

Chairman's Annual Report

Salford Priors Parish Council

April 2025 – March 2026

Good evening everyone,

It is my pleasure to present the Chairman's Annual Report covering the work of Salford Priors Parish Council over the past year.

Throughout this period, the Parish Council has continued to represent residents across the seven communities of this parish. Our work has focused on addressing local concerns, reviewing planning applications, planning enforcement, maintaining parish assets, supporting community initiatives, and working closely with district and county council authorities.

I would like to begin by thanking my fellow councillors for their dedication and voluntary service over the past year. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to our Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) for her continued professionalism and support, which underpins everything we do.

I would also like to take a moment to recognise the excellent work of our Parish Maintenance Officer Lengthsman, who continues to carry out his duties to an exceptionally high standard. His contribution plays a vital role in maintaining the appearance and safety of our parish.

Overview of the Year

Between April 2025 and March 2026, the Council has:

- Held 12 formal meetings
- Strengthened the membership of the Parish Council through co-options, while also managing changes in councillor roles
- Reviewed and responded to numerous planning applications
- Maintained careful financial oversight
- Continued regular liaison with the district and county council
- Made representations to our MP on Local Government Reorganisation, Leisure Facilities and the safety concerns of the A46 Trunk Road.

We also welcomed newly elected representatives at both district and county level, strengthening links with our partner authorities.

The Year in Review

Let me now take you through the year as it unfolded.

April 2025

We began the year with the Annual Parish Meeting at the Memorial Hall, attended by residents, councillors and community representatives. Guest speakers included representatives from Salford Priors CofE Academy, the Police & Crime Commissioner and local policing teams, providing updates and answering questions from residents.

May 2025

In May, we held the Annual Council Meeting, confirming the Chairman and Vice-Chairman reviewing governance arrangements. We also welcomed a newly elected Warwickshire County Councillor Cliff Brown.

June 2025

June saw the co-option of two new councillors, Max Howarth and Andrew Richardson, strengthening the Council's capacity and bringing additional skills into our working groups.

July 2025

The Council continued its work reviewing planning applications and maintaining oversight of development within the parish.

September 2025

Following the summer recess, meetings resumed with focus on infrastructure, parish maintenance, and resident concerns.

October 2025

We received updates regarding district council representation and continued liaison with our district and county colleagues.

November 2025

Planning, finance, and highways concerns continued to be key areas of discussion. Following a by-election in November, we welcomed our new District Councillor, Ashley Jones. We look forward to working closely with him in representing the interests of the parish and its residents.

December 2025

The final meeting of the year included reviews of parish services, planning matters and financial performance setting the 2026/27 Precept.

December also marked the closure of the Warwickshire Rural Community Council a charity that have supported rural community village halls for the last eighty years with all staff being made redundant.

January 2026

The Council resumed regular business, with continued focus on highways, infrastructure, and planning.

Members met informally to discuss a vision for the council over the forthcoming year as in May 2027 the parish council will be up for election.

February 2026

In February, Mrs Lauren Stanley was removed from office due to non-attendance, in accordance with statutory requirements.

March 2026

Councillor Andrew Richardson resigned from the Council. I would like to thank both former councillors for their contributions during their time in office.

We supported the national Bumblebee Habitat Aware project, and we are in the process of distributing three hundred bags of Bumblebee & Butterfly wildflower seeds, each bag contains seeds that will cover a square metre of ground and produce a colourful display of wild flowers to encourage bumblebees and butterflies.

Planning and Development

Planning remains one of the most significant areas of Parish Council activity.

During the year, we reviewed a wide range of planning applications and ensured that the views of residents were represented in submissions to the local planning authority.

Looking ahead, the Council also facilitated a developer-led public information evening regarding a proposed development of approximately 100 homes on land to the rear of Cedar Close. This event provided residents with an early opportunity to view proposals and ask questions. A formal planning application is expected later this year.

In addition, the proposed Arrow Valley Solar Farm Project represents a major development that will have a significant impact on the rural character of the parish. This project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, and as such, the final decision will be made by the Secretary of State. The Parish Council will continue to engage with the process and represent local views as appropriate.

Highways and Infrastructure

Road safety and traffic concerns remain key issues raised by residents.

We have continued to work with the relevant authorities to monitor traffic speeds and explore potential safety measures, including vehicle-activated signage.

