

Basnett, Matthews and Minton Charity
Receipts and Payment Account for year ending
31st December 2022

RECEIPTS	2021	2022
Opening Balance	5631.72	5980.68
COIF Dividends Received	348.71	357.86
Interest on COIF Deposit.	.25	22.66
	£5980.68	£6361.2

PAYMENTS

Grants	Nil	Nil
Closing Balance	£5978.57	£6361.2

Balance of Funds held in Bank and Deposit Accounts
on 31st December 2022

Lloyds TSB	4016.79
COIF Deposit	2344.41
Closing Balance	£6361.2

NOTES

The investment assets of the charity were as follows:

31/12/2021 £13,533.75

COIF Investment Fund on 30/12/2022

659.42 units @ 1830.65p = Total value 31/12/20 **£12,071.17**

Parish of Ruyton XI Towns: Annual Parish Meeting: May 23rd 2023

Report of Shropshire Councillor Nick Bardsley

1 Planning

The Parish Council and I have been engaged with a number of planning issues over the last year, particularly in relation to development management.

The changes undertaken in the Autumn of last year at The Grange (formerly Yardley) have been controversial. It has not been clear what action might be taken, if any, by Shropshire Council.

I'm pleased that Tracy Darke Assistant Director Economy and Place and Head of Planning Services will be attending the meeting on Tuesday evening.

2 Traffic and highway safety

The Parish has secured significant funds via the CIL "Local" fund aimed at improving road safety, easing congestion and improving the environment in the village, mainly along Church Street and Brownhill.

The Safer Roads Group of Parish Councillors and other members of the local community has been active, as I have, engaging with Shropshire Council officers and staff from SC's consulting engineers, WSP. Progress has at times been frustratingly slow but I believe we are now close to explaining to the wider community exactly what is proposed.

The Project Group for RXIT meets monthly most recently on May 16th and the Safer Roads Group had a meeting on Monday evening, May 22nd.

3 Parish Council boundaries

Shropshire Council is currently engaged both in responding to a review of Electoral Divisions in Shropshire conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission and its own review of Town and Parish Councils.

The Local Government Boundary Commission has recently published draft proposals. As published, the proposals leave the present ED for Ruyton and Baschurch largely unaltered. There are no changes proposed to the parish of Ruyton XI Towns.

Other proposals for new EDs are however very likely to be challenged in Shropshire. If there is a wholesale revision, that might well include Ruyton and Baschurch.

4 Housing Options

Residents in the Parish, particularly those living in Birch Grove and Birch Close, have been understandably very concerned at the allocation policies pursued by the Housing Options service of Shropshire Council. Very early in January this year a particularly difficult “neighbour” was placed in the estate without the knowledge, let alone consultation with, Parish Councillors, the school or myself.

We had a discussion subsequently with Cllr Dean Carroll Cabinet Member for Housing who explained that he was not involved in day to day decision making.

He was pressed to arrange a further meeting (to include officers). I’m pleased to say that this will take place on June 1st.

5 Shropshire Council

I’m happy to answer questions on the matters mentioned above and other topics, as best I can!

NB 230523

Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council's accounts are prepared on a Receipts & Payments basis, in summary:

Total Receipts for the year were £44,460.59 of which 69% was made up of the precept (£30700).

Other receipts received were as follows:

- £12,489 in Neighbourhood Fund CIL (28% of total receipts),
- £830 refund from Scottish Power (NET element) (1.9% of receipts)
- £375 VAT reclaim from spend in 2021-22 (0.9% of receipts)
- £41 refund from Scottish Power (VAT element) (0.1% of receipts), and
- £25 interest on savings (0.06% of receipts)

Total Payments for the year were £29,749.10, these are summarised below:

	£	%
Administration	13542	45.5%
St Lighting Mtce & Energy	4218	14.2%
Cliffe maintenance	3000	10.1%
Local Grants	1950	6.6%
Contingency	1692	5.7%
Village Hanging Baskets	1455	4.9%
Village Maintenance	1221	4.1%
Insurance	876	2.9%
VAT	765	2.6%
Training	450	1.5%
Climate emergency	340	1.1%
Elections	100	0.3%
AED scheme	99	0.3%
Land searches	24	0.1%
Safer Roads	15	0.1%

Total payments (from budget and earmarked reserves) were 25% under budget for the 2022-23 year. Some budgets were overspent e.g. clerk salary (due to agreed changes to contract, and overtime from 2021-22), insurance (due to Stone Cross damage), and streetlight energy due to rising energy costs (though this was partly balanced out by a refund for being overcharged in previous years) and floral displays. Some budget headers were underspent e.g. admin, training, and grounds maintenance. Safer Roads, AED project, Youth Grants & Local Grants, and VAT budgets were significantly underspent at year end.

Local Grants were made up of:

£200 Home Grown Show

This donation was made using the Council's General Power of Competence.

There was also a £1750 donation to St John's school towards new play equipment costs (funds came from Neighbourhood Fund Earmarked reserve rather than Local Grants budget) This donation was made using Local Govt (Misc. Provisions) Act, 1976, s. 19(3).

Administration Costs include Staff Costs £11,818, Audit fees £376, Annual Subscriptions £654, as well as Stationery & Printing, Meeting costs, bank fees, website and email costs, etc., (£694 combined).

Contingency spending was made up of:

£750 Structural survey of Stone Cross

£349 Jubilee expenditure

£247 Access signage north end of Cliffe and hedgehog signs

£150 Clock maintenance

£63 Christmas decorations

£48 Cost of living leaflet printing

£45 Remembrance Day expenditure

£40 Asset repair and maintenance

Total Funds as at 31st March 2023 were £71,742.85, these are held in a current account at Unity Trust Ltd and a savings account at Nationwide. Earmarked reserves balance was £39,254 at year end, which gives a general reserve balance of £32,489 (13.7 months Net Revenue Expenditure) which is slightly more than recommended for a Council of this size (should be closer to 12 months' NRE). It is however expected that there will be additional expenditure in 2023-24, e.g. for abortive costs for the CIL Road Safety Project, and repair costs for the Stone Cross (most of which should be reclaimable through insurance). There are also hopes to reintroduce the track around Doctor's Meadow playing field, and introduce information boards and signage at the Cliffe, which will help bring General Reserves back within recommended levels.

It has also been agreed since the start of the current financial year that underspend from the Safer Roads Group budget (£1985) would be moved into the equivalent Earmarked Reserve to cover abortive costs for the CIL road safety project. The combined underspend from Local Grants & Youth Grants budgets has also been moved into a new Earmarked reserve to support the Village Hall, and underspend from AED project (£576) has also been moved into AED equipment EMR to save up for replacement equipment.

Contingent Assets & Liabilities: The Parish Council has submitted a reclaim for most of the VAT spent during the 2022-23 year, i.e., £683.57. NB. Not all VAT spend is recoverable, and also the Scottish Power refund included some VAT (which had already been reclaimed from HMRC in a previous tax year), so that amount has been deducted from the total amount reclaimed for the 2022-23 year. There is no formally committed expenditure so far for 2023-24, however the claim for damage caused to the Stone Cross in April is not yet resolved due to ongoing discussions with Shropshire Council about how best to proceed with the junction and monument repairs. Our insurers will aim to recover the cost of repairs, and possible increases in insurance premium (and any excesses) from the other party when settling the claim.

Banking arrangements

The Parish Council opened a savings account with Nationwide during the financial year, to ensure that the Parish Council's total funds (per bank) remained within the £85k limit for the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Report prepared by Mrs Lydia Bardsley

Clerk/RFO Ruyton XI Towns PC

Annual Report of the Chair of Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council May 2023 Councillor David Spicer

The Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council year began at the Council meeting held on 24 May 2022.

At that meeting the Council elected me as Chairman and Councillor Alyson Lister as Vice Chairman for the coming year.

1. The Council

There are 11 Councillor seats on the Parish Council.

The Council has ordinarily met on the second Tuesday of each month except during August. At the start of the year there were the following Councillors:

Alyson Lister, Trevor Allison, Scott Denyer, Bob Edwards, Mervyn Eyles, Rob Hamlett, Luke Penton, Simon Gittins, David Spicer.

1.1 Resignations and appointments

When vacancies occur, after allowing time for electors to request an election, the Council publishes invitations for Parishioners to apply to be co-opted to the vacancies.

Kerry Coldwell applied for the vacant seat left by Councillor David Shearan and on 24 May 2022 was co-opted by the Parish Council.

In April 2022, Andrew Collier resigned from the Council. Andrew was hard working and conscientious and made a huge contribution to the business of the Council, serving on the Safer Roads Group, the Village Hall Working Group and the Planning Working Group. His advice, experience and commitment have been missed.

Andrew has remained a valuable source of advice for me and fortunately rejoined the Safer Roads Group in October 2022.

Tamarin Bibow applied for the vacancy and on 11 October 2022 was co-opted by the Parish Council.

At the Council meeting held on 11 October 2022, it was reported that Cllr Simon Gittins had resigned from the Council. Simon had given considerable service to the Council and community including chairing the Council for two years.

