**CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2023**

It has been a pleasure to Chair the Parish Council for another, extremely busy, second term and so again I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow Councillors and Colleagues for their loyalty and shared visions for Parish improvement. We all volunteer our time and private resources on managing Parish affairs to the best of our ability with much determination, dedication, and enthusiasm. It is this common care for the Parish that provides our driving force and I hope this will continue to be appreciated by all.

An Election Year is upon us again, and it is likely that our Parish elections will, once more, remain un-contested. This may be viewed as a negative from an academic perspective in that it stymies natural change, however, the Parish may still take comfort from the fact we have, in any event, already co-opted further professionalism and youth into our numbers this year. A self-determination that provides for a refreshing combination of both experience and a willingness to hear new voices and ideas.

There is, of course, comfort in continuity too. Our new Village Signs, new Parish Notice Boards, new Benches and Cherry Tree Canopy and Picnic Bench on the Playing Fields are a few examples of our 'Visual Improvements' projects that have recently come to fruition. The Christmas Tree Lights and the Parish Calendar have now had their second annual appearance and I would like to believe these events will have secured longevity.

We continue to draft monthly articles in the Parish Magazine which hopefully communicate our current thoughts, achievements, and aspirations to the Parish on a regular basis. Attendance at Civic Events and Parish Forums have also remained in focus continuing the advance of our Parish profile within our higher tiers. We recognise, that our Parish Council, in reality, has little power, so it is essential to forge good working relationships with those who do and to influence the direction of their limited resources.

We appreciate that Highways have now used s.106 contributions from the Quarry planning agreement to assist with the renewed surface of Fox Road. We have also benefitted from additional Highways funding with concentrated gulley cleaning and fresh road markings, and we must again thank our District and County Councillor Victoria Wilson for her diligent work - securing the allocation of these works to *our* Parish network. Of course, this is not the complete panacea for all the evident Highways' issues, but we must, nevertheless, acknowledge and welcome that we find ourselves in a better place for this attention.

To assist with keeping gullies free flowing we are now talking to District on the possibility of increasing road sweeping activity on our key thoroughfares particularly in the Autumn for obvious reasons. District, too, has also offered their assistance with our Sensory Garden project that will soon, hopefully, augment our Playing Fields and Play Area in Trysull.

In partnership with South Staffordshire Police, we will also be re-invigorating our Community Speed Watch. A thank you to all our trained volunteers who have expressed their wishes to remain with the programme and the few new recruits who have also signed up to join us this year. A training and refresher course has already been organised for all our volunteers in May at the Village Hall.

The Jubilee Weekend, last year, was an enormous success for the Parish and a credit to all the Parish Institutions and many other volunteers that were involved. We now look forward to the Coronation Events and we anticipate a 'bigger and better' Parish Summer Fete this year. Again, a huge thank you to all those already involved in the planning and those of you yet to take part.

It was the Parish Council's pleasure to bestow Jubilee Commemorative Coins on all pupils at our village school and a similar distribution of Coronation Memorabilia, this year, has also been arranged.

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Planning, again, remains an absolute and necessary focus of the Parish Council and whilst all decisions on planning are taken by our higher tiers, we do remain an important consultee in the planning process. As such we will always forward and support views where we believe there may be legitimate arguments for the preserve of our Green Belt and Conservation Area. Of course, not all planning matters are contentious and as a fine example of a gold standard development in the Parish I must mention the 'Highly Commended Certificate of Building Excellence' that was awarded to the 'Old Smithy' in Trysull earlier this year. It really does take its pride and place amongst our other locally listed and heritage assets.

It may surprise that; Community Initiatives & Support, Communication & Connectivity, Health & Well-being and not just the Physical Environment that are significant categories in the Best Kept Village Competition. The Parish Council has continued to achieve improvement and advancement with many of these considerations in mind and so whilst we certainly do not envisage an award for any top spot (much more to do), the competition does provide a template and focus for the direction of further village improvement.

Again, betterment, this year, has been achieved with diligent attention to budgetary and financial control. South Staffordshire Council Tax remains in the lowest third in national rankings and our Parish Council Precept per household also remains well below the average for all South Staffordshire parishes and we should be proud that we play our small part in these statistics.

I would hope that any successor to the position of Chair will continue to embrace and develop these programs and standards of performance and to continue to aspire to achieving the 'General Power of Competence' and a 'Quality Assurance Award' which have always been my short to medium term goals.

And so, a huge thank you to my fellow Councillors and Colleagues, Parish Volunteers and all our other cherished Parish Institutions who continue to make our Parish the envy of others.

Alas, we must also recognise that not all institutions, however great, may continue forever and so for my final salutation, I must now turn to our esteemed Parish Clerk – Nagle Walton. After dedicating almost fifty years of selfless service to this office Nagle has finally decided it is time to hand on the Parish Ledgers and Minute Book. The Parish has been truly honoured and blessed to have benefited from the dedication of such a loyal and long-standing servant and it has been an absolute pleasure, for me, to Chair this Council with Nagle's constant friendship, wisdom, knowledge, and support throughout. And I have no doubt that these heartfelt sentiments will be echoed by *all* who have been privileged to share this top table with her.

So, it is, with all our respect and endearment, we wish you the exceedingly long, happy, and healthy retirement you so richly deserve – 'To Nagle!'

Parish Chairman

Councillor A. Hingley-Smith