

## **ALBRIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Chairs Annual Report for the year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018**

**Having just completed my first year as Chairman, one of mine and the Vice Chairman's principle objectives has been and will continue to be in our second year in office to make residents more aware of the Parish Council's role and its activities and objectives. In that respect we have initiated the publication of "Notes from the Chair" which is an informal summary of discussions which took place and decisions made at the previous Parish Council Meeting, Sub-Committee and Working Parties. We believe that parishioners should be given more information about the important work which the Parish Council does on their behalf and to encourage residents' feedback.**

**The year 2017-2018 has seen the following:**

**1. In May last year 20 candidates stood for election for the 15 places which meant that for the first time for some years an election took place. 6 new people were elected to the Council last May giving the Council a new look.**

**The new Council decided to make certain changes: -**

- a) Council meetings to be held monthly and not fortnightly**
- b) To close all the sub-committees except the Finance Committee which now consists of the New Chairman and New Vice Chairman and for continuity the previous Chairman and Vice Chairman and also one of the new Councillors Tom Maguire who has a financial background**
- c) Some work previously done by sub-committees is now carried out by Working Parties which meant that the Clerk's time was not taken up by attendance at all these groups which was the case for sub-committees.**
- d) A new set of Councillors were elected as representatives on local organisations**

**2. Continuation of the successful management of the local library. The Council assumed the responsibility for the Library and its management in 2016 and in so doing removed the threat of its closure. However, Shropshire Council's funding ends after another year when we will have to fully finance it**

**3. Arranged the acquisition of the new Flyer minibus to replace the old one. The new vehicle has improved comfort facilities, including air conditioning. A publicity campaign has now been launched to encourage awareness of the Flyer's existence and its availability to all residents – its use is not limited to elderly people although they remain an important category for the Flyer to provide a service to. We have now made it available for evening and weekend use and we are seeing groups take this up. We have started to recruit "Flyer Volunteers" – some to act as Drivers when our permanent driver is on holiday/ill and helpers to assist with wheelchairs and carrying shopping. Training is arranged through the Parish Council.**

**4. Supported the Adopt-a-Station Scheme. Volunteers are now improving the appearance of our station with the provision of flowers and plants funded by our local rail franchise and David Austin Roses, Kingswood Road Nurseries and Albrighton Business Forum.**

**5. Continued support for the repair and reopening of the Albrighton Station Pedestrian Ramp which would greatly facilitate access to the Wolverhampton bound platform, avoiding the need to access it only by crossing the rail via the station footbridge.**

**6. Provided much needed grants to the following local organisations totalling £ 7,000:**

**Grants**

**Sports and Social Club**

**Albrighton Football Club**

**Albrighton First Responders**

**Live at Home**

**British Legion**

**St. Mary's Church**

**Severn Valley Strollers**

## **Annual Grants**

**Albrighton nature reserve.**

**Albrighton Summer Fayre Committee**

**St. Mary's Church**

**7. Opposed the granting of planning permission to the East of Shaw Lane Development proposed by Jessups involving particularly the enormous 74 Extra Care Apartments Building, the unacceptable connection of the drainage/sewage into Shaw Lane/Station Road which will increase the risk of flooding in the north part of Albrighton, having the traffic access from Shaw Lane making the existing unsafe situation for parents, children and patients to the Surgery even worse in an already very over congested Shaw Lane, with lack of parking for Station users. The impact of the Extra Care Homes by overloading the Albrighton Medical Practice would be totally unacceptable, as the doctors have confirmed, and the Council whilst not itself involved has supported a petition organised by an Action Group, set up by the Civic Society, opposing this Extra Care Apartment building aspect of Jessups application.**

**8. Provided the village Christmas lights.**

**9. Provided maintenance of the village green and grass cutting of it and other village grassed areas.**

**10. Provided a Litter Warden with now increased hours as some residents have requested**

**11. Provided the black planters with flowers in the summer months.**

**12. Reviewed many planning applications and provided comments to Shropshire Council as Planning Authority, whilst always taking into consideration views of the residents and supporting them.**

**13. Very recently the Council took a decision to oppose the erection of a Broadband Mast on land near the Albrighton Windmill. Some 30 residents attended the Council meeting at which that decision was taken and those present were very pleased to hear that the Council had decided to support their own very strong opposition to this mast erection proposal.**

**14. Continued to support the Swimming Pool when funding via Shropshire Council was cut off and has acted as the funder of last resort. The Councillors have worked closely with the Friends of Albrighton Swimming Pool Lottery, who have covered the running costs of the pool for the last year.**

**15. The Citizens Advice Service has successfully run for 17 years in a room made available at the Medical Practice. When the £6000 funding was terminated the Council decided to make a contribution to that, on the basis that it hoped other parish councils would also contribute to make up the whole amount. As time was short, and to ensure no interruption to the service, this Council provided the full £6000 immediately and is now in discussion with neighbouring councils to ask if they will make their contribution.**

**16. I won't comment now on the finances except to say that your council has managed it well and so far, we seem to be able to match calls on expenditure with the funds we have and thus avoided an increase in our precept which affects the Community Charge. The Finance Committee was pleased to elect Councillor Tom Maguire as Chairman of the Finance Committee who is able to focus his attention of this most important part of our work and Tom will be presenting the accounts in due course tonight**

**17. Michael Ward has been our Clerk and Financial Officer for 10 years but decided he wished to reduce his hours and so we welcomed Shirley Reynolds as our new Clerk in April. Michael has retained his role as Financial Officer on a part time basis. We thus were able to now have the office manned by an Officer for at least 5 hours every day, something which we had not been able to do previously. They are able to provide help and support to elected councillors and members of the public. The Library and Parish Office continues to be well used by residents and the extension of opening hours will only enhance this service to our village.**

**18. Finally I would say that we intend to continue to make our activities as open as possible to all residents and to that end we have moved the monthly council meetings to the Red House as the council meeting room did not accommodate enough places for members of the public who are entitled to be present at all council meetings – indeed we would urge more people to attend to see what is being discussed and decided. We will try to keep residents informed on our discussions and decisions**

**Finally, thanks to all people who have come this evening to support the council and to all residents who have worked with us to improve our village and to all the council staff, our librarians, village warden, litter warden, Flyer driver, volunteers, Responsible Finance Officer and the Parish Clerk and finally thanks to all councillors for their work.**

**19. It has been an honour to serve as Chairman of Albrighton Parish Council and I am privileged to have been re elected to serve a further term.**

**Cllr Peter Woodman**

**Chairman, Albrighton Parish Council**