Nick Kynaston applied for the vacancy and on 17 April 2023 was co-opted by the Parish Council.

In March 2023, Cllr Bob Edwards resigned from the Council. Bob has served a number of times on the Council and his knowledge of community affairs and the history of the Parish and his support have been missed. He has remained on the Safer Roads Group and contributed to considering the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

1.2. Parish Clerk

Lydia Bardsley has continued as the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to the Parish Council. She is the only employee of the Council.

She has provided very efficient organisation and administration to the Council and carried out the responsibilities of the Responsible Financial Officer with effective management of the finances, budget preparation and monitoring. She provides appropriate support to the activities of the Council.

A staffing Sub-Committee, the members of which are the Chair, Vice Chair, and Councillor Mervyn Eyles, carries out staff appraisals. Recommendations that the Clerk's working hours should be increased and other terms and conditions improved were accepted by the Council.

1.3. Shropshire Council Councillor

Councillor Nick Bardsley is the Shropshire Council Councillor for the Ward including the Parish of Ruyton XI Towns and attends and provides reports for Parish Council meetings. His support, advice, experience and links into Shropshire Council have been a huge benefit to the Council and to me.

1.4 Covid and Council Meetings

In my Annual Report for May 2022, I explained that due to my wife Susan's lung condition and impaired immunity, on the advice of two medical consultants, I have been unable to risk attending Council meetings (or any other face to face activities) while covid is still a threat.

This has been a challenge which I could not have met without the huge support, close working relationship and commitment of Alyson, who has chaired Council meetings, the support from Lydia, and the continued agreement of Councillors. My being unable to take part in meetings, speak to my reports and present arguments has been difficult for Councillors as well as for me.

I had originally thought that this unusual arrangement might continue until the road safety infrastructure changes were completed and then intended to stand down but these changes have suffered from extended delays and the arrangement has continued.

An interesting experiment, but not one to be repeated.

I also thought the government might extend the emergency arrangements for local authorities and members of the public to be permitted to meet remotely by Zoom or otherwise. This was not done and there has been no response by government to a consultation on the issue that concluded in June 2021, despite promises made over almost 2 years that they will respond "shortly".

There has been no response by government to petitions. In my correspondence with government on the issue I pointed out that the government is failing to address serious

inequality issues and discrimination against persons with disabilities and other groups who are unable to participate in local democracy. It took over 3 months to receive an answer that said nothing of worth. The Minister responsible for equalities across government departments failed to respond.

The requirements for Councillors to meet face to face do not apply to Parish Clerks and so when Lydia has been anxious to avoid any risk of infecting a vulnerable relative, she has been able to attend remotely.

Meetings early in the year were held at the School Hall which has good ventilation and masks were worn to reduce the risk of infection to members of the public and Councillors. Later, meetings were moved back to Victoria Rooms. Councillors no longer wear masks but are still expected to take a covid test prior to each meeting.

Covid was included on the Agenda for Parish Council meetings and I provided an Updating Report for each meeting covering recent research and policy issues and prevalence. At the Council meeting on 3 January 2023 the Council decided not to include Covid on future Agendas and I no longer circulate an updating report, except to those who asked for me to continue to do so.

1.5 Council Business

This has been a very busy year.

Some indication of the pressure of work, is that over the twelve months period I have sent and received over 6000 emails relating to Parish Council business. I have attended over 100 Zoom or Teams meetings. I have written a huge number of reports.

I would not have been able to manage the responsibility of Chair without the commitment and support of Alyson, for whom the volume of work has also been excessive.

Alyson and I have decided that the impact on our family life and other interests is not something that we can continue to endure. Unfortunately, the Council does not currently have sufficient Councillors who are able or prepared to commit their time to Council activities and responsibilities outside of meetings and the pressure on those who do so has been the greater.

At the Annual Council Meeting on 2 May 2023, Alyson informed the Council that she and I would, if the Council wished, continue as Chair and Vice Chair but only until September 2023 when we hope the road safety infrastructure arrangements will be in place. With this indication the Council again elected me as Chairman and Alyson as Vice Chairman.

2. Finance

Lydia, as the Responsible Financial Officer, has worked hard to ensure that the finances have been well managed and budgets properly established. Councillor Mervyn Eyles completes the Internal Controls checks and reports to the Council. There is a healthy reserve and the Council audit has raised no areas of concern.

Parishioners have the right to inspect the financial records and Lydia arranged for this to be exercised during Monday 13th June 2022 to Friday 22nd July 2022.

3. The Community

I have received continued support from many members of the community and I hope that those who have contacted me on a range of issues have been satisfied with my responses and the information/help that I have been able to give.

When addressing issues concerning the historical monuments, I have been particularly assisted by Irena White and Yoland Brown whose knowledge and interest in matters historical concerning the Parish is extensive.

4. Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC)

SALC draws its membership from the County of Shropshire, that is the 230 Parish and Town Councils in Shropshire and the 29 in Telford and Wrekin.

During the year I have attended by Zoom or Teams the following meetings:

SALC Joint Working Group on 6 occasions. These meetings are chaired alternately by Councillor Cecilia Motley, Shropshire Council Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Communities and Ray Wickson, Chair of SALC. They are attended by Parish Council Chairs and senior staff from Shropshire Council who speak to issues they want to communicate or which SALC or Parish Councils raise.

SALC Chairs' Networking Meetings on 6 occasions. These meetings are attended by Town and Parish Council Chairs who raise issues of common interest and importance. SALC uses the meetings to communicate and discuss issues of regional and national significance relevant to Parish Councils.

SALC Oswestry Area Committee on 4 occasions. These meetings involve Chairs of the Parish Councils local to Oswestry and discuss local issues. There are 5 SALC Area Committees in Shropshire.

SALC Solar Farm Forum on 3 occasions. These meetings examine issues relevant to planning applications and community benefits.

SALC AGM on 11 November 2022.

Immediately following each meeting, I have circulated my notes and subsequently circulated the formal minutes to Parish Councillors. Prior to each meeting I have asked Councillors to advise me of issues to raise.

Safeguarding Meetings An incident arose in the Parish when Alyson in her capacity as a Parish Councillor was given information from a resident suggesting children were at risk of abuse or neglect. As a consequence of this we recognised that it is important that all Councillors are aware of the responsibility to refer such information to safeguarding agencies and how to do so.

I drafted a Safeguarding Policy for Parish Councils and referred it to SALC for wider consideration.

The SALC Chair, County Secretary and I met the Statutory Safeguarding Business Partner of the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership for Shropshire on 4 occasions to discuss the draft policy.

I was invited and did attend meetings of each of the 5 SALC Area Committees in Shropshire and 1 in Telford and Wrekin to give PowerPoint presentations on safeguarding issues and the need for a safeguarding policy. SALC will shortly be circulating the final draft to all Town and Parish Councils with a recommendation that it should be adopted.

A copy of the final draft will be sent to the National Association of Local Councils to consider circulating it nationally and to government to consider including the issues for inclusion within national interagency safeguarding guidance.

Towards the end of this process, for unrelated reasons, I became aware that the Parish Council's insurance policy requires the Council to have a safeguarding policy drafted with specific conditions in order to be covered for claims arising from the abuse of children or vulnerable adults at Council activities. SALC will be advising Councils to check their policies to ensure they comply with insurance conditions.

5. Oswestry Health Group

I have attended 3 meetings of the Oswestry Health Group by Zoom.

Shortly after being elected MP for North Shropshire Helen Morgan re-established the Oswestry Health Group for North Shropshire that had been discontinued by the former MP.

These meetings are chaired by Helen Morgan, MP and are:

“an opportunity to bring health organisations, community groups and community representatives together to network, to identify and resolve problems and blockages and to work around a common purpose – to improve health outcomes for local people.”

Immediately following each meeting, I have circulated my notes and subsequently circulated the formal minutes to Parish Councillors. Prior to each meeting I have asked Councillors to advise me of any health issues they wish me to raise.

6. Platinum Jubilee

Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of sovereignty. In celebration of this milestone, an extended Bank Holiday took place from Thursday 2 June to Sunday 5 June 2022.

Alyson worked very hard with members of the community, local children and local organisations to arrange celebrations and social activities in the Parish. The events

raised £1256.75 for the Air Ambulance Service and local brownies raised £130 on tombola.

On behalf of the Parish Council, in addition to Alyson, I thank the following people, in no particular order, for working so hard to make the Jubilee Celebrations a success. In doing so I acknowledge that in my summaries I will have understated the work involved and I may have overlooked someone who deserves to be thanked, for which I apologise.

Claire Trickett: created all the flyers, had the banners made, created the Facebook page and group link and dressed up as HRH to open the event.

Jane Leadbeater: provided the ribbon for the opening ceremony and helped run the cake stall.

Nick Bardsley: opened the event.

Nigel Leadbeater: was the MC.

Lucinda Burns: did the blessing and gave 4 bottles of Prosecco for the raffle.

Julie Ball: allowed us to use the school and provided all the displays of children's work.

Joe Butler: lent us the PA system.

