

# Burton in Kendal Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2016/17

Delivered by Alan Wren

This year has seen the first parish council elections for many years, resulting in a change of two members of the council and I would like to welcome Sarah and David to what I hope will be the first of many annual parish council meetings. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our previous councillors. John Brown for his service to the parish, and of course Peter Smith who served both as councillor and as Parish Clerk, and on a personal note I would like to thank Peter for the guidance he gave me during my first few meetings in the chair.

During my research for this report, I looked back over the last couple of years of minutes and agendas, a noticeable trend in the decrease of consultation documents being passed on to us for comment as a council. With many bodies opting for an online option, with councillors being asked to respond individually rather than as a council. Another unfortunate decrease noted was the infrequency we have a police presence at a meeting, we do still however receive an emailed report but we have only had two visits from PCSO's Coleman and Boak. Thankfully we in Burton and the surrounding area are incredibly lucky to have such a low crime rate, but a more frequent visit from the local constabulary would be most welcome.

Something which never seems to decrease from year to year is the number of planning applications we receive, 2016/17 was no exception with the council being asked to comment on sixteen applications. These range from a small extension, to two of the three larger scale developments included in the Local Development Plan. The Green Dragon Development had a planning workshop in May which three councillors were invited to attend. And the Church Bank development currently well underway. Other notable applications were the Home Park Quarry extension of time, and the controversial Witherslack Group's application for a "Certificate of Lawful Development" on The Cottage.

During planning it was also noticeable that the Government's switch of subsidies on renewable green energy has changed with the steady increase in solar power solutions over wind turbines. With numerous solar array developments both within our parish and surrounding countryside.

The last twelve months have also seen the council again contribute to the village book drop service, a well-attended facility in the memorial hall. The recreation ground grass cutting, and the installation of rubber safety matting to be placed under the zip wire on the playground.

Some topics never go away and are visited most years. Parking, speeding, dog fouling and drainage are four regulars and we all have our favourite. Unfortunately, parking is a subject we will visit many more times, all we can ask is that driver's park within the law and with the consideration of others. Hopefully we have helped alleviate some of the dog mess in the village with the provision of a poo bag dispenser fitted in the square. However, we still have issues in some areas in the village with dog mess, may I remind dog owners of their responsibility to clean up after their pet, and the financial penalties if they don't. The parish council will continue to maintain pressure on the authorities to improve the drainage within the village following the floods of 2015. This is a topic I raise on a regular basis, but as yet with little joy. Speeding is another annual problem which I hope with the installation of a speed indication device (SID) the council has helped to alleviate, we unfortunately cannot make provision for the idiot on the road.

This year the council's finance working party advised the council that a modest precept rise was needed and a precept of £15090 was proposed. This was in order to maintain the council's current financial footing. (The precept is the Parish Councils share of your council tax.) This figure was duly adopted.

Unfortunately, the number of members of the public attending council meetings was disappointing again this year. I am hoping with some larger planning developments on the horizon, the number of parishioners attending meetings will increase. But it would be nice to see anyone with new ideas and suggestions, or who was just interested in how the council works. So please do come along we don't bite!

It only needs me to thank my fellow councillors who give their valuable time to represent the parishes' interests on many organizations such as Burton Educational Foundation, Burton Recreation Trust, Local Area Partnership, Memorial Hall Management Committee, Quarry Liaison Committee, Burton School Governors, Fireworks Working Party, Lenthsmen Manager, Plane Quarry working Group, Playground Maintenance to name but a few.

I would also like to thank our local press representatives who sit through all of our meetings, without yawning too much or dropping off to sleep, our Lentsman David Holmes for his tireless work keeping the parish in good order. District Councillor Cooper, District and County Councillor Bingham for their regular attendances and carrying our views and issues forward. I would also like to thank Alison Cummings for auditing our accounts. Last, but not least our Parish Clerk who works tirelessly chasing up various County and District departments by phone and email, looking after the finances and making these meetings run as smoothly as they do.

Alan Wren.