

Chairman's Report

On behalf of the Parish Council I would like to welcome you all to the Annual Parish meeting.

This year has been a difficult year with a number of issues following the resignation of both the Chair and Vice Chair at the beginning of September. Following a period of sick leave our Clerk also resigned thus leaving me to act as both Chair and Clerk for a number of months. I am very grateful for the support I received during this time from our advisory body Shropshire Association of Local Councils, SALC, particularly Dianne Dorrell who attended some of our Parish meetings to assist. I also thank my Vice Chair Cllr Mervyn Eyles for his assistance and Cllr Tamarin Bibow for taking the minutes during our time without a Clerk.

We were able to obtain some Locum Clerk services through SALC and I am pleased to report that despite the issues our yearly return was submitted in a timely fashion. Thanks to both Ian Cruise-Taylor and Lee Jakeman for their services.

We have now appointed a new clerk and I would like to welcome Sarah Windridge who commenced employment with us on the 1st April.

I would also like to welcome the three new counselors, Cllrs Paul Dean, Kate Mayne and Anne Mitchell however there is still one vacancy on the council if anyone would like to apply.

Parish issues: please note that many road issues can be reported direct to Shropshire Council via Fix My Street and do not need to go through the Parish Council.

- Water leaks, there have been numerous water leaks and the Parish Council are working to put pressure on Severn Trent Water to rectify these. The PC are also trying to address the issues caused by the lack of notice and confusing signage. Thanks are due to Cllr Trevor Alison who is consistent in his help in arranging timetables and keeping the bus companies on their toes when there are diversions for road closures where notice has been given.
- The road through Ruyton has been resurfaced and many pot holes have been repaired however progress on the CIL road project has been slow.
- CIL. Following public response to the information session in September, the CIL road safety improvement project was put on hold by Shropshire Council while they reconsidered their proposals. We are currently still waiting for a timescale for the road safety measures to be put in place possibly a result of turmoil at Shropshire Council due to the £65,000,000 deficit and subsequent redundancies that have had significant impact. We were, however, surprised to find that half the budget had already been spent in administration.
- Platt Bridge has now been successfully repaired unfortunately the Cross is still awaiting attention.
- Cross monument. Following the accident that damaged the Cross Monument there was a proposal to move the Cross along with the repair. This unfortunately complicated the situation and caused delay. Having established that the Cross is to remain in its current position we are in communication with the relevant parties and are keen to facilitate the repair as soon as possible.
- The wall on Church Bank is in need of repair and we are chasing this.
- Planning: There have been fewer improvements however we have faced challenges with

unauthorized developments that the council are keen to see addressed. The New Shropshire Local Plan is going through review and includes West Midlands Overflow housing proposals that will impact in Shropshire and will have a ripple effect across the County.

- Draft Shropshire Local Plan: Comments on this can still be submitted up to 11th June and I would encourage individuals to consider adding their voice.
- War Memorial: Due to the tireless work of Irena White we now have a new plaque for the war memorial to recognize the names of those previously omitted. We are hoping to arrange the cleaning of the war memorial at the same time as the new plaque is fixed. This will hopefully be at the same time as Severn Trent Water have the road closed in July to repair the sinkhole, one of many repairs.
- Broadband: Over the last few weeks signs have started to appear to inform of a Fibre Broadband service that is at long last being rolled out to Ruyton. Please check the council website as there is a link to the location of the proposed poles for this and while location can be altered slightly to please residents once they are in they cant be moved. This service will be good news for residents, local businesses and those who work from home and has been long awaited.

Going forward we face challenges with our community resources, the village shop is being considered for potential change of use to residential. Our local pub has had a number of changes in management during the year and the Village Hall has had changes in its committee. We value community participation and this is important if we are not to lose valuable village amenities.

Our finances are, however, good and we use our funds to benefit the community. We kept the precept costs to the community at the same level as last year. The Ruyton Amateur Dramatic Society, RATS, successfully applied to the Parish Council for funding to promote their activities among a larger audience.

We also gave £3000 to St Johns the Baptist School for the outdoor reading shelter for the children. We support the Local Home Grown Show and this year also donated a special award for young people. We are also continuing to fund the Church clock maintenance.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the maintenance of the village by putting up the commemorative poppies, donating and decorating the Christmas Tree, cutting hedges, mowing public areas and caring for the hanging baskets as well as reporting issues in a timely fashion so they can be rectified.

Dave Peat is employed by the PC to maintain some areas however particular thanks should go to David Shearan and his crew of volunteers who continue to maintain various countryside and wildlife areas in the village and carry out butterfly surveys on the Cliffe.

I would also like to thank our local Shropshire Council representative Cllr Nick Bardsley who attends every meeting and works tirelessly to help resolve issues in the community. In a recent Chairs Network meeting it became apparent that not every PC is fortunate enough to have a very pro-active Shropshire Council representative.

Cllr Kerry Coldwell

Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council Chair.