Colin Case: provided the televised link to the National Jubilee Celebrations which was running in the school hall alongside the displays of children's artwork.

Mac Niddrie Davis and Colin Gittoes: lit up the church and decorated the village hall.

Ruth Corfield: arranged a RATS Photo booth where people could dress up in period royal costume and have photos taken.

Irena White: funded the badges which were sold in aid of charity and toured the village and judged the best decorated house competition.

Karen Rooney: sold the badges and hosted all the planning meetings.

Amy Heath: took all the official photographs.

Yoland Brown: donated plants to be sold at the event.

Jill Owen: donated plants and with **Sue Milner** ran the plant stall.

Derek Gregory: donated £100 and provided two wagons to be displayed on the day.

Charlotte Gregory: displayed the wagons and decorated her horse for the display.

Kerry Coldwell: decorated her horse for display, was our chief first aid officer, food hygiene advisor and money counter at the end of the event.

Jo and Imogen Berry: decorated their pony for the display.

Sandy Wilson and Chris Ayres: ran the raffle.

John Gittins: ran a Pimm's bar, displayed a tractor and allowed the garden rubbish to be dumped at Hall Farm when the school garden was tidied for the event.

WI members: made and donated cakes for sale.

Annie Owen and Brenda Nicholson: helped on the cake stall.

Kathryn Brammer: helped tidy the school garden and grounds.

Carol Aspinall, Marianna Komiatis and January Incles: from The Friends of St John's School organised the tug of war rope and provided risk assessment proforma and Natasha's Law signage for the food and helped announce the raffle.

DJ Humphries: ran the sports day events.

Rob Hamlett: provided the straw bales.

Simon Gittins: delivered the bales and returned them to Rob's farm.

Morda Jive Group: did a dancing display.

Luke Penton: displayed a tractor.

Rob Mather: displayed a tractor.

Bob Edwards: displayed a tractor.

John Lycett: displayed a tractor.

Keith Lister: displayed some classic cars, did the health and safety risk assessment and helped leading up to and on the day.

Baschurch Spar: gave £120 worth of vouchers with which we bought raffle prizes.

Alan Whittle: gave a £60 voucher for an oven clean.

Dee Polzsay: gave a yoga voucher.

Nikki Guest: gave a £25 voucher for flowers.

Pam Hinks: gave a bouquet.

Pizza Box: gave a 4 pizza vouchers.

The Dolphin Inn: gave a £20 food voucher

A local man: donated a huge cool box on wheels.

7. Coronation

At a Parish Council meeting Councillors were asked for suggestions for what might be arranged in the Parish to celebrate the Coronation in May 2023 and to volunteer to lead the arrangements. Bob Edwards was keen to be involved in any plans but no other Councillors expressed an interest in working on this or made any proposals.

Alyson said she would ask the Women's Institute which was planning their own event whether it needed support from the Council but otherwise no arrangements were therefore made.

I have received a number of emails from residents, some highly charged, querying why the Parish Council was not planning and later had not arranged for some Coronation celebrations.

8. Parish Council Working Groups

The Council has a number of Working Groups which reflect particular interests or issues for which Councillors volunteer. Members of the community are also encouraged to take part and the Council is keen for more people to be involved. All Working Groups are expected to operate in accordance with terms of reference published on the Council website.

8.1 Climate Emergency Working Group

After David Shearan resigned from the Council in March 2022, this Group did not function until Lydia gave it new life and arranged a meeting by Zoom on 5 April 2023.

The overall purpose of this working group is:

- to put together proposals for activities/actions addressing the Climate Emergency for the Parish Council to consider, as a result of prior research and community engagement.
- once agreed by Full Council, to coordinate/lead on Climate Emergency activities.

The members of the Group are Councillors Kerry Coldwell and David Spicer and two members of the community, Rachel Denyer and Tony Jenkins.

The actions agreed included

- To review how Terracycle operates.
- To carry out a survey to establish local demand for public Electric Vehicle charging sites

- To establish communications with the community and collaboration with local organisations e.g. WI, Home Grown Show, and schools.
- To liaise with Severn Trent about sharing promotions on reducing water consumption
- To consider having a Climate Emergency stand at local events e.g. Home Grown Show, Annual Parish Meeting.

8.2 Countryside Working Group

This Group was established at the Parish Council meeting on 7 February 2023 and terms of reference were adopted in March 2023.

The overall purpose of this working group is:

- to identify issues and put together proposals for activities /actions / improvements relating to outdoor spaces and local rights of way for the Parish Council to consider, as a result of prior research and community engagement.
- once agreed by Full Council, to coordinate/lead on Countryside activities.

The members of this Group are Councillors Rob Hamlett, Luke Penton, Mervyn Eyles, Trevor Allison and David Spicer.

At the Parish Council meeting on 7 March 2023 it was agreed that the Countryside Group should liaise with local mountain bike riders and decide on some permissive cycle routes on the Cliffe that would be clearly marked for cyclists to avoid conflict with other users.

At the Parish Council meeting on 17 April 2023:

it was suggested that the Group should arrange amongst themselves to meet and think about projects/issues they would like the Parish Council to address

it was agreed that the Group would arrange to meet to discuss the issue of bikers on the Cliffe with local riders and other users of the Cliffe to consider next steps. And consider Football Pitch Funding as a part of Doctor's Meadow Improvements, and bring recommendations and/or a draft application for funding to the next Parish Council meeting.

There have been not yet been any meetings of the Group or reports to the Council. The Clerk has offered to arrange for the Group to meet before and report to the Parish Council meeting in June 2023.

8.3 Village Hall Working Group

The overall purpose of this group is:

- to consider the options for a new site and potential capital funding for a new Village Hall building, as a result of prior research and community engagement,

- to report on progress and present proposals to the Village Hall Committee and Parish Council (Full Council),
- to coordinate/lead on any actions agreed by both Village Hall Committee and Full Council.

After reviewing the history of this topic and the complex decisions made previously for a new hall to be located at the Dr's Meadow Playing Field, there have been no further meetings of this Group during the year pending identifying a potential site for a new village hall.

8.4 Planning Working Group

The overall purpose of this working group is:

- to advise the Full Council on all matters relating to planning applications and planning policy
- to ensure informed local knowledge is brought to bear on planning applications in Ruyton XI Towns parish, and in neighbouring parishes where such applications may impact Ruyton XI Towns' parishioners.

During the year, this Group has held no meetings and produced no reports for or given any advice to the Council.

8.5 Safer Roads Group

The overall purpose of the Safer Roads Group is:

- To promote, assist, and help improve road safety throughout the parish of Ruyton XI Towns for the benefit of all road users and make recommendations to the Parish Council.

Membership of the Group includes Parish Councillors David Spicer (Chair), Alyson Lister, and members of the community Ros Slowley, Bob Edwards Colin Case, Clare Emblen, Tania Carson and Andrew Collier.

Councillor Nick Bardsley attends meetings and because of his particular interest in aspects of road safety I have invited Councillor Trevor Allison to attend some meetings.

I have been grateful to Ros Slowley for taking notes of the meetings.

During the year, the Group has met by Zoom on 11 occasions and members have attended several site visits in the village with Shropshire Council highway's consultants WSP and the insurance loss adjuster and professional adviser concerning the Cross. I have drafted a Safer Roads Group Report for every Parish Council meeting.

The principle focus of the business of the Group has been to monitor and contribute to the infrastructure road safety project funded by £225,00 of CIL money and to advise the Parish Council.

Unfortunately, delays in meeting commitments and failure to communicate by Shropshire Council highways has led to huge delays and confusion in settling proposals.

The Feasibility Report prepared by WSP was finalised in July 2021 and discussion then took place about the detail.

From January 2022 until September 2022, emails from me requesting information and for meetings to be convened were ignored by Shropshire Council, even following the damage to the Cross in April 2022. This was only resolved after I sent complaining emails to the Shropshire Council Chief Executive.

Monthly meetings of the CIL Road Safety Project Group were then diarised but changes of staff, revisiting issues previously agreed and general delay in providing information and materials has led to further delays. This has led to cancelled meetings of and continued frustration for the Safer Roads Group.

The Group has been preparing to take part in a public information session about the road safety proposals and a briefing for Parish Council members. It was agreed that resurfacing of the road through the village would be undertaken at the same time as the road safety work.

These activities were first proposed for November 2022, then February 2023 and now July/August 2023.

Two issues recommended in the Feasibility Report do not involve infrastructure and are not included in CIL Project. These are:

1. The removal of signs directing HGV's through Ruyton XI Towns from other locations.
Cllr Luke Penton is looking into how this might be achieved.
2. Arranging for the Satnav Companies to cease identifying that HGVs travelling through Ruyton XI Towns is a preferred route.
I am working with working with Clun Town Council with Chapel Lawn which is addressing the same issue and also approaching government arguing for regulation. Sadly, as there has been very little central government functioning over the last 12 months progress has been slow.

8.5.1 CIL Road Safety Project Group

This is a Group set up by Shropshire Council to oversee and progress the road safety infrastructure changes through the village.

