

Davenham Parish Council
Chairman's Annual Report 2013 - 2014
Monday 19 May 2014

A busy year and some major changes for the Parish Council in the last 12 months.

The Parish Council has made significant progress on a number of fronts over the last year, amid a substantial increase in workload. We're always grateful for any external support we receive from members of the local community to help us in our role as volunteers, and would ask this involvement continues to grow as we look to deliver The Neighbourhood Plan during 2014.

As a Council the past year has seen some changes in personnel. Unfortunately the elected Chair, Helen Armstrong, felt she could no longer continue serving the Council during the year and resigned in January 2014. I would like to express my thanks to former Councillor Armstrong for her work on the Council and her time as Chair, where she supported the acceleration of The Neighbourhood Plan process, recruited new Councillors and personally managed a large volume of administrative work requested by one member of the community. We also saw the resignation of former Chair Tony Sellers who had to leave us due to increased work commitments. Tony's professionalism and experience were a loss to the Council and we thank him for all he delivered over the previous few years.

On a more positive note, these resignations created some vacancies and it has been good to refresh the Council and welcome three new people as Councillors. I'm grateful for their enthusiasm, new perspective and how quickly the new Councillors have been able to get involved to support and own specific areas of responsibility. Therefore, as we enter this new year, we only have one vacancy outstanding which we hope to fill shortly. It will be good to have a full team in place and hopefully achieve some stability in the Council members for the final 12 months of this term.

Moving onto village matters, planning and the threat of large scale new developments within the Parish remains the major issue we face as a community. As a Parish Council we have dedicated a lot of time and energy in responding to existing planning applications while also preparing The Neighbourhood Plan. The recent public meeting took us all by surprise and we were encouraged to have over 200 villagers attending. Hopefully this forum helped explain where we are in the process and the work that is being undertaken by the Council members on behalf of the village. While a lot of background work and a draft plan is already underway The Neighbourhood Plan will be one of the most significant tasks undertaken and delivered by the Parish Council and we hope the whole community can support our efforts. We will continue to update the Parish notice board, the website and leaflet the village with updates, news and for requests feedback as necessary while we prepare this important document.

On top of this specific, new area of work we continue to manage the village assets week in week out such as the Village Garden, Laburnum Road playing field and Butchers stile. The residents of Laburnum Road collectively paid for this private road to be re-surfaced and the Parish Council contributed it's agreed share as an owner of a fascia within the road. The trustees of The Welcome Home Fund have recently asked The Parish Council to draw up plans to erect Memorial Gates at the entrance to the hard standing area and, one complete, this will hopefully further add to this attractive village facility. The work at Laburnum Road continues as we maintain the play equipment, replace worn areas of the path and evaluate

and deliver the final elements in the original design. It is great to hear that the younger members of DJFC are now able to regularly use the field as a football pitch for training.

As Laburnum road continues to evolve we have started to turn our attention to Butchers Stile. The cricket club has recently secured funding to improve and modernise the clubhouse which should start at the end of this cricket season (around September / October 2014). The football pitch at Butchers Stile is now being used by The Bulls Head football team as well as DJFC, weather permitting. At this specific point in time we are collating the feedback on the survey that was posted to all households in the village so we will look at the responses from the community before we draw up any new plans for the field.

Traffic flow and parking continue to be an issue in the village but we hope the proposed 20mph zone in the village centre will be implemented soon to make it safer for all in the future and ease congestion.

In terms of village events it was disappointing that the weather turned against us for switching on of the Christmas Tree lights and members of the school band past and present we're not able to attend, but a good event was still had by those families who could bear the rain. Thank you again to The Oddfellows Arms for providing refreshments and also to The Bulls Head pub who co-ordinated their light switch on to be at the same time this year. Our thanks are also extended to the Village Gardener and specific members of the Parish Council who dress the tree, co-ordinate the electrics and remove the tree in January.

Although Davenham remains a safe place to live there have been some residential burglaries and drive-off petrol thefts from the garage during the year. As a Parish Council we continue to part-fund a PCSO and we have also had a change in personnel in this role in recent months. Kat Sock left us in January 2014 to work in a more challenging area so we welcome PCSO Kev McShane into our community.

At this time I would like to formally thank our Parish Council Clerk for her work throughout the year. Much of this work is done 'behind the scenes' through the preparation of minutes, answering correspondence and following up on the large volume of questions we receive. A proportion of this work requires the Clerk to support meetings in the evening and I know we could not work effectively as a Council without her.

To conclude I would like to express my thanks to all the Councillors who have given their time and effort on behalf of the village over the past year to make Davenham such a vibrant and enjoyable place to live.

Councillor Andy Duff
Vice Chairman 2013 / 2014
19 May 2014