



Broxton & District Parish Council Annual Report 2019 – 2020

Chairman's Report 2019-2020 Cllr. Steve Wild

At the time of writing this report we are still in lockdown. Our only consolation being is how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful area at this difficult time.

My time in office started in May 2019 as Rebecca Dakin stepped down from the role after three years as Chair, and numerous years as a Councillor. On behalf of the Council I'd like to thank her for all her hard work and dedication to the Parish Council and hope she may return one day in the future.

This was followed with the resignation of Richard Salmon who has been our trusted clerk for many years. Richard kept us on the straight and narrow and kept us all politically correct in our duties. He will be sadly missed but found us a first-class replacement in his daughter Ann, who is a pleasure to work with.

The start of my term started with little happening, but Council agreed to ask the public what they would like to see from the Parish Council. So, a survey was distributed for comment at the beginning of November 2019 and has resulted in some very valid comments.

We started 2020 with enthusiasm and had meetings planned with the National Trust, Highways and our local MP to discuss matters raised – then Covid-19 put a halt on all of it.

We have had resignations this year from two further councillors, David Walker and David Dawson. We thank them for their years of service and the time and effort they have put in.

The positions have been advertised within the parish and we welcome new blood and ideas onto the council.

For now, we wait until we can meet safely once again and pick up the pieces.

Stay Safe



Rich Webster (National Trust) with Chairman Steve Wild

Meeting Dates 2020-2021

Tuesday 26th May 2020

Monday 27th July 2020

Monday 28th September 2020

Monday 30th November 2020

Monday 25th January 2021

Monday 29th March 2021

Monday 24th May 2022 (Annual or First Meeting)

Meetings are normally held the last Monday of every other month from 7.30pm in Brown Knowl Chapel, however at the time of writing meetings are being held virtually.

Summary of Accounts 2019-2020

Opening Balance 2018-2019	6,333.00	Payments	
Receipts		Salaries	4433.00
Precept	4181.00	Admin, Postage & Room Hire	1137.00
CW&C Members Budget —	3125.00	Insurance	268.00
		Planning Training	206.00
Income from Training	420.00	Poppy Wreath	50.00
Rental	100.00	VAT	65.00
Total	£14159.00	Total	£6159.00
		Opening Balance 2020-2021	£8000.00

The Council's full accounts and audit information can be found at <http://www.broxtonanddistrictparishcouncil.co.uk>

Precept

Broxton & District Parish Council made the difficult decision to increase the Precept at their January meeting 2020.

The Precept which is the money raised by the Parish Council to cover its running costs and activities each year, is included in your council tax bill from Cheshire West & Chester Council. For a number of years, Broxton Parish Council has kept increases to the minimum by relying on reserves that have built up however these reserves will be significantly reduced by spending on proposed new speed limits and as the Council undertakes more projects which have been highlighted by the recent residents survey results.

As such the Council made the decision to increase the annual precept from £4,181 to £5,500 as such a Band D property charge will increase from £16.05 to £20.89, an increase of £4.84 for the year which equates to a 30% increase.

However, it should be noted that the total cost per Band D property for the year still only equates to less than £2 per month or 40p per week.



Attendance

Following the Parish Council elections in May 2019, the Council filled all 10 of its seats, since then the Council has held 5 meetings which have been attended by an average of 7 Councillors. The meetings have also been attended by CW&C Cllr Mike Jones and on one occasion by PC Ged Gigg.

All Council meetings are open to the public, although there may be confidential items discussed where members of the public are asked to leave. The public has the right to speak in Public Participation where any matter relating to the Parish Council can be raised.

Currently the on-going covid-19 pandemic means the Council is meeting virtually in line with new legislation introduced by the Government, members of the public are still welcome to attend but need to contact the Clerk in advance of the meetings to gain access to the meeting.

Planning

During the Council year, starting May 2019, the Parish Council has been notified by CW&C of 8 planning applications, 4 of which were for extensions or alterations to existing dwellings.

1 application was for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) to establish that work had commenced on an approved application within the required timescales at Green Bank Farm and has been approved by CW&C.

