

## ALBRIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

### CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2016

I was re-elected Chairman in May 2015 and Cllr Phil Harrison Vice Chairman, both for a term of twelve months.

The Council's accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2016 will be available at the Annual Parish Meeting on 5 May 2016.

Much of the Council's business is routine and changes little from year to year. We are responsible for the maintenance of the village greens, Patsull Green (the pond area in Cross Road), the provision of Christmas lights, the provision of allotments, maintenance of St Mary's Church burial ground, maintenance costs for 40 street lights, the Clockmills football field, the provision of financial support for the summer holiday club, (formerly the play-leadership scheme), a grant to Donington Nature Reserve and the provision of the Albrighton Flyer. Other financial grants are also bestowed, e.g. supporting all Year 6 children from both primary schools to attend the Crucial Crew safety initiative.

Part of the Parish Council's work is to comment and make recommendations on all planning applications.

Albrighton Parish Council has committees which undertake the work involved in the allocation of grants, personnel issues, financial matters and parish transport. These committees all have a Chairman and are conducted in the same manner as are meetings of the full council. The meetings of the committees are attended and minuted by the Parish Clerk and are open to all members of the public.

Working parties address other issues including, for example, Crime Prevention and the provision of Christmas lights. All parish councillors are affiliated to a local group (such as the Allotments Committee and the Crime Prevention Panel) and attend their meetings. The councillors' report back to the full council following attendance at such meetings.

In May 2015 following a vacancy, Peter Woodman was elected to the Council and in September Mr Alex Straney was co-opted onto the Council.

Following the decision by Shropshire Council to move out of 72 High Street; in order to save on costs, on 27 May the Parish Council moved its office into the Red House.

This has been a particularly busy and challenging year for the Council which has been obliged to address some major issues with regard particularly to the continuance of services within Albrighton. This has had to be done against a background of reduced financial provision from central government. The Council is aware that these decisions will be seen by some as controversial but seeks to persuade the people of Albrighton that they have been made with the interests of all residents in mind.

In June I represented the Council at the Armed Forces Day in Shifnal.

In July the Transport Committee recommended to the full council that the Parish Flyer contractor/drivers should be employed by the Council. Mr K West has been employed since 1 October and Mr W Harris since 1 November as drivers. It was also agreed that Tong Parish Council would be allowed to access the services of the Flyer and are now making a contribution to the running costs.

The Annual Play Scheme (now known as Albrighton Holiday Club) opened on 20 July. I was delighted with the calibre of the staff we employed and this was the most successful playscheme in its history. Many new activities were available to the children and were enjoyed by all. I am very grateful to the manager, Ms Sophie Stubbs for the professional way in which she oversaw the activities. All the staff were new to the play scheme.

Following a donation by the WI of £500 in July we applied to the British Heart Foundation and were granted money to provide a defibrillator which is now affixed to the outside wall of the Red House. Later in 2016 training in the use of the defibrillator will be available to anyone interested in such training.

The Approbation Ceremony was again held in 2015 and I am told by the majority who attended and by those who have since expressed a view that it was the most successful ceremony to date. I am very grateful to RAF Cosford for securing the services on the day of the Band of the RAF Regiment, the quality of which was favourably commented upon by many people. The quality of the catering was also a subject of very favourable comment. The Council continues to maintain a good working relationship with RAF Cosford and in August 2015 was pleased to welcome Group Captain Mark Hunt as the new station commander.

The Parish Council held its Annual Civic Carol Service in December. This was poorly attended and we need to consider the future of this event. We also advertised in December for an Administration Assistant to the Parish Clerk and in February were pleased to welcome Ms Sally Meikle in this role.

In December solicitors were appointed by the Council to act on our behalf in negotiation with Shropshire Council in relation to the running of the library. The Council is now in a position to move on 1 April 2016 into what was formerly the library building and will become the employers of the library staff. We hope that this decision will secure a library in Albrighton for the next three years and give us time to develop a business plan and to work with other organisations within the area to enable us to place the provision of library services in the village on a permanent footing. The building will now be known as Albrighton Library and Parish Council Office.

The Council works closely with a number of other organizations within the Albrighton area including the Albrighton and District Civic Society. A grant of £150 has been made to the Society by the Council towards the planting of the planters in the High Street which themselves were funded by the Council.

The ramp team was formed in 2014 in an effort to retain the ramp at Albrighton Railway Station. The team is comprised of representatives of the four Parish

Councils and the Civic Society. We are nearing our goal and work is planned for July 2016 to make the area around the station bridge and ramp exit safe for pedestrian use. Station Road access onto the A41 will be closed whilst this work is carried out. It needs stating however that this work will only take place in the event of a favourable independent professional risk assessment which is being undertaken. Such an assessment is necessary for Albrighton Parish Council's insurers as the Council, in the event of the ramp being taken into use, will be responsible for the ramp and liable for any claims, should any arise, from people using the ramp. It will not be a designated disabled access to the east bound platform of the station.

Albrighton Parish Council has begun working with Newhouse Lane School and the Swimming Club in an effort to retain the use of the swimming pool for the benefit of all residents of the local area. The Council has allocated funds for the swimming season 2016 to ensure that the swimming pool is open and is actively seeking funding opportunities to secure its future.

The Council has set its budget for the year ending 2017. From April 2016 there will be an increase of 21p per week for homes in Band D.

***Sylvia Pledger***

Chairman, Albrighton Parish Council.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ANNUAL PARISH  
MEETING ON THURSDAY 5 MAY AT 7.00 PM WILL  
TAKE PLACE AT ST MARY'S CHURCH HALL AND  
NOT AT THE RED HOUSE**