

Little Stanney & District Parish Council

www.littlestanney-pc.gov.uk

Chairman's Report for the year 2015-16



Councillor John Glazzard (Chairman)

Councillor David Astbury

Councillor Linda Carter

Councillor Paul Carter

Councillor Chris Dilworth

Councillor Roy Greenwood (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John Jones

Councillor Clive Lipscombe

Councillor Peter Mountford

Councillor Judith Thomas

Councillor Michael Todd

Mrs Pauline English (Parish Clerk)

Elections: 2015 was election year for both the Borough and Parish Councils and on 7 May the following Councillors were elected to serve on the Parish Council:

Croughton: Councillor Pete Mountford

Little Stanney: Councillors David Astbury, Chris Dilworth, Judith Thomas and Michael Todd

Stoak Parish: Councillors Linda Carter and John Jones

Wervin Parish: Councillors John Glazzard and Clive Lipscombe

That left us with two vacancies, one for Stoak and one for Wervin. Councillor Paul Carter applied to fill the vacancy in Stoak and Councillor Roy Greenwood filled the vacancy in Wervin, which brought us back to full strength. Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) changed colour, with Labour winning a very closely fought election by one seat. Our new Ward Councillor is Stephen Smith, who lives in Elton. He attends our meetings when he can but we seem to clash with Labour Group meetings, which is unfortunate. He has been very helpful in dealing with some of our issues.

At the meeting on 26 May 2015 I was elected Chairman and Councillor Roy Greenwood was elected Vice-Chairman for the year. The Parish Council decided to continue with monthly meetings on the fourth Tuesday in the month, at 7.30pm in Little Stanney Village Hall, although no meeting was held in August or December.

Finance: We increased the precept to £7,500 in 2015-16 to enable us to continue to employ our Amenity Cleaner and to continue to ensure that we have sufficient reserves. This year, for the first time, we had to make a contribution towards the cost of the Parish Council election which, fortunately, was not contested. Our internal auditor, Wellfield Accounting Services, completed the audit of the Parish Council's accounts for 2014-15 in April and we subsequently received a clean report from our external auditors, BDO, following submission of the Annual Return. We received a New Homes Bonus payment from Cheshire West and Chester Council which will be put towards a project within the parishes.

Amenity Cleaning: Graham Povey continues to provide us with an excellent service working 10 hours a week across all four villages. Stephen Smith, our Ward Councillor, gave us £1,000 towards the cost of employing him in 2015-16, but the budget from which this payment came is being amended and we will not receive any further grants of this kind. Graham continues to collect rubbish from our streets and grass verges and reports fly-tipping and other problems to CWaC when he spots them. He is on good terms with the bin collection team and keeps an eye on the condition of the villages. We would find it difficult to replace him and we must hope he never decides to retire. One of our biggest remaining problems is litter dropped by people who have visited the fast food outlets on Cheshire Oaks.

Playing Field: We were told last year that one item of equipment was getting past its best and should be replaced in the near future. We priced a new unit at around £10,000 and started looking for grant to help meet this cost. CWaC were approached and we were promised some help from grant money available for the area. Unfortunately we didn't get this until March and it was only £5,000 so we are still trying to find a way of raising the additional funding. This is the only play facility in the area and we would like to keep it stocked as best we can.

Nature Park: The Police have kept an eye on the site and the perimeter hedge has been kept low so it is visible from the road. No incidents have been reported.

Planning: The Parish Council was consulted on seven householder planning applications throughout the year, all but one of which was approved by CWaC. The other application was withdrawn.

Councillor Greenwood continued to represent the Parish Council on the Ince Park Community Forum (now renamed Protos) and attended a number of meetings throughout the year. Construction has commenced on the site on Ince Marshes.

CWaC are proposing to stop sending Parish Councils planning documents for simple applications that can be downloaded from their website. Discussions are ongoing about plans that are not clearly visible at A4.

Shale Gas Extraction: Tesla Exploration began consultations with landowners in the summer about a proposed 3D Seismic Survey to be conducted on behalf of iGas. Residents came to one of our meetings to ask the Parish Council to ban fracking in the area, but we don't have the power to do that, only to make our views known through the planning process should we be consulted. To date we have not been consulted on any specific proposals.

Highways: Discussions have continued about the problems being faced by motorists using Junction 10 and the Cheshire Oaks traffic lights and by residents in Stanney Lane who had to put up with vehicles u-turning in the road or using their driveways to turn around, having missed the right turn at the traffic lights. So far the only positive thing to have happened is that additional yellow signage has been put out along the A5117. This has not really achieved its intended purpose because the u-turning in both Stanney Lane and Rake Lane continues.

The double yellow lines around the loading bay outside the School House on the A5117 have not stopped it from being used as a lay-by. The occupants of School House have confirmed that they need the bay to enable deliveries of fuel to be made. The public consultation has taken place in relation to the proposed speed limits for Rake Lane and Wervin Road, and we are awaiting implementation. A plea to reduce the Rake Lane limit to 30mph was refused as it does not meet the criteria but CWaC are now looking into whether or not a derestriction order was ever made because there are no repeater signs visible along the built up part of the road.

Other highway issues that are ongoing relate to Little Stanney village boundary signs, vehicle testing on roads around Little Stanney, damage to the verge on the A5117 and street lighting and the Parish Council are hoping for a meeting with Inchcape about the removal of trees along the boundary of the Mercedes dealership site at Little Stanney. Concern about flooding on Stanney Lane since United Utilities were working along the road is, hopefully, being dealt with.

Communications: The Parish Council's website, www.littlestanney-pc.gov.uk, continues to grow and contains a lot of useful and anecdotal information. Any suggestions are always welcome from residents about improving its content. The Parish Council has Notice Boards in Croughton, Stoak and Wervin, and by the Strawberry roundabout at Little Stanney. Notices about meetings are also put up outside the Village Hall.

Police and Fire: Cheshire Police have changed the way in which they work which means that all beat officers now have to check in at Blacon. We have a new Beat Officer, PC Rob Boulton, who works with our PCSO, Jake Connolly. We receive written updates and the Police hold an occasional surgery in Little Stanney Village Hall which is advertised on our website. The Police and Crime Commissioner held meetings throughout the year across the Borough and updates from him and the Chief Constable are on our website. We were again consulted on Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's draft 5-year Strategy. The new Fire Station just up the road at Dunkirk is now under construction.

Cheshire West and Chester: During the year CWaC consulted the Parish Council on its budget and spending priorities and on a number of issues including the Gypsy and Traveller Allocations Policy, the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, Playing Pitch facilities and an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.

Membership of Associations: The Parish Council continues to be a member of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, Cheshire Community Action, the Cheshire Playing Fields Association and the Society of Local Council Clerks

John Glazzard
Chairman, Little Stanney & District Parish Council
April 2016