The current members of the Group are Shropshire Council highways officers, WSP highway engineer, Shropshire Council Councillor Nick Bardsley, Parish Councillors Alyson Lister and David Spicer and Executive Head Teacher Julie Ball.

The Group has met monthly since September 2022.

Progress on this project has been slow, confused and frustrating as Shropshire Council struggled with staffing problems and changes of personnel. Issues agreed have been revisited and influenced by differing professional advice.

The project has been affected by significant rising costs and an application is being made by Shropshire Council officers for additional funding. The Parish Council resolved to contribute £2000 towards what were referred to as “abortive costs” to try and move matters forward.

Because of the complications caused by the damage to the Cross, Shropshire Council made a decision to split the project into two. Phase 1 will deal with the village east of the approach to the zebra crossing and work will be done when the road is resurfaced. Phase 2 will address the junction of Olden Lane and School Road.

The proposed public sessions and Council briefings to present information about the proposals will involve officers from Shropshire Council highways and WSP.

As soon as the promised visualisations and materials have been provided by Shropshire Council dates for these events can be fixed.

8.5.2 Extension of 30mph limit past Packwood Haugh School

After a great deal of correspondence trying to encourage the extension of a 30mph speed limit past Packwood School (currently 60 mph), I received a commitment from Shropshire Council on 9 March 2020 that:

We have included this scheme in our Traffic Management Minor Works programme for the new financial year commencing in April 2020.

Nothing happened and after more chasing on 13 May 2022, I received another email including:

We will be looking at completing the scheme within this financial year. (2022 to 2023) We will keep you updated of progress

There has been no further communication.

8.5.3 Twenty is Plenty Campaign

In accordance with Parish Council policy, the Safer Roads Groups has continued to support the Shropshire-Wide 20mph Campaign for all residential areas and to liaise with the Twenty is Plenty Campaign.

8.5.4 Platt Mill Bridge

After damage was caused to Platt Bridge by HGV drivers being confused at the junction with a turning to Dairi-Pak, Bob Edwards contacted the company, which agreed to send to all its suppliers a leaflet with clear directions.

There have since been several more collisions with the Bridge, which is now due to be repaired when the road resurfacing work is done.

8.5.5 Overhanging Vegetation

Vegetation overhanging the highway periodically causes a traffic hazard. During the year there was a particular problem along Brownhill with vegetation higher than that which Shropshire Council removes but which still obscured the view of drivers in high vehicles.

Councillors Luke Penton and Rob Hamlett kindly arranged to clear this obstruction.

8.5.6 Streetlighting

It became apparent well into the road safety project through separate discussions with Shropshire Council's streetlighting team that additional street lighting will be required to bring the arrangements up to an appropriate safety standard.

Those discussions also disclosed that Shropshire Council operates an Energy Scheme by which Parish Councils can access cheaper electricity. Lydia has carried out the necessary processes and the Parish Council is now receiving the benefit of the lower costs.

8.5.7 Vehicle Activated Signs

The street lighting discussions also disclosed that the VAS installed are not at the correct height required by regulations.

The Parish Council has decided that they should be raised to an appropriate height but arrangements have not yet been made to do this.

It has been apparent that the solar panels fitted to the VAS operate effectively during summer but do not provide sufficient power consistently during winter.

The Parish Council no longer has any volunteers to monitor the VAS, download speed data or maintain the batteries.

9. The Cross Junction

In my Annual Report for May 2022, I included information about the impact of the accident on 20 April 2022 when the driver of an articulated lorry attempted to drive anticlockwise round The Cross to reverse his direction of travel and caused significant damage.

Lydia and I have continued to liaise with the loss adjusters acting for the Council's insurers to ensure a careful and sensitive repair is undertaken.

Phil White, a Structural, Civil and Historic Environment Engineer, has been appointed and produced a report on the condition of the Cross with recommendations for repair.

He will be project managing the work and has prepared tender packs for potential contractors to do the work.

Specialist advice is that The Cross must be taken to pieces and rebuilt.

Since the insurance will cover the costs of dismantling and rebuilding, this has given the opportunity to consider a recommendation in the WSP Feasibility Report written prior to the accident that the Cross for road safety reasons should be moved to the side of the junction, a suggestion that had not been pursued because of the cost and impact on the road safety budget.

The Shropshire Council Historic Environment Team has advised that whether the Cross is rebuilt in its current location with added protection or moved to the side, Listed Building Consent will be required.

From old minutes of Parish Council meetings, it is clear that the Cross has been damaged and repaired and its condition surveyed on a number of occasions in the past. Unfortunately, the detail of these occurrences and copies of reports are not available at present. **(See below my paragraph on Past Minutes and Council Records)**

The Parish Council is hoping to enlist volunteers to search the Shropshire Archives for relevant materials. Unfortunately, there is currently no record of what has been sent to the Archives.

Finalising proposals regarding this junction has been significantly affected by the delays that I have outlined in my **paragraphs above on the Safer Roads Group**.

10. Village Hall

The Village Hall Committee, currently Colin Gittoes, David White, Anita White and Colin Case has continued to ensure that the Hall has been an asset to the Parish and provided a venue for many local groups and theatrical and musical productions and of course the Home-Grown Show.

The Committee has done well to navigate the challenges caused by rising energy costs, inflation and the rising cost of living. The Parish Council is considering what help it might provide.

The members of the Committee are the Charitable Managing Trustees for the Hall. Three of the four have indicated that they will probably retire from the Committee before the end of this year.

The Parish Council is the owner and Custodian Trustee.

The governing instrument made in 1960 provides for 5 trustees to be appointed each year by the public at the Annual General Meeting of the Committee and for 8 to be appointed by local organisations including 1 by the Parish Council.

The potential resignations will require work to be done with the Committee to ensure good succession planning. How realistic is it to expect the requirements in the governing instrument to be met and should an application to the Charity Commission for change be made, perhaps to reflect better the commercial nature of the responsibilities?

11. Transport

Lack of funding and uncertainty about government policy on rural transport has caused problems for Shropshire Council in planning and co-ordinating effective public transport and uncertainty and confusion about the continuing arrangements.

There have also been significant road closures during the year that have impacted on bus routes.

The Parish Council has the benefit of the knowledge and interest of Councillor Trevor Allison who has highlighted problems and communicated with bus companies to resolve them.

Trevor has been a Parish Councillor since May 1995 and has been a consistent asset for information on transport matters that affect the Parish and also on pathways, rights of way and issues that impact on the rural community.

Proposals for reopening Baschurch Train Station have arisen periodically since it was closed. This year has seen a more active campaign which the Parish Council has supported in principle while being mindful of the likely increase in traffic that this might generate through the village.

12. Placement of Registered Sex Offenders in the Parish

On Christmas Eve 2022 a registered sex offender with convictions for rape of young people was placed by Shropshire Council Housing Options at an address within the village close to children.

This became known to local residents some of whom attended the Parish Council meeting in early January to ask for help in arranging for him to be moved.

Alyson explained the limits of what the Council could do and also warned strongly against residents taking any action against the offender.

After the meeting Alyson contacted the police to warn that there was a real risk that some residents might take action against the offender. The police were not prepared to take any action and said they would respond to any incidents.

Nick Bardsley and I emailed the Head of Housing, Resettlement and Independent Living in Shropshire Council Housing Services asking for a meeting with the agencies responsible for deciding on such placements and warning about possible action by residents.

In the early hours of the morning on 6 January 2023 police were called to a violent disturbance during which the offender was injured and the property in which he was living was seriously damaged. The offender was not returned to the address.

I continued to press for a meeting to discuss:

1. The Interagency arrangements for deciding to place a sex offender in the community and assessing risk.
2. What consideration is given to the possible impact of residents becoming aware and the risk to the offender.
3. When if ever would the Parish Council be consulted or informed of an intended placement – including Sarah's Law and the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements.
4. Who to contact if there are concerns about reactions from residents or any other concerns about the placement if they arise and what is the response we should expect.

On 21 January 2023 the Head of Housing, Resettlement and Independent Living emailed to say

I will feedback as soon as I can.

But nothing further has been sent.

Nick Bardsley arranged for us on 16 February 2023 to meet by Zoom with Dean Carroll, Shropshire Council Lead member for Housing. This was a very positive meeting and concluded with a commitment to meet again with relevant Shropshire Council officers.

The meeting gave the opportunity to raise again the issue for further discussion of providing priority social housing in Ruyton XI Towns to people with a connection with the Parish.

13. Thriving Children Grants and Funding Applications

In the middle of April, I came across a Shropshire Council News Item, inviting Parish and Town Councils to make applications for Thriving Children Grants for up to £25000.

These grants are intended to fund local services to help children overcome the impact of the covid pandemic. The deadline for applications was noon on 2 May 2023.

On 13 April 2023, I emailed to ask all Councillors to think about how the Parish Council might use the funds and whether we should consult Julie Ball, the Head Teacher of the local school.

Only Alyson responded and Alyson, Lydia and I had a Zoom meeting with Julie Ball and decided to prepare an application with a view to asking Councillors to approve it. Working hard, with Julie in particular working over the Bank Holiday weekend, a draft application to fund art therapy was prepared. I also managed to secure an extension until noon on 4 May for submission.

