

The Annual Report of Colwall Parish Council 2018-2019



Chairman's Report

COLWALL PARISH COUNCIL

The body of work achieved by the Parish Council over the last year is amazing, and a real tribute to the commitment and care of our volunteer Councillors.

Our most visible impact has been the continued work on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, culminating in the public meeting earlier this year to update parishioners on the outcomes of the Regulation 14 consultation. This consultation generated written feedback from more than 10 per cent of Colwall's voting population. This is a really strong level of public engagement and a real tribute to Cllr John Stock and the NDP Working Party's management of the consultation process. At the first Herefordshire Parish Council Summit held in Herefordshire at the end of last year, whenever I mentioned where I was from to other delegates, they almost without fail commented on the quality of the draft plan. Particular thanks to John Stock and the NDP working group for this achievement.

As ever, the work of the Planning & Development Committee and the Village Amenities Committee has been the bedrock of what this council does really well: providing careful scrutiny of all planning applications made within the Parish, and maintaining active oversight for the network of footpaths, open spaces, and other facilities for which the Council is responsible. The Planning Committee has been professionally supported over the year by Cllrs Sam Burston, Paul Butler, Wendy Cottam, John Stock, and James Wiseman. What they have achieved is truly remarkable, because it is only through their time-consuming work of visiting application sites, interviewing applicants and neighbours, and drawing up and printing reports and plans, often to very tight deadlines, that the Council has been able to deliver its objective of commenting on every single planning application in Colwall within the statutory consultation period. The village owes them a massive debt of thanks.

The Village Amenities Committee has provided the most tangible outcomes of our work. It's hard to know where to start. Cllr Paul Butler's sustained management of the footpath network volunteers in his capacity as Footpath Officer ensures parishioners are able to enjoy walking around their beautiful surroundings. The reason that Colwall's most significant public places look so cared for is the result of Cllr Gwyneth Rees's careful and knowledgeable oversight of their maintenance, both directly in the case of the Memorial Garden and the John Andrews garden, and with the able assistance of our excellent lengthsman Stephen Maund. The Library working group has continued to look for a long-

term solution for managing the library and the building it occupies; thanks to Cllr Wendy Cottam and Cllr Paul Butler, and Cllr Phil Kendrick, for their work.

One of the things we agreed to do over this last year was to promote visibility of what we do as a council through the new Communications and Community Engagement working party. This group has come up with a really dynamic plan for spreading the word about the work we already do and inviting greater interaction with parishioners about work we could be doing in future. This is not without risk, as it is easy to over-promise and then disappoint; but the gain for the Parish Council, in becoming more explicitly outward facing towards the village, must surely outweigh this. Huge thanks to Cllrs John Daniels, Rita Evans and Elonka Soros for so ably getting this off the ground and bringing the Council to the village.

All of the Council's work is guided by the leaders of our Council committees who without exception are diligent, meticulous and impartial chairs—Jim Beard on Planning, Gwyneth Rees and before her Phil Kendrick on Village Amenities, and Gwyneth Rees on Finance and General Purposes—as well as to the leaders and participants of the working parties. I wish there was an easy way of getting the whole village to be able to say the very loud 'thank you' that you and your hard-working committee members deserve, because I'm sure it would if it could!

As ever, the council owes a debt of gratitude to our clerk, Karen Davis, for all that she does in preparing, delivering and proactively the business of the council.

Roland Trafford Roberts

Chairman.

Finance & General Purposes Committee Report

This has been another satisfactory year financially for the Parish Council.

There was a small deficit of £2,230 against a budgeted deficit of £8,391.; a positive difference for the year of £6,161.

The most notable variations against budget were:-

- General, Recreation area & Play area Village Amenities expense was underspent by £6,180,

of this General Maintenance was underspent by £1,417, grass cutting was under budget by £590, the Railway Garden expenditure was under budget by £661, thanks to the sponsorship of D T Waller, there was very little spend on Play Equipment Maintenance producing a saving over budget of £819, Village Amenities Special project was under budget by £1,117 and the Nature Reserve came in £1,300 under budget.

-General Administration came in over budget by £2,838 predominately due to the redesign and update to the website site costing some £1,700 plus a recent traffic speed survey undertaken costing £1,500, neither of which had been budgeted for.

-There were no consultancy costs; saving £400

-There were minimal legal fees, giving a saving of £370.

-Insurance came in under budget by £227.

Neighbourhood Development Plan - The net cost of the Neighbourhood Development Plan this year was £9,109 (against a budgeted £11,000) with some costs being deferred to the new financial year due to unforeseen delays in completion of the Plan.

Finally turning to the reserves, the allocated reserve funds totaling £61,197 are comfortably adequate and the General Reserve at the end of fiscal 2018/19 stands at £54,080.

In all, it was another successful and satisfying year financially.

