

# ***OLLERTON WITH MARTHALL PARISH COUNCIL***

## **Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2006 in Ollerton, Marthall & Little Warford Village Hall @7.30pm**

The meeting started @ 19.30hrs with 7 Parish councillors and 1 Borough councillor in attendance.

Parish Councillor Chairman Geoff Mason was the chair for the Annual Parish Meeting and minutes were undertaken by the clerk to the parishes Mr J Cooke.

### **1. Items from attending public**

The below annual report from Borough Councillor Fisher was given to the Annual Meeting and recorded as part of the minutes.

### **Borough Councilors Report for Ollerton with Marthall Parish Council Annual Meeting 15th May 2006**

#### **Introduction**

M.B.C. has achieved several indicatives this year to improve services and to offer better value for money, including;

- a. The successful voluntary transfer of housing stock to the Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Agency with commitment from them to spend £60 million on their properties.
- b. The continuing rollout of kerb-side waste collection.
- c. The implementation of the Customer First Initiative. A one stop shop' for all enquiries at the Town Hall.
- d. Multi-pound investment in IT and e-procurement, resulting in the overall more cost effective financial control and more efficient administrative practices.

#### **Accounting & Finance**

- a. M.B.C. had the second lowest Council Tax increase in Cheshire of 3.7%.
- b. Council Tax Direct Debit uptake increase by 2% following campaigning.
- c. Exceeded targets for sanctions, cautions & prosecutions for benefit fraud.

#### **Benefits & Revenues**

The new integrated benefits & revenues computer system, 'Pericles', now operational and the benefits backlog cleared.

## Human Resources

A revised corporate management structure has been implemented for better value for money in delivery of services;

- a. Directors reduced from 5 to 2 and the Chief Executive. Their brief is to develop the over view and long-term direction of the Borough Council whilst leaving the day to management to the Corporate Managers.
- b. Corporate Managers (formerly Heads of services) from 14 to 7. This has been done due to the imbalance of responsibilities in each former department and it was also recognised that some former heads of services were under qualified for their responsibilities.

## Environment & Planning

Awarded £754,00 Planning Delivery Grant for achieving planning efficiency and the use of e-planning processes. M.B.C. is now in the top 10 shire authorities for this achievement and the highest in Cheshire. This money enabled various environmental improvements for such things as listed buildings and highway improvements in conservation areas.

Just two Planning Committees; Main and Sub have now superseded four area planning committee's held by Councillors and Officers. Public speaking and member representation has been welcomed with further improvements to be considered next year.

Delegation of planning decisions to officers is now 90% but still resulted in over 300 applications being considered by the two committees.

A pro-active planning enforcement service has been established.

To achieve sustainability of communities, the planning policies are in place to ensure that a minimum of 100 affordable houses per year will be achieved.

Securing future employment opportunities is seen as vital to the future viability of the economy of the Borough. 8.5 Hectares of land at Parkgate Industrial Estate, Knutsford has been granted for development.

## Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework has reached the stage of developing its preferred options document. Rate payers and Parish Council are now invited to give their opinions on such topics such as; Housing, Employment, Land and Town centres. This 'Preferred Options' document is available to view from 10<sup>th</sup> May for 6 weeks on the Council Web Site ([www.macclesfield.gov.uk](http://www.macclesfield.gov.uk)) or local libraries & information centres. There will also be a public exhibition held in the Customer Care Centre at the Town Hall from 10<sup>th</sup> Mat to 21<sup>st</sup> June. The document is to be presented to the Government in 2007.

### Car Parking

The Borough adopted a car parking strategy. It has been agreed with the County Council that the Borough Council will take responsibility for 'on street' parking enforcement. The project date for achieving Civil Enforcement is Autumn 2007.

### Concessionary Travel

From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 residents over 60 or disabled with a concessionary pass will be able to enjoy FREE Bus Travel after 9.30am Mondays to Fridays and any time at the weekends and Bank Holidays on any service that starts or finishes in Cheshire. Passes are available FREE from any Information Centre across the Borough. With proof of eligibility – that you are over 60 or registered disabled and that you live in the Borough of Macclesfield. A recent passport size photograph is also required.

### Leisure Centres

A fundamental review of Leisure Services was completed. Two short-term recommendations have been implemented;

- a. Restructuring the Leisure Centre Management.
- b. Improved cleaning regime commencing 1<sup>st</sup> May.

