

SPC Chairman's Report 2020

Slightly unbelievably I seem to have been chair for a year, clearly time flies when you are enjoying yourself!

My thanks to everyone for their help and support in what actually proved a somewhat difficult year with the death of both of my parents, with my apologies for coming to at least one meeting flustered and ill-prepared.

To Sean and Barry as joint vice-chairs I am very grateful, for reminding me of the history of why we are where we are, for help and support in negotiating Louise's pay rise and subsequent departure, and to our Ward Councillor Stan Davis who managed to obtain the funding for our traffic calming measures and provides very useful advice and input in many of our meetings.

Parish Clerk

As you will all know, Louise our previous Parish Clerk resigned at our March meeting and finally handed over to Chris on 20th April. My many thanks are due to Louise for continuing to act most professionally during this time despite the change to her own plans caused by the lockdown. My thanks also to Chris Jones who agreed to become our clerk at the March meeting and has managed the hand-over from Louise beautifully.

Precept

As the renewal of the street lighting was less expensive than expected leaving us with more funds in reserve, we retained the precept at the same level (£3,650) following our November meeting.

Neighbourhood plan

We reviewed the possibility of producing a neighbourhood plan with Andy Thompson, who assisted Bunbury in writing their plan, listening to his excellent presentation and discussing this at our November 2019 meeting and again at our March 2020 meeting. It was decided that in the absence of any clear advantages of completing a plan the large amount of effort involved was not felt worthwhile. We will continue to review this decision if further information comes to light.

Highways

We continue to report problems with road surfaces, drainage and verges to Cheshire East. Action can be slow as they have been subject to severe funding cuts. However progress on important issues does occur.

Speed management of traffic

Following the successful application for a grant to help speed management, the speed indicator device has been successfully deployed, the new road markings have been painted

on Peckforton Hall Lane, and bin stickers to encourage following the speed limits supplied. This was a great initiative delivered by Jonathan and Sean and I am delighted to be able to report on it.

Planning issues

We continue to monitor all planning applications and make observations as appropriate.

Parish Council Website

This continues to support the council's communication with residents and has been taken over by Chris Jones.

Village communication

We have continued to initiate occasional mail drops, including notification of the Spurstow community support and Plant a Sunflower scheme, and post village information on the notice board.

Public Participation

Our most recent Zoom Parish Council meeting was advertised as usual, so that any Spurstow resident can join the meeting in the public participation section, we value all correspondence and are still trying to sort out some road drainage issues raised recently by a resident.

Spurstow community support

This year, in response to the government's request for all over 70's and people with other conditions making them more vulnerable to Covid-19 to self-isolate we developed a phone-based volunteer and self-isolating people coordinating system together with Houghton, Beeston and Peckforton. This has been working well to provide shopping and support to residents without local family or neighbours to organise this for them.

Plant a Sunflower

In response to a national campaign to plant a sunflower in support of the NHS, with the option of donating to that campaign our local community support network felt it would help a feeling of community while we are isolated if people planted sunflowers and watched them grow, which I personally know is good fun. I hope we will see plenty of sunflowers locally in the months to come.

Accounts Auditing

David Cox has kindly agreed to audit our accounts this year, my thanks to him.

Katherine Hutchinson

Chair of Spurstow Parish Council 2020