

St Peter the Great ('St Peters') Parish Council, Worcester

www.stpetersworcs.org.uk

Annual Report 2015-16

Presented by the Chairman 16th May 2016

Introduction

St Peters Parish is a urban parish within the City of Worcester and in that context St Peters Parish Council focuses on initiatives that:

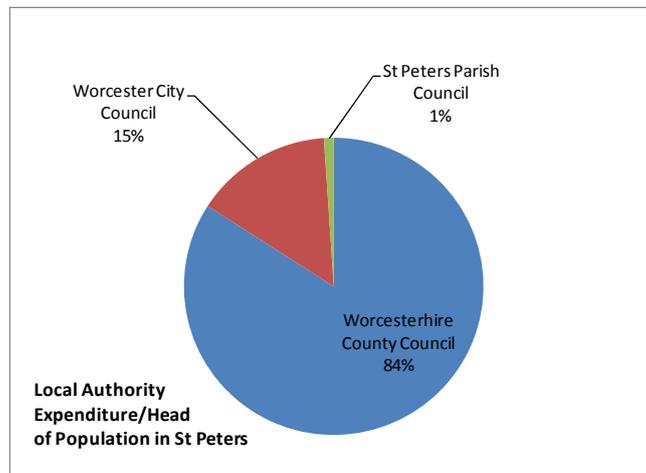
- help to foster a sense of community and local identity (e.g. Newslink, Parish Festival);
- enhance the local environment of St Peters (e.g. Community Warden, Friends of St Peters Parks);
- provide representation or action on local issues (e.g. planning & development, traffic & crossings, roadworks & bus services).

Where possible we work with community and volunteer groups or the City or County Councils. These priorities are reflected in our budget and the projects and council activities during 2015-16.

The Parish Council publishes all relevant Parish Council information (including agenda, minutes, budgets, accounting statements, policies, contact details and links to other sites of interest), that is not subject to data protection or commercial confidentiality, on our web site www.stpetersworcs.org.uk

Context for the Parish Council

The vast majority of local authority services are provided by Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council. This is illustrated in a simple comparison of the respective annual budgets compared to the respective total populations: Worcestershire County Council circa £566/person (£322m for 569,000 people); Worcester City Council circa £100/person (£10m for 99,600 people); St Peters Parish Council circa £7/person (c £44k for 5,800 people). This is illustrated in the figure below.



The Local Government Boundary Commission supports the creation of a parish council because they:

- are in the interests of effective and convenient local government;
- provide a means of giving local residents a sense of identity;
- provide a forum whereby local residents could be represented and consulted on local issues.

More recent legislation has recognised the community value of a parish council and parish councils may be formed where there is a body of local opinion that wants one. A parish council can help to form and foster a sense of community. It is unlikely that a parish council would manage to do this on its own, but a great deal can be achieved when a parish council works with other community groups and parts of government. It is no coincidence that the only parished areas within Worcester City are St Peters and Warndon Villages, recent substantial residential extensions to the City. In fact St Peters Parish Council has its origins in the Residents Association that was formed when St Peters was being developed.

Review of 2015-16

Chairman

The year started with elections, which occur every 4 years for the Parish. A number of Councillors chose to step down and only 4 people stood for the 9 seats available. Cllr Johnson resigned after the June meeting to focus on his role as a City Councillor. I am pleased to report that we co-opted 6 new Councillors during the few months following the election and from September we once again had a full complement of 9 Councillors, including 6 new members. We invested in Councillor training during the autumn, provided through the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils.

Significant projects and events during the year:

- **Parish Festival** Cllr Wheeler led delivery of a very successful Parish Festival on 28th June 2015, recording an estimated footfall of over 700 people. This was financially supported by grant from Cllr Marc Bayliss (County Council) and the Parish Council. Planning is now well developed for the 2016 festival.
- **Newslink** The editor (Sarah Lloyd-Rumens) and long standing advertising manager (Alan Jarman) for Newslink (the parish magazine) stepped down during the year. I am pleased to say that Glenn Walker has now taken over editing and producing the magazine (from October 2015), and Anna Donaldson is set to provide advertising management (from May 2016). I wish to recognise the valuable contributions made by Sarah and Alan over many years to the development of Newslink as a high quality and much valued local publication.
- **Community Warden** The Parish Council renewed our agreement with Worcester City Council whereby the parish provides additional funding to the City for an enhanced service. We increased our contribution to £8k to maintain the same level of service as previously. Tracy Sutton took over from Alex Booth as the community engagement officer in St Peters (Alex took over the lead in Warndon and remains part of the team in St Peters). Cllr Alan Tidy took over portfolio responsibility, which includes regular engagement with the City Council and Warden team. Monthly reports are provided by the warden team and published on the Parish Council web site.
- **Friends of St Peters Parks** This is a community group that provides a means for the community to engage with setting priorities for the parks and green spaces in St Peters, and volunteering effort. Cllr Alan Tidy took over as chairman (June 2015) and Tracy Sutton (City Council Community Engagement Officer) works very closely with the group. The Parish Council treats this as an advisory group, operating through Cllr Tidy, that helps to set priorities for spending Parish funds on enhancing the green environment. The Parish Council has provided funds for a range of things, including park signs, replacement litter bin, wild flower seeds, fruit trees and bulbs.
- **Area 51** The Parish Council has responsibility for 'Area 51', a play area in Power Park. This is routinely inspected (fortnightly) by Worcester City Council. Inspections identified a number of 'low risk' concerns. Certain timber that had rotted prematurely was replaced free of charge by the original contractors. The Parish Council commissioned an independent inspection (January 2016). Cllr Tidy is overseeing a plan to address the further recommendations which were accepted by the council, and the work is being undertaken by the City Warden team as part of their regular duties.
- **Enhanced Lighting for Pedestrian Crossing** Following representation by residents regarding the night time visibility of the new Norton Road zebra crossing, the Parish Council provided funding to enhance the lighting. This was also supported financially by Cllr Marc Bayliss (Worcester County Council) and the works were undertaken by County Highways.
- **Community Facilities** The Parish Council (Cllr Alan Tucker) started a project to explore options for future long term provision of community facilities, including the potential for a community owned (rather than leased) village hall. St Peters Village Hall association (SPVHA) (a private company limited by guarantee and independent of the Parish Council) which holds the lease for the current village hall, and also owns the multi-use games area (MUGA) and adjacent land, approached the Parish Council on these matters. The Parish Council (April 2016) has appointed 3 representatives (Cllrs Tucker, Tidy and

Kemp) to form a working group with representative from SPVHA to explore options and develop recommendations.

- **St Peters Drive** The Parish Council successfully lobbied Worcestershire County Council Highways regarding the poor state of St Peters Drive in the vicinity of Tesco. The road was completely resurfaced during March 2016.
- **Southern Link Road Improvements** Significant roadworks are underway to dual the Southern Link road and enlarge the main roundabouts. The Ketch Roundabout scheme finished and the Norton Roundabout works have started. The Parish Council maintains close contact with the County Council Highways to help ensure residents concerns are heard and information is available to residents.
- **Planning** The Parish council is routinely consulted by local planning authorities on planning applications in the parish or close by. (Worcester City Council is the planning authority for the parish). The majority of applications are for residential improvements and rarely require provoke comment. One of the more contentious applications considered this year was by Lidl to make changes to the former Homebase site. The Parish Council expressed strong objections to the second loading bay proposed to be immediately adjacent to the rear gardens of residents living in Barbel Close (Worcester City Planning Committee voted in favour of the scheme including the loading bay).
- **South Worcestershire Development Plan** SWDP was formally adopted by the 3 Districts (Worcester City, Wychavon and Malvern Hills) in February 2016. The Parish Council has provided comments at various stages during the development of SWDP. Adoption of this plan is expected to trigger significant development adjacent to St Peters and this is expected to become a significant area of interest for the parish Council in coming years. Two immediate related topics of interest are the separate proposals to install a bridleway bridge across Crookbarrow Way to link St Peters to Norton by the Railway bridge (as part of the link road improvements), and a proposal by St Modwen to install a pedway bridge across Broomhall Way (as part of a residential development they are planning), to land in Power Park. The Parish Council continues to engage with the relevant parties and make representations.
- **Parish Clerk** The Parish Council is very well supported by our hard working clerk of long standing Bob Jenkins. Bob fulfills the role of **Proper Officer** and **Responsible Financial Officer** in accordance with our Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Bob also undertakes many duties that would be normally expected of a parish officer.
- **Assistant Clerk** Following a recruitment process during 2014-15, Alex Booth started as Assistant (Trainee) Parish Clerk on 5th June, reporting to the Parish Clerk (Bob Jenkins). This is a 3 year fixed term appointment and includes a commitment by Alex to undertake training to achieve the CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) qualification. This appointment both reflects the considerable effort required behind the scenes to ensure the Parish Council functions properly and legally, and can deal with requests from residents. The Parish Council is also very pleased to be able to provide a training and development opportunity for potential future clerk.
- **CALC** 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.
- **Data Protection** The Parish Council is registered with Information Commissioners Office (ICO) in accordance with obligations for Data Protection.
- **Foundation Status** The Parish Council has applied for Foundation Status, a nationally recognised quality mark for parish councils.
- **Budget & Precept** The Parish Council budgets carefully and lives within its means. External costs continue to rise, in particular the contribution sought by Worcester City Council for the Parish Warden enhanced service. (FY16-17 marks the end of a formula previously agreed and the City Council plans

to out-source certain services during 2016 that will affect the enhance service provided to the parish. This means there is some budget uncertainty for future years.) In this period we have set a budget for FY16-17, maintaining a precept rise of 2% (Band D equivalent, 34 pence for each charge payer over the year). We are partly funding the 3 year fixed term assistant clerk post from reserves (and an explicit provision shows in our budget), which is why our expenditure exceeds our precept income. We also reallocated £5k from the provision for community facilities to make new provision for Area 51 maintenance and repairs in the light of inspection reports. The final outturn for FY15-16 will not be known until after the final accounts are prepared and audited (during June/July 2016).

