



# SALFORD PRIORS PARISH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL REPORT 2009 – 2010



### INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report covers the work of the Parish Council for the period commencing at the beginning of April in 2009 and ending at the end of March 2010.

### PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council held 12 Ordinary meetings during the year in addition to the Annual meeting in May and the Annual Parish Meeting in April. All meetings were held in The Memorial Hall, Salford Priors, with the exception of the October meeting that was held in the Baptist Church Hall in Dunnington. During the year one hundred and three members of the public attended meetings with the largest attendance being when quarrying at Marsh Farm was under discussion.

Attendance by Councillors: (out of 13)

KA James (11); AW Wolfe (11); JR Stedman (11); RA Francis (11); RM Pane (11); DC Penn (13); M Myers (9)

Attendance by County and District Councillors

P Barnes (7); B Slaughter (7); D Pemberton (8); KA James (11)

Cllr. KA James resigned as Chairman and as a member of the Parish Council at the January meeting. Subsequently, Cllr. AW Wolfe was elected as Chairman and Cllr. M Myers was elected as Vice-Chairman. Cllr. RM Pane resigned as a member of the Parish Council at the February meeting.

### ISSUES

#### Speed Limits, Evesham Road and Station Road

Warwickshire CC completed the scheme to impose new speed limits on Station Road and Evesham Road between the A46 roundabout and the County boundary beyond Abbots Salford. The scheme included new speed limits, a solar powered speed visor, and a road narrowing build out by Cleeve View designed to reduce speeding through Salford Priors. Following completion of the scheme Council reviewed the results of speed test and have requested further tests as speeds do not appear to have been significantly reduced. (Subsequently, the chicane was removed by the County Council and the Parish Council are pressing for alternative measures to be implemented.)

#### Lighting in Playing Field

The solar powered lights provided through landfill tax funding from the CEMEX Community Fund and the Warwickshire Environmental Trust were installed and provide a low output light source to illuminate the paths to TOPs and the Scout Hut without being over-powering. Some timing issues remain and are being investigated.

#### Drainage works

A scheme to prevent flooding at the bottom of Tothall Lane was constructed using a grant from the District Council's flood relief fund.

#### Emergency planning.

During the year the Parish Council's Emergency Plan was re-written to a format specified by the County Emergency Planning team.

### **Housing Consultation**

The Rural Housing Enabler from Warwickshire Rural Community Council has been working with the Council and the community to identify possible locations for six new affordable homes specifically for local people. One site with a willing seller has now been identified and schemes will be produced.

### **TOPs**

The Council has continued to support TOPs and has carried out necessary repairs. In particular, new UPVC double glazed windows were fitted all round in the summer and this has helped to maintain the building in a dry and warm condition. The Council pays all bills for the building but has required the Management Committee to pay a service charge of £600 per year as a contribution towards ongoing maintenance.

### **Litter bins and dog bins**

As part of the spending review carried out last summer, new litter and dog waste bins were provided at key locations in the parish. In addition, the work of Cllr. Myers in meeting local landowners resulted in additional dog waste bins being provided and serviced by Alamo and Sandfields and the Council is very grateful for this contribution. On a negative note, it is very disappointing to report the continuing vandalism of the bins on the playing field resulting in unnecessary expenditure of over £500 in recent years.

### **Training in the power of well-being**

All members of the Council and the Clerk were successfully trained in the new Power of Well-Being that gives the Council more freedom in how it spends its money.

### **Survey of footway lights**

A long standing issue has been the ownership of the streetlights in Priors Grange. This has now been resolved as being the responsibility of the housing association, Orbit. The Parish Council carried out an independent physical survey of all its streetlights to complement the inspection by our maintenance contractor EON. As a result it appears that several lights will require total replacement and significant funding will have to be provided to ensure the ongoing integrity of the lights.

### **Salt and grit bins**

The bad weather during January and February highlighted the need for more salt and grit bins around the parish. These have now been provided and all residents may make use of the bins to salt outside their properties. The bins are kept topped up by the County Council highways department.

### **Allotments**

As part of the spending review an additional water tank has been installed at the allotments at the bottom of Ridsdale Close. It is pleasing to note that some allotment holders are making good progress in preparing their plots and it is hoped the new water supply will be beneficial to them. There are still some plots available and these have been advertised on the notice boards.

### **Footpaths**

As mentioned earlier Cllr. Myers met landowners regarding several rights of way in the parish. She was successful in obtaining improvements in several places and the Council is grateful for her efforts and those of Sandfields, Alamo, and the Polacci brothers. Don Penn has continued to perform sterling service in clearing blocked footpaths and working with the County Council footpath officer to ensure that paths are properly marked and to deal with any cropping issues.

## **PLANNING AND POLICY ISSUES**

### **Planning Applications**

During the course of the year the Parish Council considered eleven planning applications ranging from minor changes to properties and trimming of trees in the conservation area to major applications such as the proposals to extend quarrying at Marsh Farm north of Broom Lane.

