

St Peters Parish Council Annual Report 2014-15

18th May 2015

The Parish Council (www.stpetersworcs.org.uk)

The Parish Council started and finished the year with a full complement of 9 Councillors. The Council met 11 times during the year, monthly apart from August when we take a summer break. On average 6 Councillors attended. At least 1 of the 2 District Ward Councillors was in attendance at 10 of the 11 meetings, and our County Councillor attended 5 meetings. The Parish Council is grateful for their time and interest as many of the issues we deal with can only be successfully taken forward with the cooperation of the City and County Council. All our meeting agenda and minutes are on the Parish Council web site.

We renewed the agreement with the City Council for provision of a Parish Warden service for the year 2014-15, and we have renewed this again for 2015-16. We opted to maintain the same level of service as last year and the cost has risen but we judge the additional service worthwhile to maintain the pleasant environment in St Peters to a standard that the residents expect. There are regular meetings between the Parish Warden and the Clerk, Parish Council Vice-Chairman to review the work and priorities. Issues notified by residents are regularly taken in to account. Monthly reports are on the Parish Council web site.

The Parish has now recruited a part-time Assistant Clerk, who will formally start work on Friday 5th June. This is 3 year fixed term appointment to support our long serving Clerk (Bob Jenkins). Contact details will be on the Parish Council web site and also in Newslink in due course.

Parish Council continues to be a member of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) through Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC). This provides an authoritative and invaluable source of advice on legal and technical matters that affect the Council, and a source of training.

The Parish Council has registered for the first time this year with Information Commissioners Office (ICO) in accordance with obligations for Data Protection.

We have set a precept of £35,507 for the session 2015-16, a 2 % increase on last year. This is supported by a grant from the City Council of £993 to offset the affect of the way Central Government handles housing benefit in relation to Council Tax. This grant is 15% less than last year. This results in a Band D parish precept St Peters of £16.48 (1.9% increase on last year). The detail of our budget and reserves for the current year are on the web site.

Special Notice

We were saddened in September to receive news of the death of Donald Anderton, first Chairman of the Parish Council.

Significant Local Developments

There are a number of substantial developments planned in the vicinity of the parish and the Parish Council takes a keen interest in all of them. They are at different stages of consultation and planning The Council has commented on the following substantial consultations and planning applications:

- County Council proposed bridleway realignment in anticipation of a new bridleway bridge.
- South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) modifications.
- The proposed St Modwen Development (land across Broomhall Way from Power Park).
- The proposed St Modwen Development pedway bridge (to land in Power Park).
- The outline planning application by Wellbeck for 2,204 dwellings (MHDC 13/000656/OUT).
- We raised objections to the proposed Middle Battenhall Farm development (P13B0632).
- We raised objections to 103 new dwellings by the Ketch roundabout across Broomhall Way (P14L0266).

Issues and residents concerns addressed

During the 2014-15 session the issues addressed by the Parish Council have included:

- Timber rot in the **Area 51** play area in Power Park. This was first notified in October and a remedy is now in place through negotiation with the original suppliers and with the support of the parish warden team.
- **Ketch roundabout improvements** and Broomhall Way dualling road works and associated issues including concerns of directly affected residents, the height of the bund and new tree planting to replace those removed. This has been done in cooperation with the City Council and Friends of Power Park.
- Residents concerns about the recent introduction by First Group use of **double-decker buses** along St Peters Drive. First Group are fully entitled to use double-decker buses on this route but following communication with the General Manager for First Group buses in the Midlands they have agreed to take residents concerns in to account and have now stopped using double-decker buses on this route on Saturdays.
- Communication with the City Council concerning residents concerns about the future plans for the land formerly used for the Falcon Close play area.
- Residents concerns about damage to footwear and carpets following Highways road dressing ('tar & chippings').
- LED lighting for Norton Road pedestrian crossing is being taken forward by County Cllr Marc Bayliss
- The warden team have surveyed the state of pedways, litter bins and dog bins and this will inform future priorities.

Parish Council Projects

We continue to support **Newslink**, the Parish magazine, which is produced 6 times each year. It continues to attract very positive feedback from residents. I wish to thank Sarah Lloyd-Rumens (editor), Bob Jenkins (Clerk) and Alan Jarman (advertising manager), our loyal advertisers who help to fund the magazine and those who contribute articles.

We decided to organise a **Parish Festival** (to be held Sunday **28th June 2015**) and Cllr Brenda Wheeler has been working hard to organise this for the best part of the last year. The festival is supported by funds from Parish Council (£2,000) and a grant (£1,500) from County Cllr Marc Bayliss. It is shaping up to be an excellent event and I hope many residents will go along.

The Parish Council is pleased to support the **Friends of Power Park** (Friends of St Peters Parks), led by our Vice-Chairman Cllr Mike Johnson and supported by the parish warden. This is a way for more residents to get involved in helping to set priorities and manage the green spaces in the Parish. Regular volunteer events are organised for example to plant trees or bulbs.

I wish to acknowledge the efforts of **David Egerton** (Duckworth Trust) who voluntarily spends time picking litter and helping to keep the Parish neat and tidy.

In Conclusion

Sometimes it can be hard to see what the Parish Council does given that most of the substantive public services are provided by either the City or County Council. However as I have drawn together this report it seems to me that we have been active on a wide range of topics through the year, from offering views on major developments on our doorstep to finding remedy for specific concerns of residents. In all that we do our first priority is the residents of St Peters. I want to acknowledge the efforts of my fellow Councillors and thank them for their support during the year.

Following the recent elections only 4 Councillors stood and so we have 5 vacancies. In some ways this is disappointing but it does provide opportunity for new blood and new ideas. I am optimistic that we will be able to co-opt to fill the places. The work of a Parish Councillor is not usually glamorous but I believe that that your Parish Council on the whole makes a valuable contribution to the quality of life in St Peters, and that at £16.48 on a Band D Council Tax bill, it is good value. I hope that you agree.

Best Wishes

Paul Thorlby

Chairman, St Peters Parish Council (2014-15)