

Tiverton and Tilstone Fearnall Parish Council

Chairman's Annual Report 2018 -2019

This was my second year of being Chairman and just as interesting and challenging as the first.

For most of the year we ran with a full complement of nine parish councillors following the appointment of Heather Lightfoot to the council in May. This further improved the balance of the council with three female councillors and further representation close to the Tiverton/Tilstone Fearnall border. Sadly Cllr Turner and Cllr Hocknell have decided not to put themselves forward for re-election in the May elections, so moving forward we find ourselves two councillors down. I would like to thank Cllr Turner and Cllr Hocknell for their support over many years. We will be looking for willing volunteers to fill these vacancies over the coming months.

Probably the most significant event this year was the reconfiguring of the junction at Four Lane Ends (the Red Fox Junction) that took place in March and April this year. Whilst we did not get everything we wanted, the right turn only lanes on the Nantwich – Tarporley leg certainly makes it a far safer junction. The central reservations, also on these legs, make it a little easier for pedestrians to cross the road at the junction. I am hopeful that the speed limit reduction to 50mph on this stretch of road will happen this coming year. Local residents directly affected by the change have given their approval to the change and legal documentation is now being prepared by Cheshire West & Chester (CW&C) Highways to facilitate a formal consultation process hopefully in May/June this year. Because the speed reduction was requested by the Parish Council there is a cost to us involved with this. We have however secured promises of contributions from both Ward Councillor Mike Jones and Tarporley Parish Council which will reduce the net cost to us.

Whilst we are on the topic of highways, we still have ongoing concerns about speeding, potholes, collisions with the railway bridge at Beeston Brook, and damage to properties and grass verges.

The primary issue now that the Red Fox work is complete is the speeding of traffic down the A49 from Huxley Lane down to and under the railway bridge. Whilst speed monitoring has been carried out by the police, the results do not reflect the day to day reality as the presence of someone in a high visibility jacket invariably leads to a temporary reduction in vehicle speeds, but sadly not a permanent one. At the bridge itself there are frequent collisions by high sided vehicles and even more frequent scrapes that do not get reported. Not all of this is down to speeding, sometimes it is down to the lack of awareness of the oncoming hazard. Network Rail has now installed new road signage on the A49 to better warn trucks of the oncoming hazard. As a parish council we will continue to lobby CW&C Highways to put measures in place to improve safety on this stretch of road.

Concerns have also been raised regarding speeding traffic along Huxley Lane between Hand Green and Brassey Green, near where the Sandstone Trail crosses the road. The trail is popular with walkers and frequently used by young people carrying out the various DofE schemes. Due to road undulations, visibility for pedestrians and drivers at this point is poor. Our representations to CW&C Highways about this have resulted in them commissioning signs to warn oncoming vehicles of the road danger. I expect them to be installed in the coming months.

Most of the potholes that were reported last year have been fixed, but obviously new ones appear all the time. The Parish Council can monitor the progress of reported faults but only if the faults are

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reported on the CW&C Reporting system (anyone can do this) and the Parish Clerk notified of the reported fault and the allocated Enquiry Number. The current list of reported Highways Issues can be found on the Parish Council Website under PC Minutes and Reports.

If you haven't yet taken a look at our new website then please do. We still have work to do in terms of better enabling associated groups e.g. the Village Society and Garden Club to make use of the web site, but the core of the site relating to Parish Council transparency is there for all to see.

The twice weekly minibus service from Tiverton to Chester remains popular, especially on a Tuesday. A campaign by residents in parishes in the Tarporley Ward and a resultant survey, appeared to threaten this service but following representation from the Parish Council to CW&C Transport I am hopeful that the Tuesday service (at least) will be protected.

During the year we had a spate of water main bursts down Huxley Lane. With help from residents who live close to the incidents we discussed the problem with United Utilities and suggested that it might be more cost effective to replace the water main than carrying out frequent ad-hoc repairs. In the summer of 2018, as a short term fix, United Utilities reduced the pressure in the water main to 2.5bar and this has alleviated at least the visible problem. At the Parish Council meeting in November 2018 United Utilities indicated that they planned to replace the water main down Huxley Lane from the A49 down to about Crib Lane in 2020. This will be a significant exercise and will no doubt cause some significant disruption but hopefully there will be a long term benefit.

There has been some good news and some bad news regarding broadband in Tiverton. If you happen to live on the A49, or in Gardenhurst, or the main part of the village on Huxley Lane then you now have the opportunity to get a decent broadband speed following the installation of a new cabinet on the A49 opposite Gardenhurst. The bad news is that our hoped for partnership with Voneus to provide wireless broadband to the more remote parts of the community appears to have fallen through. This is clearly disappointing, but we will continue to look at other options as the current situation for certain parts of our community is unacceptable.

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 Parish Council website.

Ray Mould

Chairman

14th May 2018