

Chair Report 2018-19

The Parish Council saw some changes at the beginning of the year. We were sorry to receive the resignation of Cllr Cooper due to family commitments and found ourselves with two vacancies following the sad passing of Cllr Wood last year. However, thanks to Davenham's thriving community spirit, we were delighted to have a keen expression of interest from residents willing to volunteer their time on the Parish Council. As a result, Cllr Spare and Cllr Sinfield were voted on and have been a welcome addition to the Council.

It is pleasing to report that this year has seen a reprieve from the recent spate of large planning development applications that Davenham has been subjected to in recent years. That said, the building works continue on the Fountain Lane development resulting, on occasions, in disruption and anxiety for nearby residents. The Parish Council, with the support of Cheshire West and Chester ward councillor, Helen Weltman, has responded to these concerns and supported local residents so far as possible.

Development has also progressed and is near completion on Church Street. The Parish Council has again raised concerns with Cheshire West and Chester regarding issues including damage to established trees and unsatisfactory finish of the frontage. Particular thanks to Cllr Watson for his attention to detail and communication with Cheshire West on such planning matters.

Moving onto non-development related issues, the venture to find a suitable location for a Community Hub has continued with fervour this year. Special thanks goes to Cllr Ryder and Cllr Hudson alongside local residents Martin Mewies and Darren Curry for their continued work in establishing a business plan and carrying out an appraisal of the potential options for a site. Progress has been made to consider the potential of the old church hall site with the Parish Council funding a feasibility study, whilst also exploring other options including potential opportunities with the Royal British Legion. I am sure the coming 12 months will see more progress on this project.

The Parish Council commissioned a professional report to establish a phased approach to improving the Butchers Stile playing field. Quotes have been obtained to carry out phase 1, the drainage of the field, making it more usable as a community space and football pitch. A focus group of the Parish Council has been set up to then develop the ideas for improved play equipment, playing field and wider community space ensuring, where possible, the benefit of available funds including statutory s106 monies. Hopefully this will come into fruition over the coming year seeing an improved use of this community asset for all residents.

The speed of traffic in the village continues to be problematic despite the newly erected speed signs and lights. The PCSO has provided speed testing to deter motorists from driving at excess speeds. The Parish Council has considered moving the current speed lights to raise awareness of the 20mph speed limit but unfortunately high costs meant this was not deemed value for money.

Following the closure of the old post office on London Road and a relocation to the Spar last year, a number of residents have raised complaints as to a lack of a post box in the centre of the village. Cllr Spare instructed the assistance of MP Antoinette Sandbach in the plight to reinstate a post box and was successful in the response. The Parish Council has been informed that a post box will be in situ in the near future so we watch this space.

September saw the grand opening of the Memorial Gates at Laburnum Road playing field. The gates were part funded by the Welcome Home Trust and it was fantastic to see representatives of the

trust and so many of the local community attending this event. The gates are a wonderful asset to the village and act as a fitting memorial of those who lost their lives in service in all times of conflict.

The Parish Council has registered Butcher's Stile field with Fields in Trust status to protect it as a recreational area for generations to come and is in final stages, working with Davenham Cricket Club, to register the cricket land with the same protection.

I would like to thank all of the Parish Councillors for volunteering their time with hard work and commitment to responding to the needs our village and residents. Best of luck to Cllr Watson as he embarks on his role as ward councillor alongside that of parish councillor. We look forward to receiving his support along with that consistently provided by ward councillor Helen Weltman. Thanks also to our hard working and dedicated clerk, Elaine, for her proactive approach and support. Davenham has a vibrant community and is an attractive place to live, undoubtedly contributed to by the work of the Parish Council.

It has been a privilege to act as Chair of the Parish Council for the last twelve months and, as I pass on the honour to the Vice Chair, Cllr Hudson, I thank you all for your support and dedication and wish Cllr Hudson good luck for a positive year ahead.

Cllr Cath Salt