

Davenham Parish Council
Chairman's Annual Report 2012 - 2013
Tuesday 28 May 2013

A busy year for Davenham Parish Council...

Planning has been a main theme this year for the Parish Council covering Davenham and Whatcroft. With recent central Government legislation acting to favour developers there has been a number of high profile applications. The Parish Council vigorously puts forward their view on planning matters to influence the approval, or decline, of decisions that Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) make on each application. We continue to ask all residents to individually register their views with CWAC as the Parish Council is one voice and wider public opinion does support other feedback received. The main local planning decision in the year has been the approval of 36 houses to be built on land off Green Lane, which disappointed the Council because, amongst many other things, being a green field site it reduces the green barrier around our village which we see as critical to maintain our village character. We have also opposed the application for more than one hundred house development in Moulton, on the basis that both these schemes will put significant additional pressure on the local roads and facilities.

Traffic in the village continues to be a point of much debate. After much public feedback the CWAC Highways Agency has put double yellow lines around the entrance to Fulton Grove and onto London Road. The aim was to improve safety by improving visibility at the junction whilst balancing the needs of visitors and local residents with issues of congestion. The congestion will continue to be monitored and further improvements to village congestion, parking and safety will be suggested by the Parish Council to CWAC Highways.

The Council has begun work on a Davenham Neighbourhood Plan. A well attended meeting was held in March 2013 where 28 local residents told us what they liked about the village and where they felt it could be improved. The topics covered included: green spaces and wildlife; parking and transport; planning, building and heritage; leisure, amenities and young people; and business and commerce. This is on-going work that requires formal public consultation and must be coordinated with the CWAC Plan, which they are developing.

Laburnum Road playing field has been really well used following the completion of the Adventure Playground early in 2012. This year extensive tree planting has been located either side of the path at the playground end. When mature this will form a short woodland walk and will gradually begin to benefit wildlife. Over the winter months a number of benches have been located around the pathway to allow visitors to relax and enjoy the area. There has also been 2 picnic tables installed which we hope will be useful – assuming we get some decent weather sometime this year!

Butchers Stile continues to provide popular football and cricket amenities for the Village. This support for youth community activities is an important priority for the Council.

The improved Davenham Parish Council website (www.davenhampc.org.uk) has received great feedback, as did the newsletter we distributed to houses in the village last summer.

The Councillors, who are volunteers, and the part time clerk have had an unprecedented administrative burden from repeated contact about small number of concerns from one individual. This has diverted energy from the village enhancing activities of the Council and incurred some legal costs we are disappointed at having to spend. Hopefully going forward the constructive community activities once again will take priority.

Work to maintain the Parish Council seats in the village has begun with new seats in the village garden and planned maintenance work on others. We have a formal system of safety monitoring and maintenance of play equipment in place for both Laburnham Road and Butchers Stile. Only minor repair work has been required in the year.

DPC agreed to continue part funding the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), Kat Stock, who you will see round the village. Crime activities overall have continued to fall since 2010, although the PCSO has in 2012 – 2013 attended at 172 incidents, submitted 51 intelligence reports, been involved in 5 arrests and issued a number of fixed penalty tickets in relation to parking. In addition the PCSO is actively involved in reassurance and crime prevention, such as visiting local schools and clubs (e.g. cricket, brownies and cubs). Building on the success of the last few years the Christmas tree lighting event was supported by more local people than ever on 6 December 2012. We were treated to choir and music from local children and mince pies and mulled wine from the Oddfellows Arms. Despite the weather, the community spirit was great to see.

I would like to end by thanking all the Councillors and the Clerk for their support and time spent trying to ensure Davenham and Whatcroft remain popular places to live and the many community facilities continue to add real value for young and old. I personally offer my best wishes to Helen Armstrong as she takes over the Chairmanship.

Councillor Tony Sellers
Chairman 2012 / 2013
May 2013