Sport England provides a quality assurance scheme for leisure centres called QUEST.

To gain this award each centre has to prove it applied industry led and prescribed standards. There 2000 leisure centres in the UK with 600 having this accreditation with a further 400 working towards it. Macclesfield Leisure Centre was externally assessed in January 2005 and achieved an excellent first time assessment score of 70%.

Leisure Centres Direct Debit Membership Scheme;

Customers can get a wide range of activities each month for just £10 per month. There is also membership for Families and couples.

Benefits include;

- a. Choice of membership packages
- b. All memberships offer peak and off peak use
- c. No joining fee
- d. No minimum contract  
(Cancellation just requires 1 month notice for Direct Debit cancellation)
- e. Use of all four Borough Leisure Centres
- f. Reduced rate inductions
- g. Lowest rates in the Borough for any Fitness Centre
- h. Pay as you go still available at different rates

## Crime and Disorder

The Local Area Agreement for Safer and Stronger Communities has been a cross-Cheshire initiative which has brought all 6 Cheshire Crime and Disorder Partnership together with Cheshire County Council into one funding stream.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 3 Macclesfield staff members moved to Macclesfield Police Station to join the new Multi-agency unit established to meet information, intelligence and other requirements of the Partnership for a Safe Borough known as 'The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership' (C.R.D.P.).

A Neighbourhood Warden has been allocated to Knutsford to work with the Neighbourhood Police Unit alongside the Community Support Officers

The Anti-social Behaviour Manager is working with statutory and voluntary agencies to reduce crime and disorder within the Borough. 13 A.S.B.O.'S are currently in force plus 6 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (A.B.C.s) have been used in the past 12 months. There have only been breaches in one case of an A.B.C. whilst the others have resulted in no further offending.

The Knutsford Neighbourhood Policing Unit (N.P.U.) led by Inspector Arterton covers every household and business in the area. The Police Community Action Team (C.A.T.) is really establishing itself as instrumental in detecting crime with its close liaison with the local community. They are available to solve problems such as anti-social behaviour and nuisance issues and drug related incidents.

- a. You can voicemail general information to **0845 458 6380** with a guaranteed return call within 48 hours or e-mail; [knutsford.cat@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:knutsford.cat@cheshire.pnn.police.uk).
- c. To report a crime or non-emergency incident call **0845 458 000** (Winsford).
- d. Leave an anonymous message with Crimestoppers **0800 555111**
- e. In an emergency still always dial **999**.

## Licensing

The Licensing Act 2003 has involved the transfer of responsibility from the Magistrates Court to the Licensing Authority.

During the 6 month transition period the Licensing Section has dealt with approximately 550 Premises applications and 600 applications for Personal Licenses with no appeals progressing against the Committee's decisions.

The Licensing Section is now facing the implementation of further legislation in the form of the Gambling Act 2005. Under the act the Authority will be responsible for licensing gambling premises including casinos, betting shops, bingo halls and amusement centres. The act requires wide-ranging consultation on the policy to take place with the final draft of the policy to be completed by November 2006.

## Housing

Following the decision by tenants to transfer to Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Trust (CPPHT) last August Transfer will be complete on July 17<sup>th</sup> 2006.

Looking to the future without this housing stock, the Council will be required to address the housing needs of those residents of the Borough who are unable to afford the High Prices of the open market. The development of an affordable Homes policy and its implementation will be upper most in the council's priorities over the next few years.

Likewise the Council's statutory responsibilities will continue to include the administration of Housing Benefits, legal duties towards the homeless, working with CPPHT and Police in tackling anti-social behaviour, nomination rights, providing and facilitating aids and adaptations for disabled households, support with repair and improvements to homes on the private sector that are in poor condition and the provision of housing advice.

£136,960 has been spent from Disabled Facilities Budget on adapting properties to enable people to stay in their own homes.

In excess of 500 households have been referred to CCHAC for energy efficiency improvements to be made to their properties. This is primarily targeted at venerable people and households receiving benefit.

