

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2014

As in previous years one of the most important duties of the Parish Council is to consider planning applications. With major plans the whole Council will carefully consider and, where deemed necessary, consult with adjacent residents. Cllrs will then either approve and support, if considered necessary, or recommend rejection to Malvern Hills District Council Planning Officer when a development is considered undesirable.

There have been two difficult applications this year; one where a mobile bungalow unit was put on a site up on the Highwood. As I reported last year a retrospective planning application was put in by the landowner for the unit. This has been rejected by both the Parish Council and MHDC and is now subject to Enforcement action. MHDC **are** taking legal action for removal of the mobile unit.

MHDC have decided the Stable Block that has also been built on this piece of land would have been approved if an application had been submitted. The building has little impact on the area so no further action will be taken on the Stable Block.

The second was an application by a young couple to bring the Bine Farm up to date. As this is a Grade 2 listed cottage great care was taken in the application. The applicant wished to preserve the character of the building and an adjacent building. The MHDC Conservation Officer who dealt with the case was, to say the least, unprofessional and very unhelpful causing any work to be delayed for over a year. The Parish Council was so incensed with the way this application was being dealt with that, with the support of the District Councillor, made strong representations to MHDC. The application was eventually passed by MHDC.

The point I wish to make is that if any parishioner believes that an application they have made has been treated unfairly by bureaucracy, the Parish Council will consider and if necessary, with the District Councillor, intervene on their behalf. This has been done successfully several times over the years.

As last year we were fully prepared with grit around the parish and because of a mild winter very little was used. The New and Highwood roads qualify as secondary gritting routes when necessary. Unfortunately last year the gritting lorry got onto the soft waterlogged verge on the way up the Highwood bank and slid into the hedge above the old roadway; there are now some barricades in this hole and it is extremely dangerous and a proper repair is required by WCC.

As reported last year the Lengthsman, who we share with Knighton-on-Teme, has continued to prove very satisfactory. The cost of the Lengthsman continues to be met by a grant from Worcestershire County Council; this grant is still of course a part, if only a very small part of the County Council's council tax bill and we consider it to be good value for money.

We now have good access to high speed internet broadband for most of the parish; there is a pylon to be erected towards the Tally Ho that should improve access to all residents.

The Council has applied for an extra £1,000.00 on the precept this coming year to contribute to two exceptional items; one is a defibrillator to be mounted on the front of the hall. The second is to buy kitchen equipment as part of the scheme to upgrade the Hall.

I would like to thank County Councillor Dr Ken Pollock and District Councillor Gill Farmer for continuing to give quick response to any requests for assistance. I am grateful to my fellow Councillors for their hard work and support over the past year. Finally I would like to thank Sue Burrows our Parish Clerk for her hard work on our behalf during the past year

John Inge - Chairman of Eastham Parish Council