properties had registered.

PC Milton highlighted that the tree on the 40mph sign coming out of the village required cutting back. He suggested that the Parish Council contact him once the road surface was repaired, to look at refreshing the road markings. He also requested that the Parish Council report any problems with motorcycles in the summer months, although it was noted that those currently coming through the village were not speeding and not a problem.

The vehicle speed figures for the village had been positive. Councillors highlighted that the speed cameras were set up at the school, whereas the speeding issues were on the entry and exit to the village. PC Milton explained that there was a requirement for cameras to be a set distance into a speed area.

PC Milton left the meeting at 8:00pm.

6) Chairman's Report

The Chairman presented the report of Parish Council activity during 2019/20, a copy of which is appended to these minutes.

7) Finance Report

The clerk reported that year end balances were anticipated to be c.£10,000, which included £3,200 in ring-fenced reserves, a significant amount of which was for improvements to the play area. A precept of £8,060 had been set for 2020/21.

8) Shropshire Councillor's report

Cllr Wild provided a Coronavirus update for the Parish noticeboard and encouraged Councillors to check on any isolated or vulnerable residents to ensure that they had access to what they needed.

Cllr Wild provided a report which is appended to these minutes. She highlighted that Shropshire Council had been rated 5th best in the country at creating renewable energy. She also noted the comprehensive response that the Parish Council had submitted to the power station site planning applications. The detailed traffic modelling was likely to be available around June, and a further meeting would be arranged for the surrounding Parish Councils to meet with officers to discuss this in detail. Councillors queried whether Shropshire Council would be engaging independent traffic modelling. Cllr Wild explained that officers would be involved in detailed review and challenge of the outcomes of the modelling that had taken place, alongside the Parish Councils.

9) Public opportunity to speak

There were no residents of the parish present.

10) Date and time of next meeting

15th March 2021 at 7:30pm.

The meeting closed at 8:10pm

APPENDIX 1

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019/20

We have had a particularly busy year, and it has been good to see many residents attending our meetings through the year to share their views. A summary of the main issues that we have covered during the year is included below.

Power station site proposed development

We have listened to the views expressed by residents and have attended a large number of meetings with Harworth Group and Shropshire Council. We would like to thank Councillor Wild for her support in arranging meetings, ensuring that our community's voice has been heard. We have submitted objections to the two planning applications for the power station site – for the excavation of sand and gravel, and the outline planning application. You can see our comments on the Shropshire Council planning portal and on our website. As it will take most of the year to determine the outcome of the application, there will be further opportunities to comment on aspects through the year as the detailed traffic modelling becomes available. Should the application be approved, there will also be further consultation at the reserved matters stage. We will respond to all such consultations that come forward.

We recognise that if the applications are approved, the Parish Council will need to work with Shropshire Council to ensure that the needs of the local community are heard. We therefore included in our responses a number of suggestions about what should be put in place should the applications be approved, including that the school building should be retained for community use if the school is closed, appropriate measures should be put in place to reduce speeding through the village, and assurances given on the provision of the cycling and pedestrian routes indicated in the plans. We have also outlined our ongoing concerns with development in the village being allowed over the SAMDEV agreed amount, and concerns that this will be harder to defend against with such a large development in the parish.

Smart Water

We have bought into the PCC We Don't Buy Crime initiative and are still in the process of getting Smart Water packs out to every resident. Once we have 70% coverage, we will be provided with signage to put around the parish to make it clear that we are covered by this initiative. Advice from the police is that the signage is key to deterring potential thieves. If you are using Smart Water, please make sure that you have put your sticker up to show that you are covered. If you are not yet using it, or know somebody that wants some, please contact either the Clerk or one of the Parish Councillors and we will provide you with a pack.

Park

The park equipment has undergone its annual inspection with no significant concerns noted. There has been some damage to items during the year and we have made repairs where necessary. We recognise that the park will require a refresh in the near future, and have a ringfenced budget building up for this.

Place Plan

We have been involved in meetings to review the Much Wenlock Area Place Plan, which our parish falls within. Priorities for Buildwas include upgrading footpaths between the Church, school and Village Hall, play area improvements, parking improvements at the top of Park View and traffic control measures to increase safety within the village. We will further review the plan during the next year to ensure that clear priorities are in place, detailed and costed where possible.

Other parish matters

We have reported a number of issues to Shropshire Council for action during the year, including flooding and standing water, and potholes. If you have any issues, please either report them through the Clerk, or sign up for a My Shropshire account online, through which you can report any issues directly and can see updates for any issues that you have reported.

Under the Wrekin magazine

We have continued to provide some financial support towards Under the Wrekin as it is an important source of information to some residents of the parish. We have also provided a link to the magazine on our website. We will include a summary of any key information arising from our meetings in each edition.

APPENDIX 2

REPORT FROM CLLR C WILD

ANNUAL REPORT - BUILDWAS PARISH COUNCIL – APRIL 2020

PARISH ISSUES

I have really enjoyed working with the Parish Council over the past year and helping local residents with a variety of issues. I have been contacted over matters including flooding, potholes, parking, planning, dog fouling, pavements, footpaths, speeding traffic and fly tipping.

The past year the majority of my work with the Parish Council has been taken up with the various former Ironbridge Power station applications. The two most recent applications are for the sand and gravel extraction on the Much Wenlock road and the master plan for the whole site. The Parish Council and I have both taken on board all the objections raised by local residents and submitted these objections to the local planning authority. These objections can be viewed on Shropshire Councils planning portal. The application is unlikely to be decided until the end of the year. The full traffic assessments are not yet available and once they do become available they will be consulted upon. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

BUDGET

The Council's finances have again come under enormous pressure, mainly due to the continued increase in costs for Adult & Children's Social Care. Over the last few years the costs of Adult Social Care have risen by some £10M year on year. We have also seen a big increase in the number of looked after children which has added an extra £4m of pressure to this year's budget.

