

Tiverton and Tilstone Fearnall Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2017 -2018

This was my first year as Chairman, following on from Cllr. Gordon Ibbotson who had held the post for the previous 8 years. As the newly elected chairman I have been very grateful for the advice provided by Gordon and the help and support from my fellow councillors and the parish clerk as well as the local residents.

We started the year with two new councillors (Ash Sharma and Leanne Vimalachandran) and following the resignation of Cllr. Bernard Boyd after many years of service, for most of the year we ran with one councillor short. I am pleased to say that in March we appointed a new councillor, Janine Revill, to fill this vacancy, a move that improves the male/female balance on the council as well as providing more representation for the Tiverton/Tilstone Fearnall border. Unfortunately at the same time one of our existing councillors, Cllr. Kevin Thompson, had to leave the council because of work and personal commitments. So once again that leaves us one councillor short, a position we hope to rectify very shortly.

The long journey of finalising the Beeston, Tiverton & Tilstone Fearnall Neighbourhood Development Plan effectively came to a close on 30th November 2017, when 94% of the votes cast at the referendum approved the Plan. This Plan has been made by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) who are now legally obliged to ensure that any new planning applications meet the conditions detailed in the Plan.

One long standing concern of our residents has been the safety of pedestrians and vehicles at Four Lane Ends (alternatively known as the Red Fox Junction). I am pleased to be able to report that our frequent calls for change have at last borne fruit. Just prior to the Parish Council Meeting on 13th March a representative from CWaC presented plans to the council and residents for a significant change to the road layout, which should be, if not perfect, a significant improvement. The good news is that work has now commenced on this. We are still working with CWaC to have the speed limit at the junction reduced and hopefully this will be implemented this coming year.

Tiverton is not well served by public transport but had a bus service to Chester once a week and a bus service to Nantwich twice a week. These bus services were heavily subsidised by Cheshire East Council and in 2017 they undertook a review of their supported bus services which resulted in a decision to stop the Chester service. There then followed some concerted lobbying both from the Parish Council and residents to CWaC Transport, Mike Jones (Ward Councillor) and Antoinette Sandbach (MP) which resulted in a new twice weekly minibus service being set up in April 2018 which will take residents not only to Chester, but also the Countess of Chester Hospital and Cheshire Oaks. This is an important service for residents without their own transport, but I would encourage everyone to use this from time to time to ensure that there is a sufficient number of people using the minibus to ensure the viability of the service.

We have continued to monitor the Horse Chestnut Tree on Smithy Green and have taken advice from the Senior Tree Officer at CWaC. The view is that whilst the tree is not in the best of health – it is suffering from Horse Chestnut Bleeding Canker which has created the visual symptoms of the twisted split bark – the risk to the public, property or highway is limited. We have decided therefore to maintain the tree for the time being as it is such a large and prominent feature of the landscape. We will continue to monitor the tree in conjunction with CWaC and deal with it as advised by them.

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Throughout the year we have had quite a lot of concerns about our highways, not only potholes but also damage to grass verges and property and speeding. At an open meeting held with CWaC Highways in October we clarified how potholes should be reported and agreed an escalation route to deal with long standing issues. Whilst there has been some progress it is not enough, so this is very much work in progress.

Broadband speeds continue to be a problem across much of the Parish. Whilst BT Openreach promise some improvements this summer, it is unlikely to make significant improvements for all, and for that reason Cllr. Ibbotson has led a campaign to get improved broadband speeds using an alternative supplier: Voneus. Voneus offer a different approach using wireless technology. This is in the process of being implemented.

Finally the Parish Council is in the final stages of selecting a supplier to create a new website. This will ensure that the Parish Council is compliant with the current legal transparency requirements whilst at the same time providing an improved platform for associated village information, e.g. Village Hall booking, Village Society and Garden Club. Funds for this work are provided by Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) rather than the Parish Council precept.

Please feel free to contact the Parish Clerk if you have any issues that you would like the Council to follow up on. Alternatively you are always welcome to attend the Parish Council Meetings which are held every two months. Details of which can be found on the Tiverton website.

Ray Mould

Chairman

9th May 2018