

Dawley Hamlets Parish Council

Annual Report 2020/21

It goes without saying that this has been a difficult and atypical year for the Parish Council. The consequences of the pandemic were felt immediately with the need to meet virtually and, soon after, with the enforced cancellation of our Senior Citizens summer event. We recognised early on that we had to adapt to find different ways of supporting our residents and our online communications took on a new importance alongside the eventual resumption of our newsletter once this was permitted. Other steps included

- continuing to support the Breakfast Club organised by Great Dawley Town Council recognising the worsened financial situation of many of our families and the need to combat genuine hunger amongst some children
- distributing a total of over £10,000 in grants to organisations and projects that have been foremost in providing important services to local people during the pandemic including for example Citizens Advice, foodbanks, counselling/mental health organisations and the provision of Kindles through a scheme run by the Borough Council
- sponsoring a calendar created by Aqueduct Primary School and distributed to the senior citizens who normally attend our bi-annual events as well as all children at the school
- setting up a book library next to the Little Dawley War Memorial

The most upsetting aspect of the pandemic for us as a Parish Council came in January of this year when we lost one of our most stalwart Councillors to the illness. Beryl Onions was a well-liked and respected person who worked hard for Horsehay. She is already sorely missed both personally and for her contribution to the life of the community

On other work and achievements during the past year we have:

- continued to work with Great Dawley to provide a gardening service for residents who would otherwise struggle to do necessary maintenance
- recently bought in to a 3-year agreement with the Borough Council to provide additional enforcement coverage for the Parish which will mean a better response to incidents of fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and other concerns in the local community
- continued our contracts with the Borough Council's grounds maintenance provider to deliver enhancements to aspects of the normal contract
- supported and given financial assistance to the Dawley Hamlets Local Nature Reserve which we helped to form and which, to our great delight, has now received its official designation
- continued to provide our normal grants to local and community organisations

An important aspect of our work as Councillors is to represent the Parish on other bodies and organisations and to this end we have:

- nominated a councillor to act as a 'mental health champion'
- nominated two councillors to the Climate Change Working Group
- attended meetings of the Bus User Group, Friends of the Local Nature Reserve, Friends of Horsehay Pool, Lightmoor Steering Group, Lightmoor Village Management Committee, Local Access Forum and Wrekin Area Committee

The general day-to-day work of Councillors has included reporting the need for repairs and ensuring action on such things as footpaths, rights of way, war memorial, church lychgate, green areas, car parking, fly tipping, play areas and their equipment etc.

In addition, we have commented on planning applications and taken an active role in public consultations on traffic schemes and on the future of Horsehay Pool and its surrounds for which we have assigned funding and considered proposals which we have helped to draw up

Finally, it is worth saying that for a small Parish Council we pride ourselves in punching above our weight. Our precept (the money we raise from Council tax) is set at £75,500 for 2021/22 and this has been unchanged for 5 years. We only have one employee, a qualified clerk, who works hard to administer and help oversee our activities but we nevertheless manage to engage and deliver on a wide range of projects and issues. That remains our ambition for the forthcoming year

Andy Burford
Chair