

**Chairman's Report for The Annual Meeting of The Shelsley's Parish Council
Tuesday 19th May 2020
For Year 2019-2020**

Welcome to The Shelsley's Annual Parish Meeting for the year of 2019-2020.

Whilst we were just becoming aware of the global coronavirus pandemic at our last meeting, no one could have predicted 2 months' ago that our Annual Meeting and next Parish Council meeting would be the first to be held online. Everyone has had to change their way of life dramatically and I'd like to thank our clerk and councillors for being so eager to embrace technology and make sure that our meetings continue.

This year Cllr Karen Webber decided to step down. I would like to thank her on behalf of the council for her hard work over the last year. We have also been delighted to welcome Cllr Val Jones, Louise Hutton, and Jean Hammond to the council. They have already proven invaluable to the team and I'm excited about their future contributions. I would also like to thank the longer-term members, Cllr John Stinton, Dave Bates, William Sutherland, Karen Metcalfe, and David Styles, for their support and endeavours year through year.

Our clerk, Jan Speyer, has been consistently diligent with her duties. She truly is the backbone of this council and I cannot thank her enough for her contribution.

Over the last 12 months the Parish Council has met on six occasions.

Whilst many agenda items have been routine, specific areas of note are:

Planning Permission

A number of residential alterations have been approved over the past year. The council has improved its communication with MHDC with regards to planning applications, understanding that offering alternatives and solutions helps MHDC make a compromise that serves all parties.

The Hill Climb

Whilst Retro Rides 2019 was a great success, with improved security at the site, there were still complaints about the patrons' use of the roads through The Shelsleys. This has been exacerbated by the prospect of the event being held over 2 days, instead of 1. It is understandable that the MAC do not have jurisdiction over public roads, but hopefully the PC and MAC can work together to mitigate any problems in the future.

There was a large amount of opposition from parishioners and councillors towards the MAC's application to divert the public footpath up the Hill Climb. The process of footpath dissolution is long-winded and can take a number of years, however at this point the proposal has been withdrawn.

The Lengthmans

Rob Wilks continues to do a good job at maintaining our drains, gullies, and pavements. I'd like to thank him on behalf of the parish council.

Broadband

Last year saw a number of properties within the parish finally being connected to decent broadband, with superfast fibre slowly being rolled out. Other properties have been introduced to the Rural Broadband Voucher Scheme, developed by the government to help with the extraordinary costs involved in providing fibre lines to remote areas. Currently a number of the councillors and parishioners are working with WCC, looking into the prospect of organising self-digs to expedite the process.

Flooding

The Teme Valley and surrounding area was hit by incredible flooding last year. Thankfully The Shelsleys' residents were on the whole spared from too much damage, however the usual low-lying roads were left impassable for some time. Whilst these floods were extraordinary, it is a worry that they may become more routine in the future. Communication with WCC has been made about how work on drainage and more regular dredging of the waterways may help mitigate against this threat.

Waste

Fly-tipping continues to be a problem, as it is in many rural areas. Whilst MHDC has been excellent with clearing away waste on council land, owners of fields and property who have suffered from fly-tipping feel abandoned.

The new waste bin at the junction of Fetterlocks Lane and Camp Lane has proven a great success and plans are in place for a similar bin at the Stirt lay-by, which has also suffered from littering.

Roads

The council has been somewhat disappointed with the refusal to add signage discouraging HGVs down Pudford Lane. The carriageway has been blocked a number of times by over-ambitious drivers who have not been aware of how impassable this road can be. Unfortunately, there is no indication that WCC are willing to rectify this problem anytime soon.

COVID-19 response

I would like to praise the hard work of a number of councillors and parishioners for setting up The Shelsleys' Coronavirus Helpline. They have organised the distribution of leaflets to every property within The Shelsleys to alert residents of help available with shopping and other duties that may not be possible if someone is self-isolating or shielding. They have been consistently checking on local residents who may require assistance and have been very busy organising shopping trips and food deliveries. Their quick response to a crisis makes us proud to live within such a caring and thoughtful parish.

Precept

The precept has been maintained at £4000.

Grant

I am pleased to say that the PC continued in its tradition of donating a £200 grant to The Nora Parsons Centre to help them continue their fantastic and essential work.

Finally, as Chairman, I would like to thank our councillors for all their hard work and input over the last 12 months.