



## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT APRIL 2021**

Coronavirus has made it a very difficult year for all of us. I would like to thank everyone in our Parish who has kindly helped others in need of support throughout the pandemic. From collecting shopping to having a chat, it has all helped make our community stronger. Thank you.

Like other organisations, the Parish Council has been operating virtually this year. We are still meeting bimonthly on Zoom so that the work of the Council can continue. I cannot say that we have had any 'Jackie Weaver' moments for entertainment as, thankfully, all our 7 councillors are polite, friendly and have the well-being of the Parish at heart. I would like to thank them all for their efforts. They all give up their time freely to work on behalf of the Parish council. Particular thanks go to our clerk, Lorna Pardoe, who has worked very hard on our behalf. Lorna has a lot of Council experience and is a valuable asset to our Council. I would also like to thank County Councillor Claire Wild. Claire attends all our meetings as well as helping us with issues such as speeding traffic and keeping us updated on local planning applications which may affect us , such as the former Ironbridge Power Station Application for up to 1000 houses.

### **Report on the activities of the Parish Council over the past 12 months**

#### **Statistics**

- Full council meetings were held on Zoom on July 14<sup>th</sup> 2020, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. No Annual Parish Meeting was held in 2020 .
- Extraordinary Council Meetings were held on Zoom on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021
- Financial briefing was held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020

- Cllr Susan Jones was elected Chair and Cllr Malcolm Corrie elected Vice-Chair at the July meeting.
- Alan Bain from Garmston joined the Parish Council at the July meeting 2020. We welcome Alan who I'm sure will be a real asset to the Council.

## **Planning Matters**

### **Planning Decisions in the Parish**

The Parish council is a Statutory Consultee in planning matters within the Parish. The Parish Council gives comments on all planning applications and these are taken into account in any decision making. The final decision is taken by the planning officer or Planning Committee at Shropshire Council.

For details of all planning applications please visit the Shropshire Council Planning Portal at [www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning) and view the Planning Register or visit the Planning Tracker on our Parish Council website at [www.leightonand Eatonconstantineparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.leightonand Eatonconstantineparishcouncil.org.uk)

### **Local Plan Review**

The Local Plan establishes policies and guidelines for housing and employment development in our County. The Plan is currently being reviewed and updated. The consultation period is now closed. Assuming full Council approval in July 2021, the Plan will be submitted to the Government planning Inspectorate for examination. This will take approximately 12 months. Until the Reviewed Local Plan is adopted, general rules will be applied using the current Local Plan. For details of all Local Planning Policies see: [www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy)

### **What will change in our Parish if the Reviewed Local Plan is adopted?**

Our parish is currently designated 'Open Countryside' in planning matters where development is limited and 'Open market' development is strictly controlled. This is not changing in the Reviewed Local Plan, however, to increase the stock of affordable homes in rural areas, a new approach to the way affordable homes are given planning permission is

being considered. Currently, In 'Open countryside' areas, where it is proven that there is a need for an affordable home for someone with a strong proven local connection, a 'Single plot exception site' policy can be used to provide this home. However in the Reviewed Local Plan, to increase the amount of affordable housing in local rural communities, affordable housing exception schemes including a 'cross subsidy' approach will be enabled to meet local housing need in suitable locations. A 'cross subsidy' approach is where some 'open market' housing will be allowed to subsidise some development of affordable housing. Evidence of affordable housing need along with guidelines for where the development can be sited and the maximum numbers of properties to be allowed will be required. This is needed to prevent sporadic development across the countryside.

#### **Development of the former Ironbridge Power Station site**

Two Planning Applications have been submitted by Harworth PLC to Shropshire Council. One is for sand and gravel extraction and one for Outline Planning to build up to 1000 homes along with some employment development. These Applications and supporting documents including responses from local Parish Councils and residents can be found on the Shropshire Council Planning website:

[www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning) where you can view the planning register. The Parish Council's responses to both applications can also be found on the Parish Council's website at [www.leightonandeatonconstantineparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.leightonandeatonconstantineparishcouncil.org.uk)

