

## HATHERTON AND WALGHERTON PARISHES ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 28th MAY 2024

**The Chairman welcomes members of the public attending and advises that immediately following the Chairman's Annual Statement, members of the public may raise any queries or comments either in relation the Annual Statement or any other matter.**

### Annual Statement

The Parish Year just ended was another very busy year for the Parish Council, excellently supported by our very able Clerk and Proper Officer Abbi. Lest we forget, one of her many roles is to keep us inline and so that the council and its Chairman doesn't stray too far off course.

We are a fully signed up council of 10 volunteers and last November we were happy to welcome along Gerlad Laxton to top up the numbers of our hard working Park Lane Possee.

### Neighbourhood Plan

The plan has proved worthy and supportive for our Parish since its inception, some work has been going on, with much more to come for an update which will take place this next Council year.

### Planning

This year your Parish Council has spent considerable time and effort considering 14 planning applications. The timing of several of them were somewhat inconsiderate and had to be looked at and commented on, on specified dates between our normal Parish Council meeting, so thanks to Cllr Bennion for allowing us to host the necessary Planning Committee meetings at Dagfields.

### Highways

Potholes continue to be the scourge of our road network. We need to keep reporting them on Fix my Street. Any pothole more than 4cm deep on the carriageway needs to be reported.

Crewe Road has been the centre of attention this year as Cheshire East were conducting a safety review asking residents and council for their views and experiences. There was an excellent response from the parish but to no avail, the cash strapped Highways team have used the money elsewhere. Meanwhile the road remains in a poor and dangerous condition. HGVs using the road continue deepening the potholes by demolishing strategically placed protective cones to protect road users.

Other long term highways issues have been escalated by the council and we continue to push for road safety improvements to the Parish.

Flood prevention work has been completed this year, on Bridgemere Lane, Audlem Road and Hunsterson Road end. Mostly with successful outcomes to date!!

### HS2

From May 2023 all work near our parish ceased with the cessation of this leg of the project. Much of the mitigation work completed by the contractors appears to have been

substandard with ponds not holding water and new hedgerows poorly planted. Should it re-commence, these issues will be reported.

### Finance

Last year our internal auditors were less than helpful, so a switch to a new internal auditor this year has proved very popular with our clerk. The accounts and internal controls of the Parish Council have been examined by the Auditors and found to be better than satisfactory. We have received small amounts of Community Infrastructure Levy money from Cheshire East which is being well spent on village improvements, more about that later. The Council's Balance sheet and Receipts and Payments report are available for inspection upon request.

Your Parish Council has this year given donations to

- Audlem and District Community Action a service for the more vulnerable community members.
- North West Air Ambulance, a further service which provides urgent medical response.

### Health

Local health initiatives continue to be advertised via our noticeboards. Regarding the support for older people in the community local charity ADCA has just been successful in obtaining more funds from the National Lottery, ourselves and Audlem Charity Shop and has enabled activities to be started for ADCA.

The Friday Coffee Afternoon here at Hankelow 2-4pm continues to be supported by the Parish Council, we do the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month.

ADCA is always looking for more volunteers, including drivers, to work alongside ADCA staff in running community health groups. This has been in service ferrying Hatherton and Walgherton residents to and from ADCA events.

### Improvements Group

Well, our new Chair of the Improvements Group Alli has been bounding around with lots of enthusiasm with the Group achieving great things. We've got new parish entry signs, extra thanks to Nigel, a planted up planter thanks to Katie, a new litter bin at the A51 junction.

We have a tidier parish with the roadsides emptied of litter several times over the winter months. Special thanks to those residents and spouses who go that one step further and clean up the verges around their properties and others who take a litter bag with them on their parish perambulations. We look forward to more improvements this year and we very much welcome any input from residents for potential improvements that we can handle.

Breaking news is that Hatherton Footpath No1 Bridge over the River Weaver is now passable and usable, but is still at risk from further flood damage due to the floating debris stuck under and around the bridge.

### Local Policing and Homewatch

Our local PSCO Nick Jervis gives us monthly updates and we are grateful for his speed checks and regular visits to our council meetings. Homewatch continues to operate in some areas of the parish giving early warning of anti- social activities, scams etc and our Clerk currently circulates relevant policing and Homewatch alerts as they arise to those residents in email contact.

### Communications

The Parish Council continue to respond to all relevant Cheshire East policy and strategy consultations, and encourage residents to do the same and make their voices heard.

The Parish Council has a new comms channel this year with the launch of a Whatsapp Council Group. Its website, facebook. newsletters and email notices continue to be popular and fly the flag for us. Thanks is given to worthy volunteers Cllr Dibben for web hosting, the latest version of the website is much easier to use, and Katie, Joy, Abbi and Janet on social media. Thanks to the Williams family a precedent has been set for a number of Council social gatherings Christmas and Easter, all well attended and fun.

### The Parish Council

The Annual General meeting gives me the opportunity to publicly thank all the Parish Council members for their time and contributions during the last twelve months and not least to our hard-working Clerk for those amazing cakes.

Chairman Chris Knibbs