Council agreed in February 2020 to increase Council tax by 1.99% which equates to approximately £3.1M, In addition the government Social Care precept of 2% will be included giving a total increase of approximately £6.5M. As you will appreciate this goes nowhere near to funding the Adult and Children's Social budget let alone any provision for inflation.

It should be noted that the excellent work undertaken in social care across Shropshire, the number of actual service users is less than 10,000. There are over 320,000 people in Shropshire meaning that almost 97% of the population are not accessing social care services; but they are accessing other services of the Council such as highways, transport, public protection, leisure, parks and open countryside. These areas, acutely visible to us all, are the very areas that will see their funding reduced, to enable our limited resources to be diverted to social care. To almost 97% of local taxpayers this presents a simple and unfortunate outcome: they pay more money to the local authority in Council Tax, fees and charges yet receive reduced services. There is form of receipt at the end of this report to help demonstrate just what your Council tax pays for.

LOCAL PLAN

A full draft version of the Local Plan comprising both site allocations and Development Management policies will be taken to Cabinet in May 2020. This draft version will be consulted upon for six weeks in June/July. This is likely to be your final opportunity to provide written comments on the Local Plan. The Final Draft Local Plan will go before Shropshire's Full Council in September in order to seek agreement to submit the plan to the Government for Examination. Assuming Council agree to this, the Local Plan will be submitted in October and the Examination in Public (EiP) will commence. It is anticipated the EiP will take at least a

year, and assuming a successful outcome, the Council anticipates adopting the Local Plan in early 2022.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Shropshire Council has always been concerned about the environment and have adopted many schemes and practices to reduce our carbon footprint prior to the declaring a Climate Emergency. On 16th May 2019.

Since that time we have established a Climate Change Task and Finish Group, employed additional staff and created a Climate Action Partnership of stakeholders and the wider community, to partner with the Council to provide advice, support and encouragement to public, business and charitable organisations to adopt similar policies and practices across the county.

Shropshire is already very proactive in renewable energy generation. In 2019, Government Feed-in Tariff (FITs) data showed that Shropshire was ranked **5th** nationally for installed renewable energy capacity, largely as the result of significant installed solar PV and anaerobic digestion facilities. Shropshire is home to the largest amount of installed capacity of anaerobic digestion, in all amounting to around 16 MW or over 5% of the total UK installed capacity.

Shropshire Council recently responded to the Government's 'Future Homes' consultation on potential changes to the Building Regulations to the effect that Government needs to significantly improve the performance of new building if we are to be able to respond to the challenge of climate change.

In December 2019 the Council approved a £6.5m programme to convert all the remaining street lighting to LED, which will generate further significant financial and carbon savings. Our waste management contract with Veolia also delivers a strong positive outcome, with a net carbon negative performance of around **minus** 22,000 tonnes CO₂e, largely as the result of our excellent recycling performance which places Shropshire Council in the Top Ten Unitary Councils for its recycling performance.

You will have read about the "plant a tree" schemes that are taking place across the UK. Shropshire Council will be reintroducing its free tree scheme in the near future.

Whilst Shropshire Council can ensure that it reduces its own carbon footprint it is more difficult to ensure that the County as a whole follows suit. Our role is to lead by example. However, we all have a part to play in reducing the carbon footprint and there are a lot of actions that we can take as consumers. Shropshire Council will soon be launching the new Climate Change website and this site will feature some simple positive tips that anyone can take (regardless of means) to reduce our overall footprint. I have included a few of these tips and ideas at the end of this report.

SOCIAL CARE

Our Adult and Children's Social Care budgets continue to show sharp increases year on year.

In the last three years the Council is now starting to experience budgetary pressures within children's social care.

The expected green paper for Adult Social Care which was delayed by Brexit has now been shelved completely and following the general election in December we are promised that a cross party panel will come up with an entirely new scheme for Adult Social Care in the next 12 months.

In the meantime, 55% of your council tax is spent on Adult & Children's social care. To put this into some sort of perspective only 3% of the population receive Adult Social Care from

Shropshire Council and yet it currently costs 62% of Shropshire Council's net budget. In 2015/16 the percentage of the net budget was 44%, which represents a growth of £37M in just four years. This is unsustainable and we continue to lobby at the highest level for immediate help and significant change.

HIGHWAYS

Over the past year Highways and the lack of communication and getting the job done has been a real issue for many residents and Shropshire Councillors alike. Shropshire Council has 3,200 miles of roads to maintain, one third are A & B roads, two thirds are C roads or unclassified. Two thirds of the resources are spent on the A& B roads leaving insufficient funds for our C and unclassified roads. Up until now the road maintenance programme has been based on an asset management system. However, Shropshire Council are looking at this and wish to work more with local councils and communities as to the allocation of resources for roads in their local area. I welcome this proposed way of working as the Parish Councils have a far more detailed knowledge of priorities in their area however, we cannot escape from the fact that there is simply not enough resources to repair and maintain our current road infrastructure.

The total budget available for highways this year is £30M, with the recent wet weather many roads have been flooded. There is a need to invest in drainage improvements and generally reconfigure our engagement, communications, processes, computer systems and deliver a better quality of work and service to the community. In order to assist the Council with these changes they have employed a consultant, he has been brought in on a six-month contract which, in total, will cost £130,000. So, whilst there maybe criticism, if £130k implements the changes needed to the £30m budget and residents see an improvement in delivery then in my view, it is money well spent.