**Shuttington & Alvecote Parish Council Annual Open Meeting – Chairs Report 2021-2022**

A very warm welcome to all of you here. It’s good to see you and we very much appreciate the time you have taken out of your evening to join us. Whilst we are still steadily creeping out of one form of crisis, it appears that we have crept in to other turbulent times in the world and domestically. However, as a Parish with a strong sense of community we shall ride out these storms in the best ways we can.

Your Parish Council again has been hard at work behind the scenes trying it’s best to make progress on many issues, many of which are not visible, however some that are and which we very much hope shall be appreciated by our local community and beyond.

As you can see, I have not yet been ousted, persuaded or become overwhelmed enough as yet to remove myself from the position as Chair (although the AGM is next week therefore watch this space!). Recently we welcomed a new Councillor, Andy White who brings with him a great deal of knowledge and energy which I am sure will only make a positive contribution to the work that the Council do. At the risk of being self-congratulatory, it is also only right to thank all our volunteer Parish Councillors for their continued work and input into all the areas of challenge we undertake. Sometimes it may be felt that these are the only thanks received; however, it is meant with sincerity and I am sure shared with the majority of our Parishioners. Councillor Brian Frost remains as Vice Chair for the Parish Council, Mike Smith, Claire Holloway and Leita Sly (for Alvecote)

Our thanks, naturally, are also extended to Anita Allsopp, our Clerk, who has weathered yet another year through bureaucratic adversity, come out the other side relatively unscathed and to whom we are continually grateful.

There have been very few other changes with regard to local people although recently Penny Edmonds, who was pivotal in the launching and encouragement of the Support Group over the past two years has taken a back seat from the role for personal reasons. The remainder of the team, generaled by Gaynor Barber continue to offer support to those that need it locally and we are continually grateful to them.

Craig Tracey, also a Parish resident remains our Member of Parliament for North Warwickshire & Bedworth.

Continuing in the vein of thanks for those closest to us regarding representation at the higher levels of Local Government, our ongoing thanks must be extended to our Borough Councillors Dave Humphreys and County Councillor Marian Humphreys. They both continue to offer their invaluable insights into why we can’t actually get done what we would like to, and also extend their support in financial areas.

Procedural & Profile

Over the past year we have been looking at and moving forward with many elements of the PC’s work. Some of which include the fact that we have secured tenure for those groups that hire the field and the hall by way of instigating 5-year contracts for all. This offers the groups the opportunity to plan both financially and in practical terms their operations for the forthcoming years. The Cadent Gas Governor contract is one inch away from being finalised following 4 years of communication and this will secure their tenancy for the next 20 years as well as providing the caveat of rent reviews every 5 years.

The Parish Council Facebook site currently has 213 followers and continues to highlight appropriate information regionally and locally which we may think is of interest or use to those that use the social media site. It is still not a discussion forum and is unlikely to become one due simply to amount of time such sites need to be managed; therefore, we would still like to encourage all parishioners to send their thoughts, ideas, comments on all matters which affect the Parish through to the Clerk or any of the Councillors preferably by email or if not by telephone. Their details are on the notice boards and website.

In addition, the website continues to be updated regularly with the agenda and minutes of the meetings.

The Village Voice magazine continues to provide important information on village activities especially with regard to the Churches in our locale. Claire Holloway continues to have the Parishes gratitude for the hard work that goes into it.

Finances

The revenue for the Hall continues to significantly come from renting out and since the lockdown restrictions eased, I understand it is now somewhat thriving. As mentioned earlier, the revenue stream into the Parish Council from the rental of the field and Cadent has been somewhat stabilised for the immediate future. However, it was deemed necessary to increase the precept recently to £8000 per year in order to cover possible shortfalls in income and expenditure and to hopefully strengthen the reserves for the unexpected. Although the cost per household within the Parish is very much dependent upon their Council Tax band and personal circumstances, it does average out at less than 75p per week per property which we hope represents excellent value for money.

Playing Field & Hall

Plans for a playground on the field are still ongoing. Several grants have now been secured and therefore ongoing design and the remainder of the required funds has stepped up a gear.

The Hall kitchen has now been installed as well as the French doors opening from the side of the Hall onto the field. There are still projects that need to be undertaken; replacing the hall floor and an addition of a veranda is in the planning to offer that ‘outside – in’ concept – presumably inspired by an episode of Grand Designs….. Applications are being made for grants to help with the funding.

Margaret Frost - Booking Secretary  Gaynor Barber

Sam Hall – Chair Sandra Beck

Brian Frost - Vice Chair Jayne Cooper

Adrian Hall Andrew White

Anita Allsopp - Secretary (non-committee member)

The hall continues to be a very popular choice for hirers with enquiries being made, almost on a daily basis.  The evenings are all booked out with the exception of Saturday and Sunday evenings, and all of Saturday daytime is also booked. The coffee mornings continue to be a huge success and are a firm favourite with villagers and people from outside the village attending each month.

Plans are well under way for the Jubilee fete which is being held at the hall Saturday 4 June, 2-6pm.  The lighting of the beacon, which is a national event up and down the country for the Jubilee, is being lit on the field on Thursday 2 June AT 2145 HOURS .  Everyone will be invited TO MEET FROM 2030 HOURS.