We have major concerns as a Parish in the possible increase in traffic that such a large development could bring. Our Parish Council did not agree with the initial traffic modelling provided for this application by Harworth PLC, particularly concerning the percentage of traffic from the Ironbridge site that would possibly use the B4380. Our thanks go to Shropshire County Councillor Claire Wild who has worked hard on our behalf to help put our concerns across to Shropshire Council. Claire organised a 'walk about' back in October last year, all along the B4380, with two of the Shropshire Council officers involved with the planning

applications and local Parish Councillors. This was a good opportunity to show the dangers that the current traffic brings besides adding the extra traffic from the Ironbridge development. Particularly in Leighton village, where the footpath is narrow and traffic speeds are far too high, pedestrian safety is paramount. I am pleased to inform you that the traffic modelling has now been re-assessed and an agreement made for Traffic Calming Measures to be installed in Leighton. This is great news! We hope and will push for these to be installed as soon as possible. With regards to the Sand and Gravel Extraction Application, a condition on the movement of HGV vehicles so that they cannot use the B4380 will be included. This again is good news for our Parish. We are continuing to put together responses to the Planning Application for 1000 homes, working alongside Buildwas Parish Council and I am hoping to be able to put our concerns directly to the Planning Committee when the Application is discussed and decided.

A planning application has also been submitted for work at Farley Quarry near Much Wenlock which potentially could impact B4380 and our Parish. We have responded to this application and our response can be found on our Parish Council website. Again traffic issues, particularly with HGV traffic, are a concern.

### **Highways**

We have three Councillors looking after Highways in our Parish, Cllr Sue Dawes in Eaton Constantine, Cllr Alan Bain in Garmston, and Cllr Sue Jones in Leighton. After a walk through the Parish with Highways officer Jonathan Ingoldby and Parish Councillors in October, many Highways issues were brought to Shropshire Council's attention. We are awaiting action on these issues. Details can be found in the November 2020 minutes on our website.

### **Speeding Traffic**

This is a huge issue, particularly in Leighton Village, but also all along the B4380 and in other areas of our Parish.

Unfortunately, we cannot extend the 30mph speed limit through Upper Longwood from Eaton Constantine. We did ask the police to look into this. It would need a separate application for a speed limit and the area would not currently meet the criteria required. Obviously, if requirements change, we will look into this again.

The Camera Safety Partnership will continue to speed trap Leighton village for the foreseeable future. I would like to thank PC Mark Milton from the Community Policing Team for his help in this matter.

We have asked Shropshire Council to re-paint the lines which are part of the Traffic Calming Scheme in Eaton Constantine and replace the 'Welcome Gate' which was taken away for repair after an accident.

### **Smartwater**

After our successful Smartwater campaign where 70 % target for the number of residents signed up to the project was reached, we still have some Smartwater packs available for residents who have not yet registered. If you would like one please contact the Parish Council Clerk, Lorna Pardoe on 01743 718695 or [lecparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:lecparishcouncil@gmail.com)

You will see the Smartwater signs all around the Parish.

### **Financial**

The council has set the Precept for the year 2021-2022 at £6889 . The increase from £6320 for the previous year is to complete funding for the Smartwater project, to pay for increased staffing costs and to build up reserves to complete a 'Parish Plan', hopefully later this year. A Parish Plan is a survey involving all residents in the Parish and will help guide the Parish Council's future plans and decisions.

### **Litter picking**

The Parish council has purchased litter picking equipment and Cllr Elaine Parton from Leighton and Cllr Sue Dawes have access to this equipment. If anyone wants to borrow this for their own litter pick they are welcome. We do regular litter picks around the Parish but are always grateful for extra help.

### **Exciting news**

Huge, huge thanks to 5 very generous and hard working couples from our Parish who have taken the lease on the Kynnersley Arms pub and are putting in huge amounts of effort as well as their own money to bring it back to life. Thanks also to Mr and Mrs Corrie for their support, without which it would not be possible.

The historic Kynnersley Arms is well worth preserving and along with preserving the actual building itself, the community spirit in our parish will be preserved and enhanced. A good pub is at the heart of every community. It is great to see all the volunteers pulling together to make it happen. Thank you so much from all of us.

To all residents, please support this new venture. We must help make it a success for all the community. I'm sure it will be a great village pub. Thank you.

Sue Jones