

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT MAY 2024

Clerk

We have had quite a challenging year since Wendy, our clerk of sixteen years, had to retire through ill health. Having worked for many years in local government the talents she brought to the Parish Council were extensive. However, after leaving she kindly offered to assist in any way she could and many times I have contacted her to help resolve one problem or another. We have now been fortunate to employ Shane as our clerk, he is local and is very keen that the Parish Council should carry on in its quest to ensure that Higher Hurdsfield is a pleasant place to live.

Retiring Councillors

During the year two councillors sadly had to resign, Tim Simpson who had been a stalwart on the council for several years had to leave because of work commitments and Maureen Street, who was our oldest serving councillor and had served for nearly fifty years felt that it was time to hand over to a new generation. They were thanked for the valued contribution that both had made to the Council over the years.

Co-opting New Councillor

One of the vacancies has been filled very quickly by Amber Owens, she has served on the council previously and was keen to come back as she is passionate about the area and wants to help preserve the fabric of the village, and very welcome she is too.

George and Dragon

The George and Dragon continues to be a thorn in everyone's side. The owners have ignored a court order to reinstate the fabric of the building and have also missed a court appearance so the case has now been sent to crown court for a hearing which is due on July 1st. Until we know the outcome of the court hearing there is nothing we can do to try and improve the visual impact of the site.

Proposed Telecommunications Installation

The proposed planning application for a telecommunications mast sited on Kerridge ridge has been denied for a second time. The chair of Cheshire East planning stated that as there was already a mast in one of the quarries on Kerridge and as the owners of the land had no objections to it, she couldn't understand why modifications couldn't be made to bring that one up to date rather than have to erect a new one which would scar the ridge line. Rainow

Parish Council and ourselves have been fighting this planning application from the beginning.

Defibrillator

Although no use has been made of the defibrillator, thank goodness, we continue to maintain it just in case. We have the phone box cleaned every three months and have to replace the battery and pads at intervals.

Milestone

Last year the milestone, which we had paid £500 to have refurbished and painted, was defaced by an internet company using it as an advertising hoarding. Although we found who was responsible for the vandalism, we were unable to secure any recompense, luckily Mr Warrington who did the original refurbishment was so disgusted at his handiwork being defaced that he repainted it at his own expense.

Cliff Lane

Cliff Lane continues to give us a sizeable headache. The road surface is terribly potholed and just generally disintegrating primarily because of the amount of water running freely over the carriageway. The water should be culverted across the road towards the top of the lane and then directed down a gutter at the side of the carriageway and thence into the gullies towards the bottom. However the culvert is completely blocked, the gutter is filled in with debris and overgrown and as for the gullies, they are blocked and the road surface is so cut up around them that the water just flows round them and carries on down to Rainow Road. We have had little to no cooperation from CEC in effecting repairs and the situation is now so bad that it is deemed to be a major engineering job to repair the situation, which of course Cheshire East just can't afford.

Well Lane

Although the road surface in Well Lane is also abysmal, the main problem that we are encountering is that Sat Navs are suggesting that Well Lane is a short cut through to Whaley Bridge and as a consequence we have forty foot long 38 ton articulated wagons trying to negotiate it. As this is obviously impossible the net result is that people's property is being damaged and the wagons are getting stuck required their extrication by a third party.

One of the suggestion to try to eliminate this problem is to have signage installed informing drivers that Well Lane is not suitable for HGVs. Ken Edwards, our Bollington Town representative and several residents have

written to Cheshire East asking for a solution to be found and the residents have also written to Mr Rutley, our MP, who has subsequently asked Cheshire East to look into the problem. Up to now nothing has been resolved.

Ward Boundary

Cheshire East are currently looking at evening out the number of residents per ward councillor and along with other ward boundary changes it has been proposed by that Higher Hurdsfield should be integrated into the Hurdsfield ward. We however are none too pleased with this proposal as we see ourselves more as a rural community than an urban one and we feel that being in the Bollington ward suits our needs better than a Macclesfield ward could. The Parish Council have, therefore, submitted these views in a survey that CEC put out on the subject but as yet we have heard nothing as to the outcome of the survey.

ANPR Camera

Some weeks ago the police approached two residents on Rainow Road asking them if they would have any objections to an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) camera being fitted to a nearby lamp standard. Neither resident had objections and the camera is now fitted and in operation. These are not speed cameras but read every registration plate as the vehicle passes by and compares it with known vehicles that are of interest to the police that are coming in and going out of the town. Although this is not a speed camera it is hoped that the very sight of it may have the effect of slowing people down.

Speed camera

We have been looking at the cost of installing a speed camera on Rainow Road since the original one was demolished by a vehicle, but the cost, not only of the device itself but also the ongoing charges and maintenance fees are far too high for us to sustain. We have even been offered one at no charge but again the ongoing fees are prohibitive so we have had to decline the offer.

Crime Report

Our local PCSO continues to patrol the village, one of the main causes of complaint that he has to deal with is that of badly parked vehicles particularly round the entrance to Roewood lane where the road is very narrow. Speeding on Rainow Road is the other main concern and he regularly employs the speed camera at varying locations.

Councillors

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Parish Council for their dedication and sheer hard work during the year. Since our clerk left we have been rudderless and it has fallen on the members of the council to try and make sense of all the intricacies involved in the clerking duties. From the taking of the minutes and the creation of a workable contract for the incoming clerk, it has been a fraught time. I would like to single out Neil in particular for special thanks as he has had the most onerous of tasks in trying to understand and assemble the necessary documentation for the annual audit. We have now come through this trying time and hopefully we are now in a position where we can continue serving the residents of the village