The Council has also had to address instances of vandalism within the parish, including damage to playing field equipment and bus shelters. Such behaviour is not only antisocial but also places an unnecessary financial burden on the parish. We would urge everyone to help protect and respect our shared community assets.

Community Engagement

Community engagement remains central to our work.

Public participation at meetings continues to be promoted, and we encourage residents to remain actively involved in parish matters.

We continue to use social media to ensure news is widely distributed.

We published the Annual and Financial Account Report

We have also supported local initiatives and events that strengthen community spirit.

Finance and Responsible Management

The Parish Council continues to manage its finances carefully and transparently.

The precept for 2025/26 was £84,000, equating to £123.92 per year for a Band D household—around 34 pence per day.

Like the principle authorities Parish Councils are experiencing financial pressures, inflation higher costs, higher insurance premiums, higher external audit fees, vandalism and increased demands which all has an impact on the budget but it is the role of the Parish Council to develop a robust expenditure plan and vision to serve the communities of the parish.

In December the Parish Council set a precept of £88,000 for 2026/27 equating to £130.53 for a Band D household – around 36p per day an increase of 5.3%

In addition to the precept, income has been received from grants, VAT refunds, and developer contributions.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

One of the most significant sources of investment into the parish in recent years has been the Community Infrastructure Levy, commonly known as CIL.

CIL is a charge paid by developers when new housing or commercial development takes place. The purpose of the levy is to ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with growth in the area.

The Community Infrastructure Levy continues to provide significant funding for the parish.

Due to our adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan, we receive 25% of CIL funds generated locally. These funds are used to support infrastructure projects, including the Greenway and other improvements.

- Salford Priors Memorial Hall – £5,500 to support refurbishment of toilet facilities
- St Matthew's Church – £12,000 towards a new heating system

These grants help sustain vital community services and facilities used by residents across the parish.

Financial Position

I would like to take a few minutes to provide a summary of the Parish Council's financial position and the work that has been delivered during the financial year from April 2025 through to March 2026.

The Parish Council continues to manage public funds carefully and transparently, ensuring that the money raised from the parish precept, together with external funding such as developer contributions, is used to benefit the community.

The Council has maintained a strong financial position, with total funds of just under £516,504 held across various accounts.

It is important to note that a large proportion of these funds are restricted for specific infrastructure projects and cannot be used for general expenditure.

The council has also continued to invest in routine services such as playground inspections, public rights of way maintenance, and environmental services such as dog waste and litter collection services.

Grants and Community Support

We have continued to support local organisations through grant funding, helping sustain important community facilities and services across the parish.

Infrastructure Investment

Key investments during the year have included:

- Greenway improvements
- Additional street lighting
- Maintenance of parish assets
- Defibrillator provision
- Additional replacement notice boards
- Play & recreational equipment
- Ongoing environmental and maintenance services

Governance

The Council continues to operate strong governance and financial controls, with all expenditure reviewed by the Audit Group and approved by councillors and subject to internal and external audit.

I am also pleased to report that during the year the Council was awarded Bronze Status under the Local Council Award Scheme, administered by the National Association of Local Councils. This national award recognises the Council's commitment to good governance, transparency, and effective working practices, and also reflects the high standard of professionalism demonstrated by the Clerk to the Council.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the coming municipal year, the Council will continue to focus on:

- Planning and appropriate development, a revised Neighbourhood Development Plan
 - Developing a brief for a new community building to replace TOPs
 - Representing the communities that will be directly affected by the Arrow Valley Solar Farm proposals
 - Maintaining our twenty-one-mile network of Public Rights of Way
 - Completing the next phases of the Greenway Project
 - Highways and road safety
 - Maintenance of parish assets
 - Investment in infrastructure
 - Supporting community initiatives
 - Encouraging greater public engagement
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Closing Remarks

In closing, I would like to thank:

- All parish councillors for their commitment and service
- Our Clerk for her professionalism
- Our Parish Maintenance Officer / Lengthsman for his excellent work
- Our Amenity Maintenance Contractors for maintaining the excellent standards especially the amenity planting.
- Our District Councillor Ashley Jones & County Councillor Cliff Brown
- All residents and the parish organisations who contribute to parish life
- And finally, to our Warm Hub Volunteers who each Thursday provide a valued community service which has received recognition from His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire Mr. Timothy Cox.

Together, we will continue working to ensure that the Parish of Salford Priors remains a thriving and welcoming place to live and work.

Thank you.

Cllr. Kim James
Chairman Salford Priors Parish Council
8th April 2026