Thanks go to all my fellow councillors for their appreciation of our finances and for the good sense and restraint with which they have committed our community's money. My thanks also go to our Parish Clerk for her stewardship of the accounts and the timely and accurate production of information that has enabled us to make informed and positive decisions.

Gwyneth Rees

Chairman F & GP Committee

Planning and Development Committee Report

Over the last year the Planning and Development committee have met on a regular basis to discuss various planning applications.

It is important that we raise a local viewpoint which may be overlooked at County level as well as overseeing our Conservation area.

We work in a close collaboration with the Malvern Hills Trust and Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for both help and input we receive, as well as referencing applications to the MHAONB Guidance on Building Design and Lighting and guidelines as we are "wholly in and surrounded by" the Malvern Hills AONB.

This year we have had 64 applications before the committee. From small housing developments to house extensions, garden sheds and garages to tree preservation orders. 18 applications related to trees. Although many are merely tree husbandry we as a Committee are concerned about the increasing number of requests to fell healthy trees for no valid reason.

A lot of time has been spent discussing the housing development behind the Thai restaurant as well as well as the new development behind the rectory and variations to ongoing developments.

A report for an application is produced by a lead member of the committee and where possible it is discussed with the applicant and their neighbours. This report is presented at committee so allowing all members to discuss the application and either raise objections or in fact have "no objections to that which is proposed".

It is gratifying to see the number of parishioners who turn up at meetings to discuss and suggest various matters which enables the committee to put forward a balanced viewpoint.

All applicants are considered against all relevant planning policies as well as using the guidance notes issued by the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It is important to note that Colwall Parish Council is only "a consultee", with decisions being made by Herefordshire Planning Officers or their Planning Committee.

It is therefore important that parishioners register their views directly with the Herefordshire Planning Authority as well as speaking to the Parish Council.

I would like to thank all members of the Planning Committee for their commitment and hard work ensuring all applicants are examined in a very professional manner and Karen our Clerk for keeping us on the right lines throughout our year.

Jim Beard

Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee.

Village Amenities Committee Report

The Amenities Committee meets every 2 months and oversees the regular workload within the Village. The Amenities Committee are pleased to advise that all the work undertaken during the past year has come within the allocated budget,

Play Areas- The Committee oversees the recreational facilities which include the play areas at Walwyn Meadow, Brookmill Close, Orlin Road, Colwall Green and Allen's Meadow all of which have ROSPA inspections each year and are reported to be in good order.

Colwall Green: The twice yearly cutting of Colwall Green and inspection by Malvern Hills Trust, who are responsible for the maintenance of the Green, continue to improve the Green although there has been a considerable reduction in the Scabious each year. The relocation of the Village School has reduced the parking problems at Colwall Green. A replacement memorial seat at the bus stop has been agreed, and at the request of Parishioners at Colwall Green an Oak tree has been planted to replace the ancient one in an adjoining hedgerow which had to be removed due to disease. The small flower boxes have proved to be a success at the bus shelter.

Footpaths :- Councillor Paul Butler is our Parish Footpath Officer and reports to the Amenities Committee on the condition of footpaths, stiles and gates and liaises with our Parish Clerk, for the repairs which are carried out by Stephen Maund on behalf of the Parish.

Charlie Ballard Reserve: - This continues to be an area of interest to both adults and children with each changing season. The ponds are now clear and we hope the newts will appear again this year. Stephen Maund maintains the reserve on behalf of the Parish.

Walwyn Meadow: - The small area of wild flowers and bulbs planted last year were only partly successful and we will try again this season. The large climbing 'stone' in the meadow area has provided a challenge for the young people in the village. Councillor John Andrews' memorial flower bed is enjoyed by visitors to the Library and is maintained by a member of the Parish Council. Aunt Alice is serviced annually and the Fleetwood family regularly wind the clock. At Christmas time the Council arrange for the Christmas tree to be erected and members of the Council oversee erection, lights and decoration.

Station Gardens: - The station approach garden is in good order as are the narrow flower beds on the platform. The beds now have an acknowledgement to the Picton Gardens and their RHS Michaelmas Daisy collection, some of which we have in the beds.

Memorial Garden at St James: The garden is maintained by Stephen Maund.

A member of the Parish Council plants the flower beds and boxes during the summer and decorates the memorial with poppies in readiness for the Annual Remembrance Service in November.

Thanks: - Our thanks to the landowners with footpaths across their properties who keep them open and in good order. Also to Network Rail for the completion of the new footbridge over the railway line. Thanks to the army of volunteers who report to the Footpath Officer and help to keep our footpaths, gates and styles open for everyone to enjoy. Our thanks to D.T. Waller & Sons for their ongoing sponsorship of the flower beds. Special thanks go to the Parish Clerk, Karen Davis, for her guidance and support, and to Stephen Maund, our Lengthsman, for helping to maintain the Parish footpaths.

My thanks to all the Colwall Parish Councillors and our co-opted members of the Committee for their hard work during the past year.

Gwyneth M Rees

Vice-Chairman Village Amenities Committee