A full draft of the application was circulated to Councillors asking for their support. There was overwhelming approval for the application to be submitted and Lydia ensured it was submitted within the deadline.

Unfortunately, the application was not successful. In the notifying email dated on 17 May 2023 Shropshire Council said that:

We value the use of art for health and recognise its importance in communities, however, your application on this occasion has not been successful as it does not clearly evidence need in the population.

We would welcome a further application if we open the funding again, with a focus on evidence and value for money in any future submission.

I do not accept this reasoning but preparing and writing applications for grant funding from public bodies and charities requires experience and particular skills. Lydia has experience but will be unlikely to be able to allocate time to complicated applications.

Given the time constraints I believe that Julie, Alyson Lydia and I did well to submit an application at all and we will learn from the experience.

If the Council is to secure funding for projects, then work on the selection and detail of potential projects needs to take place.

The Clerk has tried to encourage such consideration and the Council agreed that Councillors should have a meeting via Zoom/Teams to discuss infrastructure priorities for the Parish area, and any other neighbourhood projects that could possibly make use of CIL Neighbourhood Funding and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, (for which the deadline for applications closed on 12 May 2023).

These arrangements have yet to be made.

It would be useful to involve members of the community in these arrangements and also canvas people with the background and skills to help in preparing applications.

14. Local Police Reports/Rural crime

A report from local police about crime in the area is made to most Parish Council meetings.

The content, however, is generally sparse and does not enable the Council to decide whether any action should be taken or how it might exercise its statutory duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Often Councillors are aware of crimes that have occurred but are not addressed in the report.

The Council was not advised of the likely placement in the Parish of a registered sex offender or the arrest 3 years ago and more recent conviction of a resident in the same area for child pornography offences which has been reported in the press.

Lack of information has not always been the case. This is an example of reports from a local police officer to a Parish Meeting in July 2002:

PC Southall's Report

Between 11th June and 8th July 2002 there had been 23 calls to the Police made up as follows

6 suspicious incidents	1 burglary (house)
2 enquiries	1 burglary (shed / outbuilding)
1 bogus official	3 criminal damage
1 animal	2 assaults
1 alarm	1 domestic
1 nuisance call	1 disorder
1 RTC	1 theft from a motor vehicle

In the same period there were 8 crimes reported

1 burglary (house)	2 burglaries (outbuildings)
2 assaults	1 theft from a motor vehicle
1 damage	1 arson



Representations have been made to senior officers and I raised the issue at a SALC Zoom meeting at which the Chief Contable agreed to take the issue away and work on it.

When considering the circumstances of a local burglary it became apparent that the householders has recently moved into the area and had not received SmartWater kits.

Lydia has now publicised the availability of kits and will arrange registration and distribution of new kits requested by new residents.

15. Remembrance Day

During 2022 at Councillor Luke Penton's suggestion, he and Alyson approached a local business RDW Exhibitions which kindly manufactured 50 poppies free of charge for lampposts in the parish.

Cllr Scott Denyer with help from Irena White arranged for new stickers to be printed with the names of soldiers to be put on the poppies.

Thanks are due to Scott and Rachel Denyer who placed the poppies on lamp posts throughout the village.

Lydia also purchased a new wreath for the War Memorial cave.

16. War memorial

Arrangements to clean and renovate the War Memorial have been progressing for a considerable time. This has become complicated because of issues concerning additional names and a plaque.

Lydia has prepared a draft application for Listed Building Consent which requires more information from a stonemason. A planning application may be required.

Liaison has taken place with Shropshire Council Conservation Team and Historic Environment Team.

Progress has been further delayed by the involvement of Shropshire Council highways which is considering what might be done within the road safety project to protect the War Memorial from the impact of road residue and corrosive chemicals.

17. The Cliffe

The Parish Council decided that an application should be made to designate the Cliffe as a Local Nature Reserve and Lydia has been working on the administration of this during 2022 and completed the process in 2023.

At the Parish Council meeting held on 12 April 1999 it was previously unanimously decided to establish the Cliffe as a Local Nature Reserve but this appears not to have been actioned.

After representations from residents on the approach to the Cliffe arrangements have been made to erect signs prohibiting motor vehicles except for access to residents.

The Parish Council has a management contract with Shropshire Council Cliffe which is kept under review.

Volunteers help with maintaining the Cliffe and the Parish Council has given permission to a resident for members of the public to improve habitats for butterflies to address declining numbers.

18. Email service

There has been an intention to change the Council's email service provider but due to concerns about security the selection of an alternative supplier has been difficult.

Shropshire Council IT Team was contacted and provided advice which has led to a decision to change to Microsoft with support from the IT Team to make the change.

19. Planning Applications

The Council has considered 21 planning applications made in the Parish and 3 cases involving potential enforcement of breach of planning regulations and when considered appropriate has made comments to Shropshire Planning Authority.

20. Land at Peverey Close

The field adjacent to Platt Bridge is known variously as the Jubilee Field, the Queen Elizabeth II Field, the Bridge Inn field and the Land at Peverey Close.

Residents living close by were surprised when a Board appeared on the Field advertising the auction of a small parcel of the land, Lot 143b, on 15 September 2022. The land was being auctioned by liquidators acting for the creditors of the former development company that built the estate. The developer on completing the development had retained a small area of land that had important sewerage and drainage facilities beneath.

The local residents were very concerned that someone might acquire the plot and occupy it in a manner that would detract from the local amenity.

The Council supported trying to prevent the sale.

I carried out research concerning the background and Alyson tried to engage Severn Trent Water. Nick Bardsley tried to persuade Shropshire Council to take an interest.

I corresponded with the Liquidators and their solicitors arguing that the land in question had been acquired by Shropshire Council or the Parish Council by adverse possession and the plot was withdrawn from the auction pending further consideration and discussion.

Shropshire Council eventually authorised me to make the argument on their behalf and I prepared a comprehensive note arguing that Shropshire Council had acquired a possessory title to the land, which I sent to the Liquidators

I received no response and on 6 April 2023 I sent an email asking for confirmation that my note had been received and whether anything further was expected from me. On 13 April 2023 I received a reply indicating that

The points you mention are being considered and we will revert in due course.

There have been no further developments.

21. Ukraine

I have continued to send messages of support on behalf of the Parish Council to Ukrainian refugees hosted in the Parish.

22. Cost of living crisis

During the summer 2022, it became clear that many families and individuals were finding it difficult to cope with rising energy prices and cost of living inflation and that this would get much worse during the Autumn and Winter.

Lydia, Alyson and I agreed that at a Parish Meeting, Councillors should be asked to email Alyson with any suggestions for supporting parishioners during the cost-of-living crisis, and/or if Councillors were aware of any families in the Parish that may be particularly in need.

Bob Edwards asked to be involved with any arrangements but there were no other suggestions.

I wrote emails to Chairs of all the neighbouring Parish Councils to ask about any arrangements they were making and whether there was scope for co-ordinating responses including warm hubs. Great Ness and Little Ness Parish Council was keen to have co-operative arrangements and we set up a co-ordinating Group which I chaired.

The members of the Group were Ruyton XI Towns Parish Councillors, Alyson Lister, Bob Edwards and David Spicer; Great Ness and Little Ness Parish Councillors, Alison Mullis and Phil Brooks; Ruyton XI Towns Head Teacher Julie Ball, Nesscliffe Head Teacher Steph Burgoyne and Lucinda Burns; Ruyton XI Towns Village Hall Committee member Colin Gittoes. Ruyton XI Towns Parish Clerk, Lydia Bardsley also attended.

Regular reports were made to the Parish Council.

The Group met on Zoom on 6 occasions and undertook research on assistance available through Shropshire Council and on the established warm hubs available within a reasonable distance.

The terms of a leaflet to be delivered to every address in each Parish were agreed. This was to establish demand for warm Hubs or transport to other Hubs, and to identify volunteers. The printing was organised jointly by the Parish Clerks.

Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council was asked for volunteers to deliver the leaflets in our Parish. Councillors Tamarin Bibow, Trevor Allison, Scott Denyer, Alyson Lister and David Spicer divided the Parish into sections and delivered the leaflets which could be returned on-line or by depositing them in a locked ballot box in Café XI.

In the event while the returned leaflets reflected a large number of residents prepared to volunteer to assist, the demand for warm hubs and transport elsewhere was not extensive. It was concluded that assistance could be provided through the vehicle of the local charity and Parish Council donations if required.

23. Local Charity

As there was a possibility that donations would be made to the local charity, I researched the objects of the charity and the law to ensure that there were no restrictions.

No copy of the charity's governing instrument could be found locally and I secured a copy from the Charity Commission.

The local charity is the Basnett, Mathews, and Minton Charity which was formed in 1972 by the Charity Commission bringing together three historical local charitable trusts in a Charitable Scheme. It was apparent that the provisions of the Scheme had been overlooked by the Charity and by the Parish Council for some years.