Acknowledgements

Chairman

On behalf of the Parish Council and residents I wish to appreciate the regular volunteer effort of David Egerton & Duckworth Trust collecting litter in the parish. This makes a significant contribution to the upkeep and pleasant appearance of St Peters.

The Parish Council appreciates the time and effort of the following who support the community and have attended our meetings to provide us with updates:

- The local Police Team (PC Ed Shotton, PCSO Sarah Hughes)
- Tesco Community representatives (Jo Jenkins, Joanne Pitt)
- The 'Poo Watch' team presentation working to address the anti-social problem of dog waste

Portfolio Holder Reports

CLlr Brenda Wheeler (Festival, Newslink)

This was an interesting year for both Newslink and the Parish Festival.

Around June our Newslink Advertising Manager, Alan, decided it was time to retire, so Sarah offered to take on the job alongside her job as Editor. However, her husband's business also expanded rapidly and so she, too, decided to pass on the responsibility of Editor. It took a few months to find her replacement, but finally a new Editor, Glenn, was found and he is now on his third edition. Meanwhile, we were also looking for a new Advertising Manager, and finally we found Anna, who will be in place for the June edition.

Therefore, we need to express our great thanks to Alan and Sarah for their excellent custodianship of Newslink for the Parish to date, and wish Glenn and Anna best wishes for the future.

Meanwhile it was decided to hold a Parish Festival again in 2015, mainly free to visitors, and independent of the Worcester Festival. The Parish Council gave a grant and also County Councillor Marc Bayliss contributed, and we went ahead. With the help of Michelle and Alex, our Parish Wardens from the City, we sourced entertainers, stall holders, bouncy castles, games and even included a dog show. Although the day started drizzly, the sun came out by the time the Festival started. Feedback indicated that everyone enjoyed themselves and, thanks to sponsorship and donations from visitors, it meant we have money to put towards another Festival in 2016!

CLlr Ross Walker (Local, Police Liaison and PACT, Highways)

PACT: Regular Parish Council representation at the bi-monthly PACT meeting where achievements have included highlighting residents concerns regarding a rough sleeper, monitoring and reducing anti-social behaviour (including excess noise, littering and potential drug use) at the MUGA next to the Baptist Church during the summer holiday, and displaying signage reminding residents to lock their cars following a small spate of vehicle crime in the parish.

Highways: The Parish Council provided a letter to Worcestershire County Highways supporting a bid for funding to replace the Carrington Bridge and dual track the A4440 bypass between the Ketch and Powick roundabouts. The Parish Council has written to Worcestershire County Highways requesting in strong terms that there will be a barrier to protect the footpath and cycle way adjacent to the new dual carriageway from traffic.

Parish Vital Statistics

The data in the following table is compiled from several sources available online (i) 2011 Census; (ii) Worcester City Council; (iii) Parish Council budget; (iv) Parish Council Annual Accounting Statement (audited).

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Population (2011 census)	5,851		
Total dwellings (2011 census)	4,865		
Electorate (number of registered electors)	4,495	4,489	4,510
Tax Base ('Band D equivalent' council tax payers)	2,150	2,154	2,167
Total Precept Received	£34,783	£35,507	£36,450
City Council Grant (Re Council Tax Housing Benefit)	£1,168	£993	£993
Other Income (Annual Accounting Statement)	£8,900	tbd ¹	
Precept paid by Band D	£16.18	£16.48	£16.82
Annual budget	£35,951	£44,214	£43,751
Total Balances & Reserves at Year end	£110,668	tbd ²	

Council Meetings and Attendance 2015-16

Parish Council		May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec ³	Jan	Feb	Apr
Average 6.6	Cllr	6	8	5	8	7	5	6	7	8	6
Chairman	Paul Thorlby	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	√	√
Vice-Chair	Pam Clayton	√	√	A	√	√	A	A	√	√	A
	Mike Johnson	A	√ ⁴								
	John Kemp				C	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Greg Rowe	C	-	A	√	√	A	-	-	√	A
	Alan Tidy	C	√	√	√	A	√	√	A	√	√
	Alan Tucker		C	A	√	√	A	√	√	√	√
	Ross Walker	C	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√
	Brenda Wheeler	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Terry Widdows		C	√	A	√	A	-	√	√	A
<i>Attending</i>											
City	Roger Knight	A	√	√	√	√	-	A	√	√	A
City	Mike Johnson	A	√	√	√	-	-	-	A	A	√
County	Marc Bayliss	A	A	√	A	√	-	√	A	A	A

- C Co-opted at this meeting
A Apologies recorded in Minutes
√ Present

¹ Figures not available until 2015-16 accounts are finalised and audited.

² Figures not available until 2015-16 accounts are finalised and audited.

³ 'December 2015' meeting held 4th January 2016 to avoid Christmas-New Year holiday Period

⁴ Cllr Johnson resigned from the Parish Council after the June meeting