

Chairman's Report 2023

Achievements this past year.

It has been an exceptionally busy year for the Chairman, Clerk and Ward Councillor.

We have held numerous site meetings and meetings with residents, Balfour Beatty Locality Stewards and HC officers throughout the year regarding parish issues, the most pressing of which has been the deteriorating condition of the BOATS on the Doward. As a result of these meetings, we have secured an official statement from HC regarding their policy towards repair and maintenance of all BOATS in Herefordshire.

We held meetings with National Grid to discuss the frequent and irritating power outages. Although they cannot (as yet) prevent the occasional power interruptions due to squirrels and crows (the main culprits), they have achieved a much more reliable energy service by replacing old, cracked insulators and worn-out switches and clearing vegetation from the power lines.

Throughout the year the parish clerk and I have held numerous meetings and filled in countless forms to establish a Community Hub in the parish. With the Good Neighbour Scheme as its firm foundations, the Hub is now officially recognised, and we have successfully applied for grants which will allow a growth in activities. Community Hub activities are publicised on the parish website <http://www.wagpc.org.uk>.

The appointment of a new parish lengthsman has proved to be more cost effective and has achieved greater efficiency.

We reappointed a firm from Derby to carry out maintenance work on the clock in the Clock Tower and can report that it is now accurate and reliable, the first time in years due to a competent upgrade. Although the pc does not own the clock tower and are not responsible for it, we maintain the clock and pay for the electricity supply.

At the end of last year, we made the difficult decision not to provide a Christmas Tree outside Woods of Whitchurch. The bill for providing just one month of electricity had shot up to more than £850, and the tree was going to cost us around £350. Fortunately, a generous member of the public stepped in and provided a tree and lights at their own expense.

The PC has remained committed to supporting tourism and improving the appearance of the parish with the installation of additional litter bins, dog bins and general maintenance. We have continued to help with churchyard maintenance, and we maintain and service the four defibrillators in the parish. We continue to provide all equipment necessary to anyone wishing to help with litter control in the parish.

Planned improvements.

In the coming year the parish council plans to improve signage in the 30mph zone on the Llangrove Road.

We intent to make Improvements to the play area on the Old Monmouth Road, adding more facilities and making it more family friendly.

Planting a specimen tree to celebrate the life and reign of Queen Elizabeth II. It is intended to arrange solar lighting on this tree on special occasions and will replace the annual Christmas tree provided by the pc.

Thanks and appreciation

The work of the parish council would be far more difficult without the valued contributions of a number of people.

In particular I would like to thank our outgoing Ward Councillor, Yolande Watson for her unstinting efforts on our behalf. I would also like to thank our pc working groups who give up their time to gain results and take the parish forward. The Good Neighbour Scheme team in particular provide an invaluable service to the parish.

The Old Court Hotel is always helpful and hospitable to parish groups and parish work meetings. They also help the parents of local school children with free parking at the start and end of the school day.

Our Balfour Beatty locality steward deserves thanks as he goes over and above our normal expectations to help us with parish issues. The Balfour Beatty team in Rotherwas is also very helpful to our clerk and supports our needs.