Trysull and Seisdon Parish Council – Business As Usual (Jun 2020 Cllr. AHS)

Well not quite and it may well be some time before we see a return to what was regarded as normal practices. No organisation has been able to avoid the disruption caused by COVID-19 over the last three or so months and this includes, not least, the Parish Council. Ordinarily Councillors are formally summoned to attend Parish Council meetings and it is only while attending in person at Council are we able to use powers to influence, decide on and transact business. Parish Council meetings are necessarily held in public and this would have brought holding such meetings into direct conflict with the social distancing and lockdown requirements now imposed. Indeed Government was quite explicit with its advice that such meetings could no longer be entertained. Recognising the requirement that local authority business had to continue it enacted emergency regulations, via powers contained in the Coronavirus Act 2020, which essentially allowed Council business to be conducted via remote or virtual meetings.

The Parish Council adapted very quickly to this developing situation and the new regulations and is proud to have held its first ever virtual meeting in May and with a public audience too! Our June meeting is scheduled to be held in the same manner. It is important to remember that these meetings remain public events and if you wish the attend, remotely of course, then simply follow the protocol in the meeting notice as advertised on our new web site which may be found at

trysullandseisdonparishcouncil.org

There is only one condition and that is you will require a device that operates 'zoom'.

On the theme of public participation it is vital to the Parish Council that we become informed of any local concerns you may have. We positively encourage active engagement and all our Councillors and Clerk are very approachable and all have provided their contact details on the web site. Even if our limited powers prevent us from taking a direct approach in any concern that you may wish to bring to our attention, we remain in the most favourable position of working very closely with our dual role District and County Councillor who is always willing to take genuine issues to these higher authorities on our behalf. The Parish Council too adopts this ethos of engagement with its equals and peers. It now attends Parish Summit Conferences organised by District and your Parish Council will also now actively represent and speak on your behalf at District planning meetings where strong objections to the planning matter are sustainable. For the first time we also have a direct representation on District's Standards and Resources Committee.

More information about what we do may be found on our web site along with the minutes of all previous meetings. Our 2019/2020 Annual Governance Statements and Accounting Statement have also now been published. Your public rights to scrutiny of these accounts are also detailed.

The new web site continues to be work in progress with further developments such as budgetary control information; a planning application log and even a new Parish Council logo are in mind. As it stands it is the culmination of some nine months of dedicated work and with the complete creation of all new policy documents this is the first stage towards achieving the goal of a Quality Assurance Award. Why not consider becoming a Parish Councillor too and find out, first hand, how rewarding our work can be. Join the team and help progress our ideas for the future together with your own. Training for the uninitiated is also now encouraged but is no means an essential undertaking.

Next week will see further relaxations of the lockdown provisions but strict social distancing and hygiene measures remain the key to beating this horrid virus. Our Community Speed Watch Teams have been asked by Staffordshire Police co-ordinators to consult on their views on various safety issues as a pre-cursor to re-commencing operations. The Parish Council will be advocating a recommencement as soon as possible given that we believe these activities may be carried out successfully and safely while still maintaining the required strict social distancing measures. We will of course wait for and follow the full recommendations from the consultation process and then use this as the acceptable standard when considering re-commencing our other activities such as litter picking.

The most important business of all is to 'stay safe'. Please read the Council News Round Up - Issue 172 article on the 'news' tab on our web site and stay updated with current rules and advice.