

Clifton-upon-Teme Parish Council

Annual Report May 2020

Hello to all residents of Clifton-upon-Teme, I hope you are all keeping Safe & Well during these very trying & unique circumstances. It is indicative of the “Community Spirit” within the village that the help support system – “Clifton Hill Helpers” was set up prior to the suggestions from the County Council. A large “WELL DONE”, from all on the Parish Council.

A new Council was formed in May 2019, following the resignation of 4 out of the 5 Councillors & the Parish Clerk. We then had to start afresh, with only 1 Councillor with any experience & a new Parish Clerk, provided by the Local Government CALC. This proved to be a great addition to Clifton & Michelle Alexander was formally employed in July last year. She has & continues to do a grand job, guiding the new Council, with her very extensive knowledge of how to work a Parish Council!

When we commenced working for the village, we basically had to start from “scratch” & we were surprised to find quite a few things which had not been made clear to the village, due to the many, many private meetings, which had been held “in camera” & no trace of any “Minutes” could be found.

We were surprised to discover that some £1100 had been spent on instructing two separate firms of Solicitors, to chase a debt of £7, from the Guides & Brownies, being the “Ground Rent”, for the last 7 years, which had remained outstanding, due to an oversight. A cheque for £7 was found in the documents box, but it had been crossed out, many times.

We were further surprised when we paid the Annual Premium for the Insurance on the Councils’ properties, to discover we were insuring the BP Hut, which is owned by the “Scouts & Guides Association” & not the Council. I am pleased to inform you that this situation has now been rectified.

As a result of the preponderance of “Private Meetings” after the main Monthly Parish Council Meeting, it was decided to hold the Monthly Meeting as a more “open-meeting”, thus allowing any villager the option & time to speak on any relevant issue, they may wish to raise. This has worked reasonably well, even though some villagers continue to interrupt! However, this is felt to be a much more accountable forum.

We have also encouraged “Teme Triangle” to publish the Meeting Minutes, in “Draft” form, as soon as they are available, so that villagers who do not attend the meetings, have the information.

I would stress that the way to raise any concerns or issues, is to attend the Monthly Meetings, which will allow villagers to understand how & why decisions are taken.

Despite the slow start to the Councils year, many issues & items have been resolved during this period. A new Container has been purchased for storage for the Bowls & Football Club & will also be used by the “Uniformed Organisations”.

The industrial bins were removed from the Recreation Ground, as meeting attendees stated they were not being used. However, as a result of “unintended consequences”, it became apparent that this was where the Guides disposed of their weekly rubbish – I can confirm that replacement bins have been ordered & that the overall cost, will be less than previously.

Chris & Sid Hayward have completed work on the new Notice Board, which has needed replacing, for some time – an excellent job! Allowance has also been made for “Non Parish Council” items to be displayed on the reverse side.

There was a certain amount of “disquiet” in the village, when it was proposed that some sort of barrier was to be provided around the Village Green, to prevent persons parking their vehicles on the Green. The issue was raised following Parents parking their cars on the Green, to drop off their children at the school. When challenged, they became abusive, & used foul language in response. The worry is that in this situation, a child could be injured, so measures have been considered, in an attempt to prevent this. Doing nothing & ignoring the problem until an accident happens, is not an option.

This issue is still under review, but the use of “No Parking” Cartoon signs local to the school & the re-instalment of the original “No Parking” sign on the Green, seems to have alleviated this problem, at least temporarily.

Villagers have expressed concerns about vehicles speeding into the village, from all four entrances. A check was recently made by the “Police Speed Survey”, which gave the surprising result, that it was not as big a problem, as villagers thought. We have, however, with the support of the County Councillor, Ken Pollock, both financially & verbally, agreed to install “White Gates” & “Speed Monitors” on each of the entrance roads. The only exception will be Pound Lane, where the verges are too narrow to allow the positioning of “White

Gates". It is hoped that when this work has been completed, motorists will reduce their speeds further, when driving in & through the village.

The Heaters & Lights have been refurbished at the Pavilion & the required annual "Testing Certificate" obtained, as no certificate could be found within the documents provided by the previous council, or at the Pavilion.

We welcome new residents to the village, now that "The Meadows", or "Blueshot Development", is almost complete & about 90% occupied. As a result of the new housing, "S106" monies are available to the village. It should be noted, that the housing at Church Farm, currently consisting of just the ground floor slabs to two houses, does not provide any "S106" funding, which is very surprising.

A "Working Party" has been set up, under the leadership of Chris Hurley, to accept & process ideas, as to how these monies should be used, to the benefit of the village, within the strict rules, as set out by the "S106" legislation. The suggestions are to improve the facilities at the Recreation Ground, with improvements that benefit all ages, works to improve the sound & comfort within the Village Hall, a "Sensory Garden" at the Rec & also a "Peace Garden" behind the church. The funding is on a "Use it or Lose basis" & we have some 10 years to commence any agreed projects. If anyone has any other ideas, please contact Chris Hurley, or any member of the Council.

Another aspect of "S106" is the possible provision of a Bus Service to Malvern, or possibly increasing the service to Worcester. This is dependent upon a Survey of the Village, which has been prepared, but will be circulated, when the current "Corvid 19" crisis is resolved.

There are still some issues outstanding, such as provision of a new "Tourist Information Board", refurbishment of the old "Footpaths" board & providing a 20MPH speed limit on Pound Lane, these issues being detailed within the Neighbourhood Plan, and were not addressed by the previous council.

On examining the Accounts from the previous council, it was decided that there was no necessity to increase the Precept this year, as we are currently running a surplus & this surplus will be preserved to cover anticipated maintenance costs, for whatever project(s) the S106 funding is used for.

Kind Regards,

John Bowden

Chairman

Clifton-upon-Teme Parish Council

