

Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting, 17th April, 2018.

We have come to the end of another busy year.

Unfortunately, we have had to say goodbye to Alastair Wood, a valued Member of this Council and Vicar of our Parish as he moved to Wiltshire.

Our Clerk, Jonathan Brumwell has completed his third year and we have kept him very busy. We are grateful to him and to Gail Lawrence, who take care of the Council's business to the highest standard of professionalism.

Planning matters have again dominated the year, with Horton and Apley having significant issues. This Council continues to work hard to try to achieve the best outcomes for all concerned.

Our environment continues to be our focus as we endeavour to make this Parish an attractive place in which to live and raise children. The biggest project was the landscaping at Apley Castle to create an attractive aspect for the visitors to the Severn Hospice. Because of the reorganisation of staff at Telford and Wrekin Council, we have lost Rob Jevons who worked so well with us to produce many of the visual improvements.

This Council agreed to employ a Parish Lengthsman to overcome the difficulties we faced. Clive Johnson is working well to ensure that our area is maintained to the highest standard through liaison with the Borough.

This year is the centenary of the Armistice and we are marking it by working with the community, in particular through funding school projects. We have purchased a 'there but not there' steel silhouette of a 'Tommy'. This will be sited in the schools in the run-up to Remembrance Sunday finishing with its installation at the saluting dais to honour all who were lost in conflict.

The Annual Concert for St. George's Day is now on the Parish Council calendar with Pat Smart making all the arrangements.

Our Christmas concert with Hadley Orpheus, Apley Wood and Millbrook choirs, had to be postponed because of snow but we held a Spring Concert instead. The usual donations were made to support choral singing in the area.

The summer and Christmas events, including the pensioners' dinners, will take place as usual, weather permitting, of course.

HLC is now part of an academy with Dr. Eatough as Executive Principal. HLC Principal is Paul Roberts and we continue to enjoy an excellent working relationship with all our schools.

Our commitment to the young continues with the funding we provide. Our Youth Zone take part in many activities, thanks to our excellent youth leader, Mark Palmer-Burrage. The service is to relocate to the Methodist Church where the young people will have more space. Castle Farm will let the available rooms at a higher rate than we will be paying the Church so the move will benefit all.

Castle Farm is to undergo improvements and our thanks are extended to Building Manager, Carol Henderson, and her assistant Karen Walker, whose diligence keeps the premises in pristine condition. They contribute many suggestions for improvements and their input is greatly appreciated.

Our Cemetery Manager, Cliff Henderson, continues to maintain the grounds to an immaculate level and he receives countless messages of thanks and praise from visitors, not only for his work, but for his kindness. Cemetery Lodge is to undergo much-needed and long overdue improvements to bring the building up to a higher standard.

In conclusion, I wish to thank my vice-chairman, Cllr. Malcolm Smith, the Chairman of F&GP, Cllr. Bill McClements, and Cllr. Pat Smart for taking care of the Events Committee and the Environment . We have 2 non-councillors on Events, Sean Thomas and Rosemary Jones, and I thank them very much for their contribution.

I look forward to another productive year as we all work together for the people we represent, and assure them of our best attention at all times.

Written by Councillor John Smart
17th April, 2018