



Waters Upton Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting 28 April 2021 Chairman's Report

The last Annual Parish Meeting was held on 24th April 2019, and was chaired by Councillor Lynda Baker Oliver, performing her last duty after nearly 33 years in office. As we looked back at the activities of the previous year, and thought ahead to the next year, few could have predicted that our whole lifestyle would be disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic in the way it has been, with the accompanying hardship, loss, and effects on physical and mental health which so many people have experienced.

And yet it is at times like these that successful communities pull together to support those members most in need. During lockdown the Parish Isolation Support Group worked hard to enable those at risk to stay at home, and keep safe and well. We should thank all the volunteers who have helped with essential deliveries of food, collection of prescriptions, dog walking and other supportive activities. The team at Waters Upton Stores have also played their part in maintaining essential supplies to those who have needed them.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the necessary restrictions on public meetings led to the cancellation of all Parish Council meetings after February 2020, including the Annual General Meeting, and also the Annual Parish Meeting. However, the Parish Council continued to function and fulfil its statutory duties due to the Members' resolution to implement the Scheme of Delegation. Legislation was passed to enable the introduction of remote meetings, and the first Waters Upton Parish Council meeting to be held using the "Zoom" platform took place on 24th June 2020. This proved very successful, and subsequent monthly Zoom meetings have been well attended by members of the public.

The Parish Council, ably supported by our Ward Member, Councillor Bentley, has continued to liaise with Telford and Wrekin Council (TWC) to improve the safety of the roads in our Parish. Of notable success has been the implementation of the road improvement scheme on the A442 in Cold Hatton. This has included road surface improvements, revised lining, Vehicle Activated Speed Signs (VAS) including speed indication and highlighting the presence of traffic in the side roads, as well as improved signage in general. It has been agreed in principal that there should be a reduction in the speed limit on the B5062 between Crudgington and Shray Hill, and progress has been made to give Catsbitch Lane and Meeson Road Quiet Lane status. A number of locations have been identified throughout the Parish for the deployment of a Speed Indication Device, and TWC have agreed to project manage the scheme.

Planning matters are a vital part of any Parish Council's role, and Waters Upton Parish Council has continued to ensure that the views of local residents and Councillors are heard by the Planning Department of TWC. Indeed, on occasions when TWC have made what, in our view, are illogical and ill considered decisions, we have ensured that we have expressed our disapproval and dissatisfaction. We have also had meetings to express our concerns that there has been a lack of enforcement action when there have been clear breaches of planning regulations.

The Waters Upton Neighbourhood Plan (WUNP) continues to sit centre stage when considering planning matters. At each Parish Council meeting, Councillors have considered the WUNP and its importance in the determination of planning applications in the Parish. As part of the monitoring and review, the Parish Council has confirmed that the WUNP continues to meet the needs of the Parish at this time. However, it is recognised that a meeting with TWC should take place in the coming weeks with regard to the WUNP. TWC has a new Development Plan Officer who has been in contact and will arrange a meeting in the near future.

Recently, two well-established farms in the Parish have been purchased by external organisations, and concerns have been expressed by residents concerning potential excessive developments of the sites in a rural area, noise and light pollution, access to and egress from the sites in the context of a busy and dangerous main road, potential future conference facilities with associated disruption, and the potential testing of pesticides in fields adjacent to residential properties. The Parish Council will continue to try to maintain channels of communication with the organisations and TWC in order to ensure that the concerns of local residents can be addressed, and that harmonious relationships can be established.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their hard work on behalf of the residents of the Parish, and their contributions to the Parish Council meetings. I would also like to thank our Clerk, Katrina, for her tireless work on behalf of the Parish, and her invaluable advice and guidance, and our Ward Member, Stephen Bentley, for his determination to represent the interests of our residents.

I hope that the next twelve months will provide a welcome return towards normality, and that we can resume our customary activities, including face to face council meetings, even if we need continued vigilance to avoid the threat of further coronavirus outbreaks.

Stay safe everyone!



Dr Bryan Rothwell
Chairman, Waters Upton Parish Council