

Shocklach Oviatt and District Parish Council

Chairman's report to Village Meeting – Thursday 16th May 2019

As part of our standing orders as Chairman I am required to give a short report on the activity of the Parish Council at our village Meeting.

Firstly, I would like to thank our Clerk Claire Taylor, who is unfortunately unable to be here this evening. Claire takes extraordinary care to make sure the Parish Council runs smoothly, and meets our statutory obligations. Claire has a great knowledge of Parish Council Governance and an awareness of the activity and ideas from other parish councils on outside of ours, and also has a useful overview of Cheshire West and Chester Council news and activity. Possibly more importantly she also brings great enthusiasm and energy to her role which the councillors all greatly appreciate.

Claire is part of a very stable Parish Council, which is really positive, I am very grateful for the commitment of my fellow Parish Councillors.

I am delighted that all five Parish Councillors have stood and have been re-elected to office, although this was uncontested. Therefore, we continue to have council made up of Cllr John White (from Caldecott), Cllr Mike Wilson (Horton), Cllr Greg Bowles (Castletown), Cllr Andy Brown and myself (from Shocklach), so the diverse corners of the Parish are represented.

There is one change to our governance from the recent elections as Paul Roberts was elected as Ward Councillor for Farndon. Cllr Roberts has already been attending our Parish Council meetings, and has already been able to assist our efforts. We look forward to developing this working relationship with Cllr Roberts during his time in office.

The cost of running the parish council is covered by a precept from CWaC, which in turn is funded by the community. The precept we requested for this financial year (£2250) generated a Band D charge of £13.60/annum an 11.8% increase on last year = increase of 2p per week. This is to cover ongoing costs to administer the Parish Council, and is in part due to the removal of Housing Bonus funding that previously subsidised our activities.

The role of the Parish Council is to act as the localist level of local government, providing a link between the community and the Cheshire West and Chester Council. A primary part of this role is providing a response to Planning Policy Documents (such as the Local Plan) and responding to specific planning applications in the Parish Area, to ensure that local context and local issues are considered through the planning process. This year we have had a relatively quiet year in terms of planning applications with only a handful of mostly domestic residential projects. The parish council considers all applications it receives collectively to

ensure a balanced response. If any members of the public are interested in a particular application, they are welcome to make written comments to the Parish Council or attend the Parish Council Meetings to air their views. Indeed, our parish meetings are all open and members of the community are welcome to come to any meeting. This year we have been particularly grateful for the time Chris Grey, and Iain Carr have given to attend Parish Council meetings, sharing their local knowledge, professional expertise and passion for the local area – it has been very helpful in discussions.

Highways have continued to be a primary issue for the Parish Council. This year we have installed “30mph roundels” at the thresholds of the village highlighting the speed limit. We felt the roundels offered a good balance of highlighting the speed limit without introducing visual clutter of excessive signage. We will monitor the response to the roundels and consider if further signs are indeed required. The Roundels were funded by Cheshire West and Chester monies secured through our former ward councillor Howard Greenwood. Howard stood down prior to the 2019 elections, but I would like to minute our thanks for his support to our Parish Council.

The Parish Council continue to undertake traffic speed surveys through the village, with the findings being sent to Cheshire Police who then contact significant and persistent offenders. This speed survey relies upon volunteers, to man the speed gun. We believe the presence of speed gun survey is in itself a reminder that there is a speed limit in the village. Cllr Mike Wilson coordinates the speed gun, and we are very grateful to him for all his efforts in doing this. We are also very grateful to volunteers alongside councillors who given time to man the speed gun. Mike does need more volunteers to sustain the speed survey, so if you are willing to give up just one hour a year, please let any of any of the councillors know and we can include you in the survey programme. Speeding vehicles through the heart of the village and along local lanes, continues to be a concern for local residents and the school community, so we will continue to try and address this issue.

The Parish Council continue to monitor and report on the condition of highways, bridleways and footpaths in the Parish. Cllr Greg Bowles, along with Cllr John White, have been working particularly hard to ensure the maintenance of the Bridle Way Section of the Bishop Bennett Way between Castletown and Caldecott. We are also monitoring badger activity along the route as this is causing significant subsidence. Importance of routes such as BBW for our rural visitor economy, including the Bull.

Internet speeds is another issue and we have continued to pursue provider
Painted directional finger signs (thanks to Chris Coulter)

We continue to try and share with the community the issues and activity of the Parish Council. This is achieved through this Village Meeting; we also have a Parish Council Web Site shocklachparishcouncil.co.uk . Cllr John White produces a regular Parish Council report for the “Yellow Pages” paper that get distributed around the Parish.

The Parish Council is here to try and serve the community so if you have any ideas or concerns please do speak to one of us, either this evening or you can get our contact details from our website shocklachparishcouncil.co.uk. And if you would like to become involved in the Parish Council, we would welcome a new councillor.

Thank you again for coming and I hope you can stay for a drink, some local cheese and chat later.