

Little Stanney & District Parish Council

www.littlestanney-pc.gov.uk

Chairman's Report for the year 2016-17



Councillor Chris Dilworth (Chairman)

Councillor David Astbury

Councillor Linda Carter

Councillor Paul Carter

Councillor John Glazzard

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)

Meetings: At the Annual Meeting on 23 May 2016 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 except in December, the regular meetings starting at 7.30pm in Little Stanney Village Hall, and the meeting in April taking place on the rise of the Annual Parish Assembly which starts at 7.00pm

Finance: We increased the precept to £8,524 in 2016-17 for a number of reasons, the main ones being to enable us to continue to employ our Amenity Cleaner and to continue to ensure that we have sufficient reserves should an election be contested. Our internal auditor, Wellfield Accounting Services, completed the audit of the Parish Council's accounts for 2015-16 in May and we subsequently received a clean report from our external auditors, BDO, following submission of the Annual Return.

Amenity Cleaning: Graham Povey continues to provide us with an excellent service, working 10 hours a week across all four villages. For the past few years our Ward Councillor has given us £1,000 towards the cost of employing him, but Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) Council changed the rules relating to the Members' budgets this year meaning we could no longer receive this grant. Graham not only collects rubbish from our streets and grass verges, he also reports fly-tipping and other problems to CWaC when he spots them. He liaises with the bin collection team and keeps an eye on the general condition of the villages. We would find it difficult to replace him so hopefully he will never retire! One of the ongoing problems is litter dropped by people who have visited the fast food outlets on Cheshire Oaks and we have raised this with McArthur Glen, the owners of the site. We hope to arrange another meeting with them to discuss litter problems generally.

Playing Field: We received an offer from Pentagon Play to help us with an Awards for All grant for a new Tower Unit. We took them up on their offer and an application was submitted for £10,000, which was successful. Together with the £5,000 grant received from CWaC last year that gave us £15,000 to spend on the new Tower Unit, which Pentagon installed for us in early 2017. The safety matting has yet to be laid, but will be done in May 2017 bringing the whole project to a close. Following the re-turfing under the new unit, we discovered we had some unwelcome visitors – moles! A local company managed to rid us of them and, so far, the field remains clear.

Nature Park: During the year, we found evidence that someone was camping on the site. On a separate occasion, drugs paraphernalia was found under one of the picnic benches. This was reported to the Police who removed it from the site. The perimeter hedge is being kept low so the site is visible from the road.

Planning: The Parish Council was consulted on only one householder planning application this year, which was refused by CWaC. Other applications submitted for comment included new houses at Church Farm and Stanney House, a major improvement scheme at Cheshire Oaks Outlet Village, a Dog Training unit and a printing business at Kennel Farm, equine stables, and lighting at The Stanney Oaks. The Parish Council objected to a proposal by Costa Coffee to erect a large signage unit at the entrance to the TGI Friday site. CWaC refused the application and Costa have since appealed. The outcome is awaited.

Councillor Greenwood continues to represent the Parish Council on the Protos (formerly Ince Park) Community Forum and attended several meetings throughout the year.

CWaC stopped sending Parish Councils planning documents for simple applications in February 2017 and Parish Councils and residents are now expected to download these from their website following notification by email.

Highways: Highways issues have once again been the main topic for discussion at Parish Council meetings. There have been ongoing problems with the Cheshire Oaks junction, especially the management of the traffic without use of the traffic lights. Residents in Stanney Lane are still having to put up with vehicles u-turning in the road or using their driveways to turn around despite notices being erected directing people up to the right turn at the Longlooms roundabout. Little Stanney Lane and Rake Lane also have problems with traffic u-turning.

The proposed speed limit for Wervin Road is still awaiting implementation. It has been pushed back to allow the implementation of the first year of the Borough-wide 20mph zones around schools. There have been ongoing discussions with CWaC about the speed limit on Rake Lane with the Parish Council still adamant that the presence of street lighting makes it automatically 30mph. CWaC are unable to produce a derestriction order and agree that it should be 30mph but they argue that it was recently reviewed and the speed limits found to be appropriate were 40mph through the built-up part of the street and then 60mph (national speed limit). They are going to consult on the 40mph proposal and have offered to let the Parish Council see the letter before it goes out to residents.

Members of the Parish Council have met with Inchcape about the removal of trees along the boundary of the Mercedes dealership site at Little Stanney and have asked CWaC Planning and Highway officers to come up with proposals for replacing the trees that should not have been removed. Now that the building is up, residents in Rake Lane are having to deal with problems of light pollution. Mercedes have been approached and have promised to turn their lighting off at night.

The Honda dealership decided to park a vehicle on the grass verge on the opposite side of the A5117. CWaC were informed and the vehicle soon disappeared, but then reappeared a few days later, trying it on again. The dealership was told by both CWaC and the Police that what they were doing was illegal and no further vehicles have appeared.

Traffic was again chaotic over the Christmas period, especially in Stanney Lane where the Reindeer Farm attracted a large number of vehicles, including coaches, which parked wherever they could find a space. The Village Hall allowed the use of their car park but there were a lot of vehicles parked on the grass verges, which suffered as a result. The Parish Council has asked CWaC to find out whether an order can be made preventing the parking of vehicles on the grass verges, as has been done in other areas of Chester.

Communications: The Parish Council has had to transfer the hosting of its website, www.littlestanney-pc.gov.uk, to a private hosting company because CWaC have stopped hosting Parish websites. The transfer was undertaken by Councillor Glazzard and was "seamless". Contributions are always welcome from Councillors and residents, especially 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 put up outside the Village Hall.

Police and Fire: PCSO Jake Connolly has now moved on to become a regular PC and we wish him the best of luck in his new role. We now have a new PCSO, Sue Keers, and a new Beat Manager, PC Joe Duckworth. A new Police and Crime Commissioner was appointed and he has held two meetings at different locations across the Borough. We were again consulted on Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's draft 5-year Strategy. The new Fire Station at Dunkirk is now finished and operational.

Cheshire West and Chester: During the year CWaC consulted the Parish Council on a number of issues including the Local Plan Part 2, their Budget, Civic Duties, Homelessness and Housing. The proposed Community Governance Review of the Non-parished areas, in which Little Stanney have an interest due to their boundary with Ellesmere Port, has been put on hold while the Boundary Commission carries out an Electoral Review of Cheshire West and Chester. The first stage of this review will look at Warding Arrangements.

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.

Chris Dilworth
Chairman, Little Stanney & District Parish Council

April 2017