

Castlemorton Parish Council

Chairman's Report 22/23

General

Meetings took place as scheduled and were well attended throughout the year.

Personnel

The year started with one vacancy on the council and we were happy to welcome Dr Rosemary Powell as a co-opted member.

Precept

The precept is very low when compared with other Parish Councils. In a period of high inflation it has become increasingly hard to meet our statutory requirements and have any budget left for small proactive activities. It was therefore agreed that a modest increase to £4691 would be made this year.

Normal Duties

The regular activities of the PC continued with a busy year on planning matters, on which the PC provided comments to the best of their ability, within planning regulations and with the best interests of the community in mind.

Highways matters were pursued by David Smallwood, supported by our clerk and lengthsman, who maintained their good work on the roads of the parish..

Hilary Flanders continued her good work on Footpaths, committing a lot of time to the application to establish a PROW along the Bannut Tree track.

Mike Wilkinson represented the PC on the 4C's and reported back to the meeting.

The Parish Hall Trust had a very successful year with increased bookings and revenue compared with pre-Covid.

The PC provided comment on the Boundary Commission review recommending that a single councillor rural ward be created. However our recommendations were not accepted and a two councillor ward created.

Throughout the year we enjoyed the active and knowledgeable support of our District Councillor Mick Davies.

Other Matters

The Castlemorton Environmental Action Group Sub-committee has been active throughout the year with significant results which are reported separately. Thanks to Dawn for chairing the sub-committee.

Parish Hall Trust Committee Annual Report 22/23

Summary

An excellent year which has seen levels of bookings and revenue increase significantly when compared with pre-Covid levels. There has been a noticeable increase in enquiries from new users for private parties and events as the hall as a venue is becoming more widely known.

Capital Investments

New French doors have been purchased and installed between the Armitage Room and the main hall to decrease noise transmission and improve draught proofing. Capital cost £2570.

Financial

Income	£11990
Expenditure	£9807
Nett	+£2183

Note 1: The annual expenditure does not include £1121 for gas paid just after the financial year end and a provision of £700 for outstanding charges for electricity.

Note 2: the annual expenditure does include the capital cost for the French doors.

So we have a healthy surplus of operating income over expenditure.

Bank balance at start of year £14558

Bank balance at end of year £16742

Management

Alex Day, ably assisted by Mary Williams, has managed the hall extremely well and has been instrumental in the addition of many new bookings.

Tim Cotterell has carried out the duties of Treasurer and Anne Cotterell those of Clerk, both in an exemplary way.

Website

The hall website, created and administered by Tim is attracting quite a number of hits and provides the facility to check availability and request bookings.

General

Thanks to all the committee for their efforts and turning out for maintenance tasks.

D M Lupton 5/5/23

Annual Highways Report 2022-23

The roads throughout the Parish remain in very good condition, with resurfacing undertaken at Golden Valley and Hollybush.

A hard edge has been installed around the triangle of common at Chandlers Cross, but it is hard to understand what it will achieve other than to protect the road edge.

The pavement by St Gregory's church has been raised and resurfaced and a safer pull-in by Feathers Pitch Cottage resurfaced and edged.

Water leaks, especially in New Road, are reported to Severn Trent, and we are promised a new pipe along the whole road at some unspecified date.

The issue of road flooding by Cherry Orchard is still to be pursued.

Ownership of and responsibility for the pond opposite Ruells Farm awaits clarification from Highways and we believe it is Highways responsibility.

A potentially collapsing wall on Highways land by The Morgans has been reported and a barrier is in place.

Our Lengthsman deals with many small but important issues: road signs twisted on their poles, bollards losing their reflectors, drainage across verges into ditches and clearing culverts. Trees and brambles growing on the Highway's verge are cut back for safety. This year we spend only 49% our allowance, as no more was necessary.

Workmen often leave signs and sandbags behind and we ensure that they are subsequently collected. Volunteers regularly collect litter, especially along Gloucester Road although the amount has been substantially less than last year.

Castlemorton Parish Council Annual Meeting 2023

Footpath report.

Worcestershire Countryside Services continue to support the Parish by providing us with gates, stiles, bridges and the manpower to keep our footpaths and green lanes open.

Thanks go to landowners and volunteers who keep our footpaths in good order.

As reported last year the Parish Council is in the process of applying to register the track leading from B4208 (adjacent to Walnut Tree Cottage and Bannut Tree House) to the entrance of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's Hollybed reserve as a Public Right of Way (PRoW). We are grateful to parishioners who have given evidence that the track has been used by the public over many years. Therefore we are now in the position to submit this to Worcestershire County Council.

If you know of any footpaths that have become overgrown, stiles broken or footbridges that need some attention, the Parish Council would like to know. Either contact the PC via email castlemortonpc@gmail.com or phone Hilary Flanders (volunteer footpath warden) 01684 562305.

CASTLEMORTON ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GROUP

UPDATE MAY 2023

Since launching in March 2022 the CEAG committee has continued to meet regularly and organised a number of events and to develop ideas regarding future activities.

To date we have:

- Put on a number of talks including: electric cars, heat pumps, solar energy, solar batteries, home insulation, wildlife photography and gardening, Hollybed Farm meadows
- Given out over 2600 trees to be planted locally
- Set up a webpage on the Castlemorton Hub regarding our activities
- Surveyed residents' areas of interest in environmental matters
- Run a logo competition for local children and chosen our logo
- Set up a mailing list to keep members informed (open to all) – now numbers over 80
- Made links with other local environmental groups (Hanley Carbon Neutral & Colwall Greener)
- One of the committee ran a couple of birdsong identification walks on Castlemorton Common and invited individuals to join his regular butterfly transect
- Run a 'plastic-free' household products stall at the monthly community café
- Collaborated with Morton Majestic to show two environmentally themed films (Biggest Little farm, 2040)
- Collaborated with The Chase Eco Club to run an environmentally themed evening at The Cube Youth Club and shown the Billie Eilish film Overheated

Current projects:

- Carrying out a survey of local verges with a view to improving their biodiversity
- Continued programme of talks to include British orchids, managing pasture for horses in an environmentally friendly manner, tidal power and eco tourism
- Visit to local recycling centre
- Continue running the 'plastic-free' stall
- Collaborating with Hanly Carbon and Colwall Greener to run a stall at Hellens garden Festival in June
- Using a wildlife camera to record local wildlife
- Thermal/energy surveys for local residents at their request
- Liaising with the local Church to improve biodiversity in the churchyard

We are keen to hear from local residents regarding ideas for future activities and welcome interested individuals to join our meetings and become involved.