

# Ollerton with Marthall Parish Council.

Chairman's report for 2010-2011 delivered to The Annual Parish Meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

Good evening, Councillors, Ladies & Gentlemen.

As this is the first meeting following the elections in May for the Parish Council it seems appropriate to congratulate the re-election of each councillor who offered himself for re-appointment; to welcome the three new councillors who have been elected.....Councillors Stephen Blakey, Melanie Butler and Neil Hanlon; and to place on record our appreciation of the service to the council and the community totalling collectively some 30 years by councillors standing down i.e. Richard Barnes, Martyn Berrisford and Jenny Holmes. The Parish Council also congratulates Borough Councillor George Walton on his election to represent the new Chelford Ward, of which the Parish of Ollerton with Marthall is now a part and upon his election as Deputy Mayor of Cheshire East Council. May we all look forward to a useful and rewarding term in office.

I wish to refer at the conclusion of my report to my retiring colleagues.

The twelve months since I last reported to you have been busy, as always, and at times challenging. Many of our responsibilities are ongoing and have been reported in some detail previously, or in the Parish Post and on the village web site so I thought it proper to highlight some major aspects of the Council's work in the last twelve months.

## **Finance.**

Again these are sound and we have agreed to hold the precept down to £6500.00 for the third year running. This will enable us to contribute to the final reconciliation of the accounts for The Hall at Marthall project; to meet our capital and statutory commitments; and to retain a modest reserve account.

## **Planning.**

Demanding as always and varied as reported by the regular 'Applications Monitor' in the 'Parish Post'. Of course affordable housing has been the major controversial item on the Planning Committee's agenda and I, and my

fellow councilors, appreciate the positive contributions made by the residents to this debate, and the civilized way in which views have been put forward.

Your Parish Council made preliminary recommendations for rent controlled property before it became a Government initiative, and will continue to try and secure this asset, but in the number and location acceptable to our residents. This is an ongoing matter with several nationally imposed legal obstacles, but we are actively striving for an agreeable outcome.

Imbued in this is the petition we have received for improved child recreation provisions off Oaklands Road which we aim to make an integral part of the proposed housing development.

#### Highways & Footpaths.

Like almost every authority in the country we are constantly under pressure regarding surface conditions, drainage and general safety. Lack of money is the main obstacle, but after years' of persuasion and with the support of residents and our Borough councillor we have had a spectacular success over re-conditioning what was the worst stretch in School Lane using a new corrosion – resistant technique and we are promised attention for other footpath and highway problems soon.

Linked to this are possibilities for the devolution of responsibilities to town & parish councils with funding from the Borough under the Government's Localism Bill. Currently Cheshire East are negotiating with a small number of larger councils; smaller parishes are promised consideration next year. In anticipation your council is exploring the possibility of a few modest pilot schemes to be funded from our existing resources to strengthen our ability to apply for funding when our turn arrives.

#### The Hall at Marthall.

Parish Councillors have been very directly involved with this project's outstanding success and your council has hosted a modest reception to express your congratulations and thanks for the major time, effort and expertise which the team concerned has devoted to it's accomplishment. As Chairman I have attended many county – wide meetings when praise ( often tinged with envy I suspect) is expressed for our iconic building. The financial results in terms of bookings on which the Chairman of the MOW Project Team reported recently, underlines this success.

Health, Safety & Security.

The care of our community is a major responsibility. In modest, mainly supportive ways, we have tried to secure this. We have advocated the maintenance of the “Dial a Ride” scheme; we attend Airport consultations on matters which could affect us; we have been kept in touch with health authority changes regarding centralized services and transfer of control from borough to local G.Ps; we have consulted with landowners and Borough officers regarding allegedly dangerous trees; we have purchased bins to be placed strategically round the parishes during the winter months in response to the Borough’s offer to keep them filled with grit, sand & salt mixture for residents’ use; we provide liaison with the police, especially in connection with the Rural Watch programs, to list some of the areas we endeavor to cover.

Following the Annual Parish Meeting we will publish a list of the “portfolios” each councillor will undertake, but as always do contact the councillor best known to you if you have concerns or suggestions you wish your council to consider. The dates of the forthcoming meetings are posted on our council notice boards and all residents are invited to attend as observers.

I thank each councillor for their efforts on behalf of the community, and both councillors and residents for their support. And as always to our Clerk for her diligent and professional service.

In closing this meeting I wish to make a small token presentation to our three retiring colleagues on behalf of their former colleagues.

Cllr. A. T. Street.