

Malpas Parish Council - Report of PC Chair 2021/2022.

Overview.

It has been a busy year, with new challenges as life started to return to something more like normality. Regular in person meetings returned, as did a range of other face to face contacts.

Whilst the PC is the first level of our democratic system, it can and does play an important role. In that context, positive relationships with CWaC, as the Principal Authority are crucial.

All councillors are volunteers, each giving as much or as little time as they are able. However attendance at the regular monthly PC meetings is viewed as an essential requirement.

Our links to CWaC don't always run smoothly, due in part to the demands on them as a consequence of Covid and budgets being under tremendous pressure. I am therefore grateful to our CWaC Ward Cllr Rachel Williams for her great efforts to promote constructive relationships between the PC and CWaC.

We also have regular "ward walks" with CWaC officers, to look and discuss directly the things requiring attention. Most recently CWaC have replaced our communities liaison officer, this direct link into CWaC, is really important.

Parish Council Members

We've seen a number of comings and goings in 2021/22. Cllrs leaving us, Jackie Clegg, Gordon McGregor Reid, Michelle Lloyd and Cllrs joining, Pauline Hood, Santa Makuza. Thanks to all colleagues on the PC for their contribution and efforts to improve things in and around Malpas.

Our Clerk.

Ruth, has been clerk for almost 18 years and again this year negotiated with flexibility the many requirements to adjust in response to Covid 19.

Ruth also kept us on track financially, submitting unqualified accounts. In turn her high standards of accounting were recognised by the auditor.

We also finally sorted Ruth's grading and undertook her first ever "appraisal".

Grants made.

In 2021 grants were awarded to;

Malpas Community Minibus

Malpas Young Persons Centre

Malpas Cricket Club

Malpas Girls Football Team

Actions taken over the past 12 months.

Amenities and appearance.

Plans to expand the car park have taken a great deal of time and taken much longer than anticipated. However, we've finally applied for planning permission - so watch this space.

After many months of inaction, due to the pandemic, we've got 5 dispensers of bags for dog waste in place. There will soon be 6 in place and to date over 3,000 bags have been taken from the dispensers. So no excuse for anyone to leave their dogs mess on pavements!

We've got another 3 planters in place, in an attempt to brighten up the entry points to the village.

A bus shelter has been installed on Springfield and another will shortly be installed on Old Hall Street. It will replace the one that was outside The Crown, which was destroyed.

Working with Cllr Rachel Williams, we've supported the planting of a number of wildflower areas.

Highways.

The key event was the collapse of the Church yard wall in January 2021, who would have thought it would take so long to be repaired!?

Liaison with and representation to CWaC eventually saw reasonable interim arrangements, with the hope that the final repair will be completed over the summer.

Still not sure who's destroying the cones on Church Street, placed to prevent parking and thus aiding traffic flow.

We've also had issues with Bradley Bridge, now resolved and a number of crumbling road surfaces around the village.

Recognising the severe budget constraints CWaC are under, liaison with their Highways team have improved. This is due in some part to the "ward walks" undertaken with their key officers, the Ward Cllr and representatives on the PC.

Events

The PC made a significant financial contribution to the Christmas Fair, which seemed to be a great hit with villagers.

An integration day, organised by the PC, was held at Malpas sports club. This in an attempt to reintroduce all to what's on offer in the village - particularly villagers who have moved into the new estates.

A climate emergency event was held in the Jubilee Hall, with a large number of villagers attending.

The events for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee being planned by Malpas Community Links are to receive significant financial support.

Police - camera - action.

PCSO Jon Hurst, has been our principal link to Cheshire police. Jon has been a positive presence in the village and has coordinated a number of initiatives. These have included a week in which speeding and illegal parking was clamped down on. Unfortunately due to Jon's ill health, a planned second event looks unlikely to happen.

Jon retires in September.

At a meeting with the clerk and myself, the Police and Crime commissioner has assured us that the PCSO position will be filled.

Speeding, poor driving and parking standards continue to feature in Malpas.

Our application for a pilot of "Average Speed Cameras" on Chester Road, appears not to have enjoyed success.

Planning applications.

Applications continue to be submitted on a very regular basis. The PC being a 'statutory consultee' though it's important to remember that it's CWaC who makes the decisions.

We were extremely disappointed that the proposals for a new health hub on Chester Road have not been supported by the CCG.

Their decision contradicts their original position and seems extremely short sighted.

Our approach to considering planning applications has been challenged. As a consequence a sub group has reviewed our process and will be reporting in May on any adjustments that may be required to our process.

Other activities.

The PC is involved with Cheshire Police to run a number of speed watch events. Sadly the vast majority of motorists who are found to be speeding are locals!

The Mosslands allotments now have an association, which manages the day to day running of the allotments.

We are about to install a defibrillator outside the Jubilee Hall, this being funded through a legacy.

The legacy is from the estate of **Michael Maurice Schroeder**, who was evacuated to the village during World War Two.

The community website has been independently audited for accessibility with no action being required.

Significant section 106 monies - from the Duchy homes estate, are to be drawn down by the PC, to enhance facilities at Malpas Sports and Social Club.

The process for a potential merger with the Cuddington Parish meeting has started, with Cuddington Residents being balloted on their preferences .

The year ahead - to May 2023

There is currently one vacancy on the PC, this for a person to be co-opted.

In 2023, there will be “all out” elections, when all 14 places will be up for election. I know that **several** Cllrs will be standing down, so it’s a good time to be thinking about others putting themselves forward for election in May 2023.

John Webb

Chair Malpas Parish Council

1st May 2022

CWaC = Cheshire West and Chester Council

PC = Parish Council

Cllrs = Councillors

PCSO = Police Community Support officer

CCG = Clinical Commissioning Group.