The Scheme requires the Council to appoint two of the three Trustees for periods of 4 years, the third being the local vicar for the time being.

It is important that provisions of the Scheme are read, understood and applied. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11 September 1995 record that “The Trustees were required to be the Vicar and two Parish Councillors” which was inaccurate since the appointments can be, but are not required to be, Councillors.

For many years the Charity’s accounts were reported to the Annual Parish Council Meeting. At some point in the intervening years the provisions ceased to be complied with at all.

The Scheme and charity law also expects and encourages a close relationship between the Charity and the Parish Council.

Arrangements were made for the Parish Council to make the necessary appointments and the Charity and the Council are now acting lawfully. In these circumstances the Charity Commission agreed that it was not necessary for any other action to be taken.

24. Donations and Support

The Parish Council was asked by a local resident and agreed to purchase 2 signs from the British Hedgehog Preservation Society to warn motorists of hedghogs crossing the road. Unfortunately, shortly after the signs were positioned close to Platt Bridge they were stolen.

The Parish Council once more agreed to fund the maintenance for the Church Clock at a cost of £150+VAT. Funding public clocks is a permitted exception to the prohibition on local councils funding church affairs. (Parish Councils Act, 1957, s. 2 and 6).

The Shropshire Association of Local Councils circulated a request to Parish Councils to consider signing an open letter drafted by the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance intended to be published in the Shropshire Star and calling on the government to improve provision to address poverty in the Shropshire area. At a Parish Council meeting it was persuaded not to sign when it was suggested that this was a political activity and campaign aimed at discrediting the government. The text of the letter and information available on-line about the Poverty Alliance illustrated the inaccuracy of this assertion but when this was recognised it was too late to reconsider the issue.

The Parish Council was pleased to respond positively to a request from the Friends of St John’s School to make a donation towards the purchase of new all-weather play equipment. The topping-up donation of £1800 allowed arrangements to be made to supply the equipment.

25. Parish Boundary Review

Shropshire Council is carrying out a Community Governance Review of local council boundaries and has asked Parish and Town Councils to consider their boundaries and advise of any anomalies that can be corrected or Parishes that might be merged.

Trevor Allison and I studied the detail of the Parish boundary and produced a report with observations and recommendations for the Council meeting on 6 September 2022. After strong arguments by Councillors whose properties might be affected and

a suggestion that any changes would be unpopular among residents, it was agreed to thank us for our hard work, but to not pursue the review any further and to be reactive if residents specifically requested any changes to the parish boundary.

At that time few residents were aware of the review or where the Parish boundary runs. Since then, some twenty residents have written to me indicating that they wish the boundary to be changed because it runs through and splits their properties or because they think it should follow the River Perry, as historically it had done.

The timetable for the review has been changed by the Boundary Commission and Shropshire Council is now urging Parish Councils to respond to the consultation by October 2023.

SALC has urged Parish Councils to be proactively involved with the Review to avoid the danger that lack of contribution may lead to unwelcome changes being imposed.

26. Mill Lane Arboretum

Richard and Anne Mayall established the Arboretum for public enjoyment and following their deaths and the sale of Mill House, their daughter, Ginny Mayall, contacted Alyson and me to say she intended that open access to the Arboretum should continue and asked for involvement of the Parish Council.

Since then, Alyson, Lydia and I have worked with Ginny Mayall on the terms of a Management Agreement. Members of the public made clear that they were happy to help with maintenance of the Arboretum if this is needed and Alyson has arranged for volunteers to do maintenance work.

The Council has approved an annual expenditure of £600 towards the costs of maintenance.

The terms of the agreement have been agreed by the Parish Council and will be subject to a biennial review.

27. Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

An AED is fitted to the school wall for the benefit of the local community.

When it was first fitted, volunteers were trained to use the equipment and a list kept of those who could be contacted in the event of an emergency.

After the passage of time the arrangements were in need of review and Councillors Alyson Lister and Kerry Coldwell agreed to carry out a review.

Only 3 people had expressed an interest in AED and CPR training.

The recommendation from the British Heart Foundation and The Circuit (who manage the UK's network of defibrillators as part of the British Heart Foundation), is now that AEDs should be "self-service" as they are designed to be used by anyone, rather than

relying on a small number of volunteers who may not be available to help when it is needed.

The Clerk has discussed this with the school and they are happy with this suggestion, but would like the Parish Council C to help ensure there are still some volunteers who can help conduct weekly checks of the AED equipment during school holidays to ensure the equipment is always ready in an emergency.

The Clerk followed up those formerly involved in the AED scheme to see if anyone is still willing to do equipment checks.

Two volunteers from the original group have offered to help with checking equipment during school holidays.

Alyson, Kerry and Lydia are considering providing some CPR and AED awareness training in the community so that parishioners feel more prepared in the event that they need to use the AED. The National Restart a Heart Day October in every year may be an appropriate time to focus on this.

The Clerk has contacted Packwood School and Dairi Pak which have AEDs to ask whether they are planning any community training.

28. Traffic Diversion through the Village

At the end of January 2023 in the early hours of the morning, a very sad fatal accident occurred on the A5 on the Holyhead Road involving a young man who was a resident of Ruyton XI Towns.

A consequence of the accident was that the A5 was closed and a huge amount of traffic travelling south was diverted through Ruyton XI Towns, Baschurch and other villages during the whole of the night and the following day.

Residents complained that the speed of vehicles and the standard and speed of driving was appalling and extremely dangerous with a high risk of further accidents. They asked the Parish Council to consider what might be done to improve this in the event of diversions occurring in the future.

The B4397 through the village is a designated diversion route when there are problems on the A5. This has prevented some traffic control measures for which the Council has argued in the past.

While preventing diversions in such circumstances might be a long term goal, securing traffic management in the village when diversions do occur and improvements to the safety of the A5 might be more achievable.

Diversions in these circumstances are not frequent but have a significant impact on the village and safety of residents when they occur. Previous minutes of Parish Council meetings record a number of discussions about the problem including:

A letter received (from a resident) was read out. This concerned the effects of a recent traffic accident on the A5 with the subsequently large volume of traffic which diverted through Ruyton XI Towns. In particular, the damage done by lorries to street lights and possibly to grids on pavements were highlighted.

Councillors wanted to note the heavy traffic congestion on local roads following a serious accident on the A5.

The Clerk has been in correspondence with National Highways who are awaiting the results of the police investigation and conducting a safety review of that stretch of road to establish if any improvements are needed.

I shall raise the issue of traffic management in the village when diversions take place with the Chief Constable who will be attending a future SALC Joint Working Group.

29. Community Emergency Planning Programme

Shropshire Council and SALC is encouraging Parish Councils to prepare for major incidents in the Parish.

Alyson Lister, Kerry Coldwell and I will be taking part in workshops over the summer 2023.

The Parish Council has in the past had an extensive Emergency Plan. In 1997 the Council was one of only 16% of Shropshire Councils that maintained an emergency planning register but the focus appears have been lost over the years.

30. Hanging baskets

The Parish Council has again agreed to fund hanging baskets throughout the village. These are being provided by Pam Hinks a local florist.

31. Council Insurance

After reports of a case that suggested Councillors of a Town Council were likely to have significant claims made against them for which they are personally liable, I thought it important to examine the Parish Council's insurance policy.

Insurance companies, in order to reduce the likelihood of claims, have been introducing into policies strict conditions designed to reduce the likelihood of events leading to a claim. If the conditions are not met there is no cover.

It was clear that, unknown to the Councillors, in relation to significant areas of cover, such conditions have been added to the Parish Council's policy. There were also issues concerning the level of cover.

I wrote a report and notes on the sections of the policy for Councillors highlighting the need to ensure in our own interests as well as the Council's that decisions are made strictly in accordance with the law and that we need to be familiar with the insurance policy and consider any necessary changes. I suggested arrangements were made

for Councillors to meet and go through my report and notes and the policy. The Clerk asked Councillors "Please do read the report and documents as this has an impact on councillors' personal liability if things were to go wrong and the Council did not have sufficient cover."

I had read just enough of the policy to be satisfied more work is needed since there may be other conditions in the policy that put cover at risk if not fulfilled.

It became clear that Councillors were finding it difficult to allocate the time to read my report and attend a meeting to discuss the detail and so I asked instead if any Councillors were willing to spend time with the Clerk, Councillor Alyson Lister and me to go through the insurance policy and consider my comments. Unfortunately, no Councillor has said they are able to do so or requested a copy of the policy.

I believe that this work needs to be done. The Council would be very unwise to arrange any activities to which members of the public are invited before any conditions attached to the public liability section of the policy are met and conditions in other sections of the policy and level of cover are reviewed.

I referred to SALC two issues that arose from my consideration of the insurance because I thought they had serious implications for all Town and Parish Councils. SALC agreed and referred my correspondence to the National Association of Local Councils.

32. Past Minutes and Council Records

While I have been carrying out research during the year, it has become apparent that over many years there has not been a reliable system for recording and storing of important Council documents.

Most copies of past minutes have recently become available but the minute book for meetings from April 1910 to April 1924 and minutes for November 1987 to March 1991 are missing.