### **Marsh Farm extension**

A planning application for the extension of the quarry at Marsh Farm was submitted by CEMEX during the year. The application raised many concerns amongst residents and was opposed by the Parish Council on the grounds that it was premature as there was no overall plan for future mineral extraction and also that restoration of the existing site was not progressing at an acceptable rate.

### **Policy issues**

The Parish Council is consulted on all policy issues by the County and District Councils and responding effectively to these is often a challenge. During the year there have been several important issues.

### **Warwickshire Minerals Strategy**

The County minerals strategy elicited an enormous response particularly in respect of a proposal to excavate sand and gravel from Berry Coppice around the Hillers Farm Shop. The Parish Council funded two consultant's reports and local residents provided other expert information and a very comprehensive response was submitted to the County Council. The County are still working through the proposals.

### **Warwickshire Fire service review**

During the year the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service produced a controversial report proposing to close fire stations at Bidford and Studley and to make Alcester Station full time. Bidford residents mounted a very effective campaign with public meetings attended by hundreds of people and demonstrated how the station could be preserved and money actually saved! The Parish Council strongly supported the campaign and submitted its own very full response.

### **Worcestershire Waste Management Strategy**

A full response was submitted to the proposals in the Worcestershire waste management strategy. A matter of concern is the lack of materials to complete the restoration of excavated sand and gravel sites.

## **PROVIDING INFORMATION TO RESIDENTS**

The Council serves as an important link between the District, County, Regional, and National government and parishioners and provides information to residents in several different ways:

### **Newsletter**

A special Gravel News letter was produced in April together with a Salford Seven News. Another edition of Salford Seven News was produced in November 2009.

### **Website**

The website continues to be developed including full details of all Parish Council meetings.

### **E-mail newsletter**

E-mail newsletters have been circulated to interested persons providing up to date information on matters affecting the parish. Anyone wishing to receive the e-newsletter should contact the Clerk.

### **Parish Office and Resource Centre**

The Parish Office is situated at the back of the Memorial Hall in Salford Priors. The office is generally open on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10am to noon. An internet connection and photo-copying facilities are available for use by residents. The Clerk is able to provide full information about the Parish Council in accordance with the Freedom of Information policy of the Council.

## **FINANCE**

### **Review of expenditure 2009 - 2010**

Total income during 2009 – 2010 (excluding VAT) was £51743.57

The main items of income were:

Precept	£41000.00
SDC Mowing grant	£2225.60
Allotments	£714.00
TOPs service charge	£450.00

Total expenditure during 2009 – 2010 (excluding VAT) was £50711.56

The main items of expenditure were:

Mowing and flower displays	£18178.71
Communications	£728.00
Highways and Footway lighting	£5489.28
Projects	£683.50
S137 payments	£380.00
Strategic expenditure (TOPs)	£5631.26
General administration inc. Staff costs	£19620.81

### **Donations made**

During the year the Parish Council made donations of £100 to the Village Fete Committee, £180 to the Salford Priors Amateur Theatrical Society, and £100 to the Salford Priors Royal British Legion.

### **Participatory budget meeting**

In order to inform the budget making process for the financial year 2010 – 2011 the Council held a participatory budget meeting to present details of the Council's income and expenditure and to seek the views of residents on spending priorities. It was disappointing that not a single resident attended.

### **Precept for 2010 - 2011**

The Precept for the next financial year is £47000. This is the money the Parish Council needs to spend to carry out its responsibilities to all residents. Services provided from the Precept include Amenity Mowing, Verge Mowing, Maintenance of the Playing Field and Allotments, Providing Flower Planters and Displays, Maintenance and Servicing of TOPs and the Parish Office, Providing Footway Lighting, and providing the link between residents and the District and County Councils.

The increase in the Precept is £6000 and although this is a large increase it follows a reduction the previous year when several grants were obtained. However, the average increase since 2005/06 has been 3.5 per cent. This year there is potential major expenditure for new footway lights at £1000 each and provision has to be made for this. For a Band D property the Parish Precept is equivalent to £1.65 per week.

### **Acknowledgements**

This report only highlights some of the work of the Parish Council during the last twelve months; the detailed minutes of all meetings are available for inspection at the Parish Office or on the web site.

During the course of the year our long-serving Chairman, Kim James, left the Council. Kim had been a member of the Council for 26 years and our Chairman for 21 years. Kim's contribution to Parish life was enormous, far too wide reaching to record accurately in this short time. His support for organisations and individuals in the parish was never rationed and is well recorded in the Minutes of the Parish Council over all those years.

Peggy Pane also left the Council. We are indebted to Peggy for the part she has played in parish life. She will always be the village "head girl".

The Council will suitably recognise the achievements of both Kim and Peggy in due course.

Finally as Chairman I would like to record my appreciation to members of the Parish Council for their work, to our District and County Council Ward members for their support and involvement, and also to our Parish Clerk, Michael Philpott, for all his efforts on behalf of the Parish.

**Cllr. A W Wolfe, Chairman**

**15<sup>th</sup>. April 2010**