

DAWLEY HAMLETS PARISH COUNCIL

Chair's Annual Report - April 2022

Overview

During the past year the Parish Council has continued to do its best to support individual residents and local organisations through the tough times we have been experiencing. We ourselves have not escaped sad events. We lost our good friend and colleague Cllr Beryl Onions to Covid over a year ago and a memorial picture dedicated to her memory is now on display at Horsehay Village Hall. It was donated by a local artist and celebrates Cllr. Onion's love of gardening and her long association with the Horsehay Horticultural Society

There have been three by-elections during the course of the year namely:

- Dawley Hamlets Ward - Cllr Greenaway replaced Cllr Onions
- Aqueduct Ward - Cllr Deakin replaced Cllr Pinter who resigned in July 2020 (election delayed due to Covid)
- Aqueduct Ward - Cllr Preece replaced Cllr Cassar who resigned in July 2021

The Precept (the amount the Parish Council raises from Council Tax) has remained at £77,500 for the last 6 years (since 2016/17).

This year's Parish Precept element of the Council Tax bill shows a reduction of 4.0% from last year. This is due to the growth in the tax base (number of households) across which the Precept is spread. The tax base has grown from 2,434 to 2,535

Partnerships

We are a small Parish Council and our partnerships with the Borough Council and Great Dawley Town Council enable us to do much more than we could deliver on our own

Thus, we have joined the Borough's 'Community Action Team' initiative which gives us eyes and ears on the ground to deal with and report neighbourhood issues as they arise whether that be landscaping, footpaths, roads, fly tipping or anti-social behaviour. We understand how much some of these issues affect people's day-to-day lives and we do what we can to get a reaction for our residents. Also, with the Borough we are a target area for the 'Safer and Stronger Communities' scheme which brings with it some funding for projects and initiatives to improve security and general well-being in our Parish. As well as CCTV cameras, we expect to contribute to a Youth Project and to other ideas to develop services and places within the Parish

Another joint programme with the Borough which is now coming to fruition is the improvement and refurbishment of the playgrounds at Spring Village and Aqueduct with more still to come particularly at Spring Village with the involvement of residents

Road schemes to calm traffic and improve safety are always near the top of people's agenda and we have contributed to a Borough scheme on Station Road/Bridge Road and, with officers, we are now looking at the wider Horsehay area for measures that can be taken. This is not easy! One person's solution is often another person's bad option

and financial constraints and the weight of traffic caused by new developments are key factors. But it is important to try to find a best solution

Finally on partnerships with the Borough we have our own small landscaping contracts (including one at the Local Nature Reserve) which we are given help with arranging. Our relationship with the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is itself an important part of our work. We initiated, and have helped to fund, the LNR. It is now independent but supported by two of our Councillors in particular who report regularly on events and progress with its development

There are also two schemes which we have funded in partnership with Great Dawley Town Council. One is the Holiday Activities and Eatwell Club for children which, in these really difficult times, is so important for families. The other initiative is the Gardening Project for older people and those with a disability - this helps a number of our residents with basic maintenance they would not otherwise be able to do themselves or afford

Other Parish Initiatives

Last Christmas for the first time we provided Xmas Trees at suitable locations in Horsehay, Little Dawley and Aqueduct. We were delighted by the positive response we received from local people who spoke of how this was a cheering and welcome move. It took a lot of work to organise but our conclusion was that it was definitely worth it and we intend to repeat the process in future years - it should be easier next time as the infrastructure is now in place and we have lessons learned!

In the last year we have also initiated 'Little Libraries' where local people can leave and exchange books

Our twice-yearly newsletter is still going strong despite difficulties with distribution (not unique to us) and we think our Clerk makes a real good job of this

Finally, I am delighted to say that we are now restarting our very popular events for older people beginning with a Platinum Jubilee Celebration in June

Grants

An important aspect of our function has always been to grant aid local organisations. This is the list of those we have helped in the last 12 months which shows a rich diversity:

Age UK Shropshire Return to Face-to-Face Services

Aqueduct Primary School Community defibrillator

Britannia Aqueduct History Society

East Shropshire Talking Newspaper

Friends of the Dawley Hamlets LNR Pond Dipping Nets

Lightmoor Village Primary School (Friendship Bench)

Platinum Jubilee Grant - Aqueduct Primary School Jubilee Plaque

Platinum Jubilee Grant - FoHP&E Jubilee Scarecrow Fest

Platinum Jubilee Grant - Friends of the Dawley Hamlets LNR Jubilee Event
 Platinum Jubilee Grant - Telford Steam Railway Jubilee Services
 Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council - Mobile Santa Grant
 Aqueduct Primary School - Author Visit (Xmas treat as there was no Panto)

Representation on Outside Bodies

We make sure we make a contribution to other organisations in the Parish and those relevant to our work as follows:

Outside Body	Representative(s)
Bus User Group	Cllr. Cooke
Climate Change Working Group	Cllr. Cooke
Friends of Dawley Hamlets LNR	Cllrs. Barnes & Wennington
Friends of Horsehay Pool	Cllr. Hopkins
Lightmoor Steering Group	Cllr. Cooke
Lightmoor Village Management Committee	Cllr. Hopkins
Local Access Forum (LAF)	Cllr. Hopkins
Mental Health Champion	Cllr. Cooke
Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) & Association of Local Councils (NALC)	Cllr. Burford (Chair)
Shropshire Association of Local Clerks (SALC) Clerks Network	Clerk
Snow Liaison Officer	Clerk
Wrekin Area Committee (WAC) - up to two members have voting rights at a meeting	Cllrs Barnes & Mehta