Minutes of Parish Council meetings must be retained as a public record available to the public.

Original legal documents including, in breach of the law, title deeds and charitable governing instruments are missing. Documents and reports and important correspondence referred to in minutes are missing. This increases the likelihood that the Council will act unlawfully and in breach of for example duties in Trust documents.

It is possible that some of these materials have been sent to the Archives in Shrewsbury, but no record has been kept of what has been sent.

This has caused problems dealing with current issues to do with the Cross and War Memorial but there may be equally important issues of which the Council is unaware.

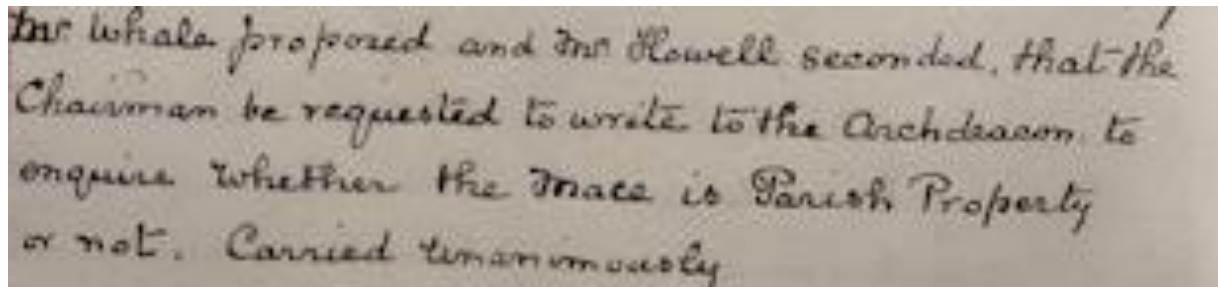
There has previously been no process for recording independently of minutes important decisions and policies made by the Council which means Councillors having

to rely on memories when issues arise again which over time is unsatisfactory particularly given the turnover of Councillors and Clerks. Lydia has now introduced a system of searchable records of decisions.

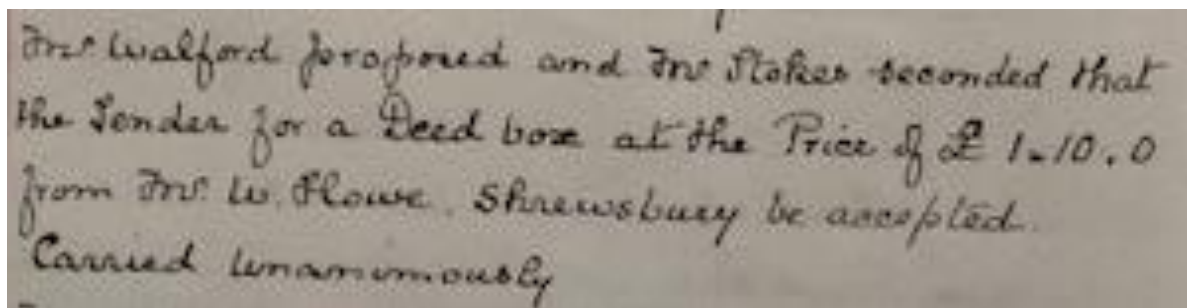
Lydia, Alyson and I are trying to address these issues but it requires allocation of considerable time.

The difficulties were recognised in the past and sometimes gave rise to arguments.

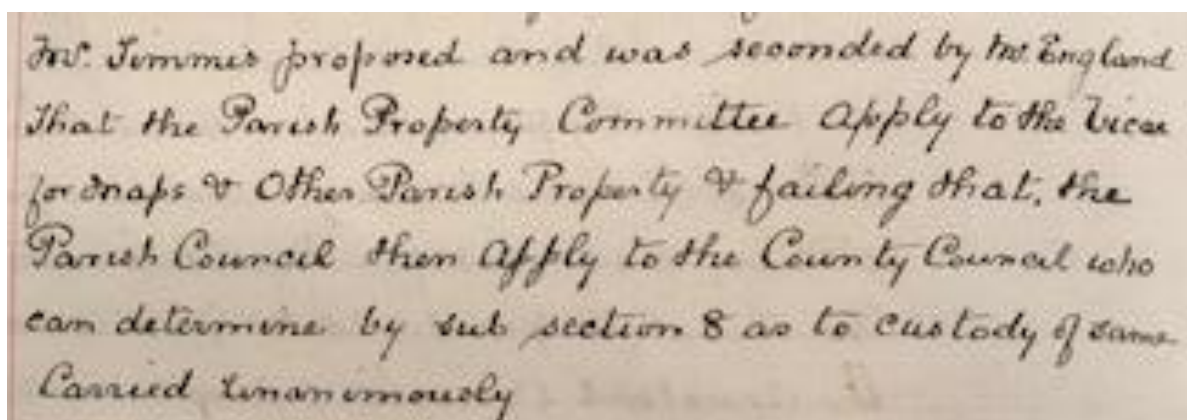
In 1895:



Mr Whiale proposed and Mr Howell seconded, that the Chairman be requested to write to the Archdeacon to enquire whether the Trace is Parish Property or not. Carried unanimously



Mr Walford proposed and Mr Stokes seconded that the Tender for a Deed box at the Price of £ 1-10.0 from Mr. W. Flowe, Shrewsbury be accepted. Carried unanimously



Mr. Tommes proposed and was seconded by Mr England that the Parish Property Committee apply to the Vice for maps & Other Parish Property & failing that, the Parish Council then apply to the County Council who can determine by sub section 8 as to custody of same. Carried unanimously

In 1959:

Parish Records.
A letter received from the Rev Bowen stated it was not lawful for him to remove Parish Records from their place of custody. It was pointed out that only Records relating to the History of Bouyton were required and that the clerk should write again saying so.

In 1977:

Preservation of Parish Records
It was agreed that most of the Parish records would be better maintained if stored by the County Archivist at Shirehall. It was agreed that the records held be examined at the next meeting.

Parish Council Records - A list of the documents held has been made and will be so considered for the Jubilee Celebrations display.

In 1978:

Parish Records - an examination and schedule of records to be transferred to the County Archivist to be compiled. I have Chairman and Clerk to confer and arrange transfer.

In 2009:

Council agreed without dissent that a formal council document retention policy was required.

At some point a safe and filing cabinet were purchased.

I have been reviewing the past minutes that are available, copying them, including those handwritten, and copying those minutes which may be of particular interest generally and separately those relating to particular topics – Charities, Parish History, Traffic, Village Hall, War Memorial, the Cross and Memorial Institute. Copies will be available to anyone in interested.

33. The Next 12 Months

Over the next 12 months I hope that the Council will make progress in:

- 1. Achieving better engagement with the community.**
- 2. Arranging more frequent Parish Meetings to address specific issues of interest to the community with expert speakers.**
- 3. Encouraging electors who are able and prepared to allocate time to Council activities outside meetings to become Councillors.**
- 4. Ensuring that when decisions are taken that involve action there is always identified the person(s) responsible for taking them forward.**
- 5. Forward Planning of projects for the benefit of the community.**
- 6. Accessing skills in the community to help with grant applications.**
- 7. Making copies of all reports made to Parish Council meetings available to parishioners unless data protection, confidentiality or commercial interests require otherwise.**
- 8. Achieving a continuing effective management structure for the Village Hall.**
- 9. Encouraging more focus on issues arising in areas outside the village.**

**Councillor David Spicer
Chair of Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council
May 2023**

Annual Report of the Chair of the Safer Roads Group May 2023 Councillor David Spicer

The Safer Roads Group is a long-standing Working Group of Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council which involves Councillors and members of the community.

The current membership is Councillors Alyson Lister and David Spicer and the following members of the community Ros Slowley, Bob Edwards, Andrew Collier, Clare Emblem, Tania Carson and Colin Case.

Shropshire Council Councillor Nick Bardsley also attends meetings.

This is a busy Working Group and I am grateful to the members for their consistent commitment. The meetings are currently held by Zoom and usually take place in the evening.

I prepare agendas for each meeting and circulate notes of the previous meetings taken by Ros Slowley. Outside of meetings I keep the Group up to date with developments from the CIL Road Safety Project Group.

During the year the Safer Roads Group has met on 3 May 2022, 28 June 2022, 31 August 2022, 27 September 2022, 31 October 2022, 17 November 2022, 25 November 2022, 29 November 2022, 26 January 2023, 6 February 2023, and 22 May 2023.

I provide a report from the Group to each Parish Council meeting.

The following is a copy of my paragraphs concerning the Safer Roads Group included in my Annual Report for May 2023.

8.5 Safer Roads Group

The overall purpose of the Safer Roads Working Group is:

- To promote, assist, and help improve road safety throughout the parish of Ruyton XI Towns for the benefit of all road users and make recommendations to the Parish Council.

Membership of the Safer Roads Group is made up of Parish Councillors David Spicer (Chair), Alyson Lister, and members of the community Ros Slowley, Bob Edwards, Colin Case, Clare Emblem, Tania Carson and Andrew Collier.