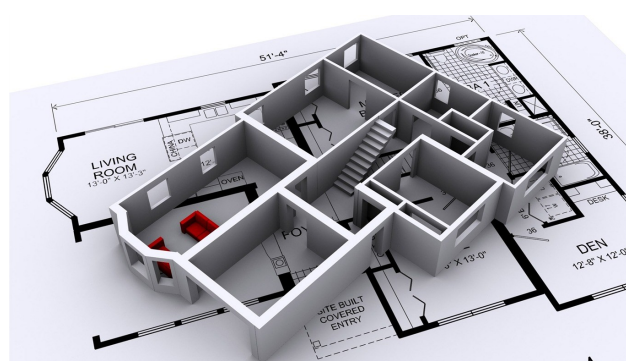
Another application was for the creation of a Ménage for personal, equestrian use which has been approved by CW&C.

Only 1 application was received for the creation of a new dwelling, which proposed creation of a 3-bed property through the conversion of an existing steel framed barn which at the time of writing has not been decided by CW&C.

The Council was also notified of an overhead lines application for overhead electricity line and rebuild scheme from Duckington to Chowley.

The Parish Council retains a register of all planning applications that are received are recorded in the Council's planning register including comments submitted and decisions made by CW&C, the register is published with the Council agenda.

Moving forward all applications that are received will be published on the Council's Facebook page and on next door.



Clerk Steps Down

Sadly this year has seen the Council Clerk Richard Salmon step down, Richard has served as Clerk to Broxton for over twenty years over two periods from the mid-90's and then after 2005 up until the present

Richards first became a Clerk to Mickle Trafford and District Parish Council in the early 1990s, having previously served as a Parish Councillor, and he continues to work for Threapwood Parish Council today.

Richard will be greatly missed by the Parish Council not only for his wide experience and knowledge formed from working with a number of different Councils in Cheshire but also for his dedication to the job as well as his patience and sense of humour.

Something you may not know about Richard is that he is a skilled horseman and if you attend any local point-to-point the chances are you will see his name engraved on many of the trophies, the attached image is from Holcombe (Bolton) 1966.

The Broxton and District Parish Council would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Councillors both past and present and residents to thank Richard for all his hard work over the years.



Holcombe Adjacent. R to L: Bandy Legs II (1st) (R. R. Salmon), Flip Top (4th) (W. J. Henderson).

Broxton & District Home watch Scheme

As you may know Home Watch is a national scheme which aims to help neighbours come together to create connected safer communities and to help in minimising crime .

The Parish Council were concerned that we should provide this service to our Parish and I have been looking after this for the last couple of years .

I receive alerts from the police , fire service , local people and circulate these to our residents. Over the last few years I believe I have pushed out around 400 notices which provide information from the police and local sources about criminal / suspicious activity in our area , the information on scams is particularly important .

I use the Nextdoor system plus an email circulation list to distribute the information

If you would like to be added to the circulation list just email me on John.Mann@mglworld.com



Footpath (PROWS) Project

A newly formed Parish Paths Group has begun to explore ways to promote, maintain and improve our local paths. The three parishes of Broxton, Duckington and Harthill enjoy a wonderful network of around 40 Public Rights of Way (PROW), covering nearly 17 kms (6.7 miles). The majority of these are public footpaths, with 611 metres of public bridleway.

These parish paths are for everyone to enjoy, offering a precious resource to experience and appreciate the beautiful landscape we have on our doorstep. Their value for exercise and helping to raise our spirits has become increasingly important during the recent months of lockdown caused by the Coronavirus.

The group of volunteers is aiming to:

- Support the Parish Council in meeting its obligations;
- Respond to the community voice, as expressed in the Parish survey of November 2019
- Involve members of the community, working with the Parish Council, to improve the environment, character and facilities of the Parish.

A range of activities for the Group is being discussed including:

- Promoting the PROW network, particularly on the Parish Council website.
- Encouraging volunteers to regularly walk the paths to ensure that they are in a usable condition, and to carry out minor clearances of vegetation where necessary.
- Reporting path problems to Cheshire West and Chester Council.
- Encouraging landowners to keep PROW free from obstruction, and to look after gates, stiles and footbridges.
- Informing members of the public to use PROW responsibly and to follow the Countryside Code.
- Actively pursuing local projects such as the identification and publication of circular walking routes.