A barn dance has been booked for October and a switching on of the tree lights at Christmas is also planned to include a Christmas bazaar along with mulled wine and mince pies.

With the addition of new committee members, they are in a very good position to promote the hall further to include future events which will appeal to all ages.

Alvecote

The past year has seen a relatively stable atmosphere in the village. Incidents of unwanted noise or behaviour have been investigated where necessary. There has been an unusual absence of communication from site management over the past months which indicates a stretching of resources or/and no major issues which need to be dealt with. Speeding traffic continues to be an issue with sadly not any foreseeable remedies possible, although this shall continue to be considered. The play area continues to be maintained and enjoyed by many. As the Samuel Barlow has closed, we are intending to move the Defibrillator into Alvecote. Investigations are continuing as to it’s power supply and installation.

Policing

Our Policing contingents continue to be PC Mike Redman and Simeon Hodson. Over the past year our local area has not seen any particularly concerning developments or patterns in crime, however I shall be inviting PC Redman to make a short presentation with regard to that and also advise us of the Structural and operational challenges that Warwickshire Police themselves have had, and continue to have, which we should all be aware of.

Carol Cotterill (a Parish resident) continues to be the Rural Crime Officer and a constant support to our local community

We have yet to hear more news regarding the planned Police satellite hub to be situated in Polesworth. The PC shall continue to monitor and advised as and when more information becomes available.

The Police would like to reiterate the need for calling 101 to report ANY incidents of anti-social and criminal behaviour (unless there is a serious crime in action or person/s are in immediate danger), in addition to reporting online.

Planning

The site to the left of the village hall still has underlying planning permission for x24 houses, although recent enquiries have yet to give the P Council clarification as to what stage this development is at. We shall continue to monitor and advise as and when that information becomes available.

Traffic Safety

At the beginning of this year, we have had changes made to the three entrances to the village. What was installed, although most appreciated, is not what we have been vehemently asking for over the past 3 years. The 30mph starting points into the village have been pushed back and new signs erected, however there are many other items which the PC wants to address in the forthcoming months. Sadly, like all small councils, we are at the mercy of budget planning, long-term time-scale delays and many other elements within the laws of Highways and policing restrictions. That being said, we continue to welcome thoughts and ideas from all Parishioners as to what they ideally would like and we can then only pass these on to the relevant departments for consideration. This issue, like all of the Councils objectives include Alvecote.

The Robeys Lane development is also naturally going to have an impact on traffic through both our villages. We have asked for some options to be put to Highways and await answers.

There has been an increase in housing construction traffic through the area of oversized lorries. This has been looked at as much as possible but sems to be an uphill climb in stopping it to the extent which we would like. It is compounded by the inappropriate signing on the entrance to the East of Shuttington, however is mainly due to a dismissive attitude of the site managers and subcontractors and bad decisions of the vehicle drivers themselves, which is a Police enforceable matter.

Emergency Plan

The local Emergency Plan is still being reviewed and shall be completed during this millennia.

Unitary Authority

The pending decision on how the Unitary Authority process will be impacting our local area is still awaited. We shall keep parishioners informed.

Parish projects

The wonderful donation from Marian Humphreys for our village benches has also now been spent with Shuttington now having 3 benches around the walking routes including one in Coronation Crescent, one on the Church Yard and one now on Milner Drive.

Milner Drive has now had work commenced in order to create the Shuttington Community Wildflower Meadow. This is the brainchild of Councillor Claire Holloway with extensive help from Liz Odber and many volunteers from the village and beyond. It is a long-term project which by way of the Green Shoots Grant shall provide, eventually, a sanctuary of wildflowers, small creature habitats and educational opportunities for the locals and visitors. We have no doubt that the continued efforts shall bring to fruition a wonderful spectacle.

We have been successful in obtaining a grant from the National Lottery in order to fund new Notice Boards both within Shuttington & Alvecote. The one for Shuttington shall be a free-standing board next to the bus stop and in Alvecote, will be in the same place but a much large one. These will present much needed central information points able to convey a great deal of information on Parish and Hall business but also on local group activities and support from local authorities.

The pathway between Coronation Crescent and Church Lane has been identified as possibly being unsafe, inaccessible and in need of review. We shall be discussing options with the small works department regarding the best way to approach this with possibly having this area converted into a ramp in order to accommodate all abilities of mobility and also lighting that would make the area safer whilst not impeding on the neighbouring properties.

Councillor Mike Smith has recently instigated a Parish Historical Archive drive. The intention of this is to accumulate documents and photographs of days gone by and create an historical and extensive reference regarding our Parish for many years to come. If anyone has anything they feel would be of use to that project, please contact the PC for more information.

In closing this Annual Open Meeting, may I extend our continued best wishes to all for your wellbeing. We are always delighted to see Parishioners at our meetings which usually occur on the 3rd Wednesday of every month (except August and December) at 6pm in the Pat Fletcher room, access to which is via the back door. Feedback and ideas are the only way your volunteers can address concerns as well as further enhance our villages for the benefit of all and we strongly encourage everyone to engage physically where possible or indeed contact any of us via email or telephone; the details of which are on the website, FB site and the notice boards. The soon-to-arrive summer celebrations shall hopefully present us with another opportunity to come together with high spirits and continue the positivity which we have experienced over the past year.

Thank you