Trysull and Seisdon Parish Council Chairman's Report 2022

Presented at The Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th April 2022 by Chairman Cllr. Andrew Hingley-Smith.

It has been an important and exciting year at the helm. Important because of the exit from Covid restrictions that allowed projects to re-commence and exciting because the Parish Council has been able to deliver the most significant, planned and promised results. And, so a huge thank you to my fellow councillors and colleagues who appreciated and shared in what I believed to be a necessary focus on 'Visual Parish Improvement' much of which would not have been achieved without their diligence, precious time, effort and sheer hard work. I have, indeed, been lucky to have received such dedicated support. A special mention to Nagle, our esteemed Clerk for her consummate loyalty to office, her personal support for me and for being that constant source of wisdom, experience and knowledge from which I have often requested comfort. I must mention too my previous Chairmen. Steve Harrison, now enjoying his retirement in the Cotswolds, was a great inspiration in my election to Council in the first instance with his vision of becoming a more 'pro-active' organisation. To my immediate predecessor too, Cllr. Mike Kelly, a sincere thank you for having the confidence in me to continue with and to build on the ground work for parish improvements already planned and put in place under his fine and most welcome stewardship which was made, all the more, difficult in times of 'lock-down'.

I would also like to show my appreciation for our County and District Councillor Victoria Wilson who also offers constant support in matters of parish affairs. Victoria regularly attends our Council meetings and has helped generate a new accessibility to higher tiers of local government giving us a more effective presence at parish level. She must take particular credit for organising the Highways matters listed below. Opportunities to attend district forums and civic events have not been passed over which, no doubt, has helped raise our Parish profile too. This culminated in a recent meeting I had with the new leader of our District Council and the Chief Executive Officer with whom I was able to discuss directly various parish concerns such as road sweeping, fly tipping and prospects of a neighbourhood plan to name but a few. We have received some excellent feed-back in terms of what assistance may be available on several topic points and it was also very pleasant to note our achievements at parish level had not gone un-noticed in higher tiers.

So, what has this splendid team work achieved for the Parish this past year?

- Telephone Box Renovations
- Bug Hotel – Trysull School
- Dangerous Railings Removal
- New Flags for Village Green
- New Planters and their Seasonal Upkeep
- New Parish Benches / Base Renovations
- Shelter Painting / Renovations
- Play Area Repairs / Fence Repairs and Painting
- Best Kept Village Entry – Nominal prize winner
- Community Speed Watch Training
- Additional Bins / Grit Bin

- Tree Pollarding / Verge Improvements and Tidying
- Replacement Oak Posts at the Pavilion Car Park
- Village Hall Gate and Fence Repairs
- Christmas Tree Lights
- Parish Calendars / Whole Parish Distribution
- Parish Magazine Articles
- Public Defibrillator (on National Register)
- Defibrillator Training organised
- Jubilee Canopy / New Playing Field Benches
- New Speed Limit Signs (Fox Road)
- Weight Restriction Signage (Fox Road)

This list of achievements is certainly not exhaustive. New Village signs are already on order and we will hopefully see the installation of these this summer in order to complete this major parish project. Additional Speed Indicator Device positions have also now been identified and approved as part of our constant battle and concern with speeding through the Parish.

A special thank you too to all our volunteers for their marvellous support, tidying verges, litter picking, speed watching, lending heavy lifting gear, donating a bench, gifting plants and bulbs, sponsoring projects so generously or simply acknowledging our improvements. We would certainly not have achieved all we had hoped if it were not for this wonderful and heart-warming sense of community spirit.

Visual improvements are important, they are tangible, but should not remain the only measure of success. Quality of any service and its delivery starts from a more fundamental base. A firm focus of mine, as Chairman, has also been to continue with the implementation and updating of a sound and resolute policy base and by further adopting the spirit of the Transparency Code we now grant full public access to all our financial and budgetary data on a quarterly basis in addition to the statutory and summary annual returns. Openness and Accountability are important standards and, I believe, are expressions of a Parish Council's confidence in its ability to provide a quality service and performance. A further demonstration of this quality is our sound financial control, delivering on budgets this year to within a fine degree of accuracy. Councillor training programs have been attended and take up of these opportunities will continue to be encouraged.

To reiterate our previous Chairman's statement, planning matters continue to be a high priority in terms of our due diligence, scrutiny and comment. As a Statutory Consultee in the Planning Process the Parish Council will always apply its best endeavours to maintain our essential village environment, which we all wish to see remain unspoiled by progress. To add to this level of assurance, we now have access to further professional input at parish level.

The Parish Council's web-site development has continued as an important tool in terms of improved communication with parishioners. Our web pages not only include the necessary detail of our meetings' agenda and minutes our News page also includes informative parish and district articles and provides a direct access to any public consultation currently in progress. Direct links to other local and central authorities are also available together with reporting facilities for environmental crime and much more. We also list all Parish Planning Applications and provide a direct access to District's Planning Portal where anyone may comment on these applications. The Parish web-site is constantly updated and indeed the analytics suggest an encouraging increase in new and returning visits month on month.

We continue to provide our monthly articles to the Church and Parish Magazine and we have a keen focus on increasing its distribution as part of our overall improved communication program. In addition to the main narrative in these articles I have always promoted our openness and our willingness to engage with parishioners and stressed that their presence at meeting will always be most welcome. We also have new notice boards planned, to be placed at more prominent locations and we are conscious we may also need to reinvigorate our social media presence.

I would hope you may recall my recent article on the distinction between a 'Parish Council' and a 'Parish' meeting. The later provides an opportunity for representatives of other key parish organisations to come together to exchange ideas, issues, concerns or indeed discuss any other 'parish affair' with parish councillors in order to identify areas of common interest where synergy and the mutual benefits of 'joint enterprise' may become apparent. Such meetings will also serve to demonstrate that the Parish Council is receptive to hearing the views of local residents.

Indeed, several recent Parish meetings have now been held but, understandably, have remained solely focused on the forthcoming Jubilee celebrations. It is hoped, however, that now this avenue of communication has been developed it will continue to be a regular multi-organisational forum that will help deliver a more informed and co-ordinated approach to some wider aspects of future parish development and improvement. So, a big thank you too to all those representatives who have joined us at these round table events and for their continuing and dedicated commitment to their respective vocations that all helps make this Parish the envy of many others.

I would like to conclude by offering, once again, a sincere thank you to my colleagues and fellow Councillors who have helped deliver an impressive program this term with extraordinary passion and determination. The position of Councillor is attained, in an instant, with a signature, but to serve the office well takes many hours of dedicated effort. I am proud to assure the parish we have such dedication in abundance and it has been my privilege to Chair the team this year.

Parish Council Chairman - Andrew