Councillor Nick Bardsley also attends meetings and because of his particular interest in aspects of road safety and I have invited Cllr Trevor Allison to attend some meetings.

I have been grateful to Ros Slowley for taking notes of the meetings.

During the year, the Group has met by Zoom on 11 occasions and members have attended several site visits in the village with Shropshire Council highway's consultants WSP and the insurance loss adjuster and professional adviser concerning the Cross.

I have drafted a Safer Roads Group Report for every Parish Council meeting.

The principle focus of the business of the Group has been to monitor and contribute to the infrastructure road safety project funded by £225,00 of CIL money and to advise the Parish Council.

Unfortunately, delays and failure to communicate by Shropshire Council highways has led to huge delays and confusion in settling proposals.

The Feasibility Report prepared by WSP was finalised in July 2021 and discussion then took place about the detail.

From January 2022 until September 2022, emails requesting information and for meetings to be convened were ignored by Shropshire Council, even following the damage to the Cross in April 2022. This was only resolved after I sent complaining emails to the Shropshire Council Chief Executive.

Monthly meetings of the CIL Road Safety Project Group were then diarised but changes of staff, revisiting issues previously agreed and general delay in providing information and materials has led to further delays. This has led to cancelled meetings of and continued frustration for the Safer Roads Group.

The Group has been preparing to take part in a public information session about the road safety proposals and a briefing for Parish Council members. It was agreed that surfacing of the road through the village would be undertaken at the same time as the road safety work.

These were first proposed for November 2022, then February 2023 and then July/August 2023 because of confusion over the detail and failure by Shropshire Council to meet commitments to provide visualisations and maps and materials concerning the proposals that are needed for the public session and briefings.

Two issues recommended in the Feasibility Report do not involve infrastructure and are not included in CIL Project. These are:

1. The removal of signs directing HGV's through Ruyton XI Towns from other locations.
Cllr Luke Penton is looking into how this might be achieved.
2. Arranging for the Satnav Companies to cease identifying that HGVs travelling through Ruyton XI Towns is a preferred route.
I am working with working with Clun Town Council with Chapel Lawn which is addressing the same issue and also approaching government arguing for regulation. Sadly, as there has been very little central government functioning over the last 12 months progress has been slow.

8.5.1 CIL Road Safety Project Group

This is a Group co-ordinated by Shropshire Council to oversee and progress the road safety infrastructure changes through the village.

The current members of the Group are Shropshire Council highways officers, WSP highway engineer, Shropshire Council Councillor Nick Bardsley, Parish Councillors Alyson Lister and David Spicer and Executive Head Teacher Julie Ball.

The Group has met monthly since September 2022 after a period of 8 months without a meeting being arranged despite persistent requests by me and Nick Bardsley that one should be convened.

Progress on this project has been slow, confused and frustrating as Shropshire Council struggled with staffing problems and changes of personnel in WSP. Issues agreed have been revisited and influenced by differing professional advice.

The project has been affected by significant rising costs and an application is being made by Shropshire Council officers for additional funding. The Parish Council resolved to contribute £2000 towards what were referred to as “abortive costs” to try and move matters forward.

Because of the complications caused by the damage to the Cross, Shropshire Council made a decision to split the project into two. Phase 1 will deal with the village west of the approach to the zebra crossing and work will be done when the road is resurfaced. Phase 2 will address the junction of Olden Lane and School Road.

The proposed public sessions and Council briefings to present information about the proposals will involve representation from Shropshire Council highways and WSP.

As soon as the promised visualisations and materials have been provided by Shropshire Council dates for these events can be fixed.

8.5.2 Extension of 30mph limit past Packwood Haugh School

After a great deal of correspondence trying to encourage the extension of a 30mph speed limit past Packwood (currently 60 mph), I received a commitment from Shropshire Council on 9 March 2020 that:

We have included this scheme in our Traffic Management Minor Works programme for the new financial year commencing in April 2020.

Nothing happened and after more chasing on 13 May 2022, I received another email including:

We will be looking at completing the scheme within this financial year. (2022 to 2023) We will keep you updated of progress

There has been no further communication.

8.5.3 Twenty is Plenty Campaign

In accordance with Parish Council policy, the Safer Roads Groups has continued to support the Shropshire-Wide 20mph Campaign for all residential areas and to liaise with the Twenty is Plenty Campaign.

8.5.4 Platt Mill Bridge

After damage was caused to Platt Bridge by HGV drivers being confused at the junction with a turning to Dairi-Pak, Bob Edwards contacted the company, which agreed to send to all its suppliers a leaflet with clear directions.

There have since been several more collisions with the Bridge, which is now due to be repaired when the road resurfacing work is done.

8.5.5 Overhanging Vegetation

Vegetation overhanging the highway periodically causes a traffic hazard. During the year there was a particular problem along Brownhill with vegetation higher than that which Shropshire Council removes but which still obscured the view of drivers in high vehicles.

Councillors Luke Penton and Rob Hamlett kindly arranged to clear this obstruction.

8.5.6 Streetlighting

It became apparent well into the road safety project through separate discussions with Shropshire Council's streetlighting team that additional street lighting will be required to bring the arrangements up to an appropriate safety standard.

Those discussions also disclosed that Shropshire Council operates an Energy Scheme by which Parish Councils can access cheaper electricity. Lydia has carried out the necessary processes and the Parish Council is now receiving the benefit of the lower costs.

8.5.7 Vehicle Activated Signs

The street lighting discussions also disclosed that the VAS installed are not at the correct height required by regulations.

The Parish Council has decided that they should be raised to an appropriate height but arrangements have not yet been made to do this.

It has been apparent that the solar panels fitted to the VAS operate effectively during summer but do not provide sufficient power consistently during winter.

The Parish Council no longer has any volunteers to monitor the VAS, download speed data or maintain the batteries.

Councillor David Spicer
Chair of Ruyton XI Towns Safer Roads Group
May 2023



Bomere & the XI Towns Federation

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Julie Ball, NPQH, PGCE, PG(Dip)M



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To the Parish Council

Primary School News - May 2023

As I am writing this, we have just completed yet another busy summer half term after a long winter and spring.

We navigated the NEU strikes and snowfall, managing to keep the school open throughout what was a very difficult time across the country yet again and are hoping that the government will support schools by fully funding any pay awards they offer through the coming weeks, otherwise, it is my understanding that most unions are now balloting to strike.

We have held a successful parents evening in the Spring term, with parent meetings back to face-to-face through the whole of this academic year. It has been lovely to be back to normal within school (albeit with struggles to cover when illness strikes). Parent support continues to be strong with a superb effort of over £20,000 being raised towards the purchase a new trim trail which the children can now enjoy each day with its all weather surface.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the parish council for their support for our trim trail and would be delighted to show the finished item for any who have not yet seen it. The work the parish council has done to support safety outside the school (and continues to do) is very much valued - thank you to all those involved in the Safer Roads Group. A number of volunteers from the village also help us with our clubs eg sewing and knitting, as well as volunteering as governors and supporting with events.

We have continued to work on our music offer this year with performances during the Autumn term and a mass concert in Birmingham in the Spring term. We are currently planning a residential visit to Liverpool for our Year 4 children, and our Year 6 also went to Arthog last term.

We continue to be blessed with a strong staffing team and are offering high quality education to our pupils with an underpinning excellent pastoral, nurturing and caring team who have all supported our children with their SATS tests over the past weeks. We are delighted with the effort and attitude our pupils continue to show towards their learning.

Our Bumblebees nursery has continued to thrive with a growing number now enrolled, taking children from 2 years upwards. Our new Nursery Leader Lauren Hurst leads a new team who are also growing in numbers! A request has been made to the parish council to consider a grant towards a shelter to help our Bumblebees make the most of their outdoor space the summer months.

The rest of a very busy Summer term awaits with our Summer FunFest topping this off in July, to which you are all invited!

Thanks again to the support the Parish offers to our school.

Mrs Julie Ball
Executive Headteacher

Village Hall Committee Chairs report for year ending Dec 2022.

Again a testing year as people still concerned with Covid and its implications

Bingo both by VHC and Rats were supported well and continue to be well received

Yoga, Brownies and Rainbows and various private functions all contributed to Hall funds.

The Home Grown Show continued to be widely supported but receipts were down due in part by donors being more cautious.

An upside note was the help given by the leaders of the Brownies and Rainbows leaders to encourage a children's section class and help with the running of stalls.

The greater involvement by Both St Johns and Packwood helped to make a colourful display again.

The Panto was a sell-out and a tonic that was needed and well received.

Maintenance carried out during the year.

The long running saga of finding and securing a company to damp proof and plasterer board the back wall was finally achieved after the Home Grown Show and is showing immediate benefits with the comfort of using the hall.

The old Front Doors were also replaced. This was supported by a very generous donation by Dari-Pak for which we are very grateful. More works are required to keep the hall legal and safe.

Like all Village Halls we are at the mercy of the energy companies prices. We are continuously looking to make the hall more efficient.

We appreciate the contribution made by the PC and its members to help were possible.