If you would like to get involved with the Parish Paths Group please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council.



To keep up to date with what the Parish Council is doing join our distribution list,
just forward your e-mail address to the Clerk

Residents' Priorities Survey

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Parish Council survey which was distributed towards the end of 2019, the survey which had a 20% response rate, was developed to help the Parish Council understand the issues that you as residents, care about, and the improvements you would like the Council to address.

It is no surprise that the survey identified that majority of respondents love living in the area due to its rural location, stunning views and tranquillity, people also highlighted the friendliness of the community.

The survey results also highlighted areas for improvement in the Parish Council area which the Council is seeking to try and address, these include:

Broadband & Mobile

The lack of fast broadband and reliable mobile signal was highlighted by the survey, as a result the Council contacted Edward Timpson MP who had agreed to meet with Council representatives in April, however this meeting had to be postponed.

Improving broadband and mobile signals is now more important than ever with people working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown and the Council is seeking to reschedule the meeting as soon as possible

Footpaths (Public Rights of Way)

As a result of the survey results a working group has been established to look at promoting and improving the network of footpaths which run across the Council area (Footpaths Project article)

Brown Knowl

A number of respondents highlighted general concerns regarding the general appearance and maintenance of the Council area as a result of this a 'Tidy Up' was scheduled for the 21st March had to be cancelled and we will reschedule this when it is appropriate to do so.

The survey also highlighted concerns regarding the appearance of a properties in Brown Knowl and the Council agreed at their January meeting letters to send letters to the specific landowners, the response to these letters will be discussed at the Council's May meeting.

Pitch – Larkton Hill

The Survey results also highlighted a desire to bring the Pitch on Larkton Hill back into use and a meeting has already taken place at the Pitch on Larkton Hill with a representative of the National Trust who agreed the Council should send a letter to the National Trust confirming the Council wishes to maintain the site, this letter has been sent and we are awaiting confirmation that the National Trust are happy with this.

Highways Meeting

In response to highways maintenance concerns a meeting had been organised with Highways officers from both Cheshire East and CW&C, again this had to be postponed and we are now seeking to rearrange the meeting.

Sandstone Inn

Unsurprisingly the future of the Sandstone Inn was another issue raised by those who responded to the survey. Carol Rouse from the Bolesworth Estate will be providing written update for our May meeting and is hoping to attend our July Parish Council meeting to discuss the matter in more detail.

Police

The findings of the Residents survey were forwarded to our local police officers and the Police and Crime Commissioner who subsequently requested a meeting to discuss these findings, the meeting was scheduled for April and we are now working to reschedule the meeting.

A results of the survey can be found at can be found at on the Council's website at www.broxtonanddistrict-pc.co.uk/residents-survey-2019

Speed limits

As many of you will be aware a number of speed assessments have been carried out by Cheshire West & Chester Council on roads in the Parish Council area which have resulted in the following suggested speed limits and costings.

Road	Suggested Speed Limit	Full Cost	Cost to Parish Council (50%)
Brown Knowl	Reduction to 30mph – Various roads	£8,273.56	£4,136.78
Broxton A534/A41 Roundabout	Reduction to 50mph	£7,249.60	£3,624.80
Harthill	Reductions to 30mph & 40mph	£5,486.29	£2,743.15
Old Coach Road Broxton	Reduction to 50mph	£3,183.02	£1,591.51
		TOTAL	£12,096.24

The details of the proposed speed limits including plans can be found at <http://www.broxtonanddistrict-pc.co.uk/highways>

It should be noted that the Parish Council has earmarked approximately £6000 for this project including a grant of just over £3000 provided by the CW&C Ward Councillor Mike Jones who has confirmed he is willing to provide additional funding.

It has been agreed that the Parish Council would consider these proposals at their May meeting where it was decided that the next step would be to arrange a meeting as soon as possible with Highways officers to discuss the various scheme and costings.

Your Parish Councillors....

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