## Waste Management Services

- a. The integrated recycling and refuse collection system now covers 40,000 homes in the Borough – nearly 60% and the rest will be covered by the end of 2006 calendar year.
- b. There are now 33,000 green garden waste wheelie bins in operation – funded by Defra’s Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund.
- c. The Council is forecasted to achieve 26% recycling and composting rate (up from 15% last year) for household waste, which is ahead of Targets for this financial year-end.
- d. The quantity of waste collected for recycling increased by 32% on last year.
- e. The quantity of household landfill waste dropped by over 8% compared to the previous year.
- f. Received support from Defra’s Local Authority Support Unit on plastic collections, kitchen waste composting and waste composition projects.

The first 50 Dog Waste Bins have been distributed as part of the expanding network across the Borough.

The service has assisted Cheshire County Council in its tendering process for the selection of a new countywide contractor to manage abandoned vehicles.

## Council’s Communications Strategy

The Council has adopted and implemented a Cheshire Charter to enhance and develop relationships with Parish Councils in the Borough, including monthly @Customer First’ bulletins and the publication and distribution of ‘Boroughwide’.

(Borough Councillor Edward Fisher is a regular attendee at Parish meetings).

## **2. Updates from attending parish groups, societies or representatives**

The Annual Parish meeting had received no written submissions and attending members of the public(councillors) had no reports from village groups or societies.

### **3. Parish Council Chairman's Statement and update to the Annual Meeting**

Councillor & Chair of The Parish Meeting & Chair of the Parish Council Geoff Mason Presented the below statement and report to the meeting:-.

“The last year has seen several changes within the parish, one of the major new achievements for the people of Ollerton with Marthall Parish Council is the introduction of the ‘Parish Plan’, this was originally implemented by the parish council who organised a meeting at the village hall which was extremely well attended by interested parties of both villages. The interest and number of volunteers came as quite a surprise to me personally. I would like to thank the hard work of those involved. The Parish Plan has now received funding and is moving along well and I hope it will continue to do so in the future.

The parishes have also seen the election of the a new Borough Councillor, Ted Fisher who has proved already to be enthusiastic and extremely helpful, especially to the Parish Council sub-committee and I also personally note that it has been a pleasure to work with the Borough Councillor. Also the parish council has welcomed David Hawkins to the parish council after his election success in 2005, I feel he is already proving to be a useful linking element between the Church, Village Hall and Parish Council.

The Parish Council have for several months been without a Parish clerk which has caused some considerable difficulties, owing to changes in government policy over the last few years. The work load on all parish clerks has, I am sure they will agree increased tremendously and is causing them to leave their positions in droves. Ollerton with Marthall have been lucky to have acquired a clerk of John Cooks abilities and I am sure after a few hiccups things will run smoothly.

Parish Council thanks go to John Wilson for his time as clerk and also to Cllr Jenny Holmes for standing in to bridge the gap between clerks.

I hear a bone of contention in the increase in the parish council precept has come from some areas. Everyone must appreciate new legislation over the last few years has caused an increase in expenditure which is beyond the control of the parish council. The parish council has also voted to donate to the Village Hall a sum of money to help with the running and upkeep which has come out of the parish council precept.

Cheshire County highways have installed new slow signs in red warning boxes at both Ollerton and Marthall crossroads in an effort to improve traffic safety. I can only hope this has some effect. Thanks to Steve Wilkinson for his help in the matter and also the other help he has given the parish council.

I would like to give a belated thanks to ‘our’ retired chairman and councillor Ken Sayle for all his hard work in the past, his knowledge has been of great assistance to our council.

The Parish Council extend our deepest sympathy to Councillor Alan Street at the sad loss of his wife Betty. I know this has been a difficult time for Alan, but even so he has kept his eye firmly on the Parish Council Planning sub-committee. Many Thanks to Alan.

As this is the Chairman's address, I would like to take this opportunity to remind the residents of Ollerton and Marthall that all councillors give their time voluntary to the parish council, no small sacrifice in all cases, there is no personal gain to any Parish Councillor other than to serve the electorate and for this go my heartfelt thanks to all members and colleagues''.

Councillor Geoff Mason – Retiring as Parish Council Chair on 15th May 2006  
(Councillor Mason continues as a parish councillor and has only retired as Chair of the Parish council)

#### **4. Items requested for Parish Council future considerations from the Annual Parish Meeting**

An open offer for any group to attend a parish meeting and report their activities, progress or request for assistance or advice continues for future agenda's and meetings.

#### **5. Close of Annual Parish Meeting**

The meeting closed @ 20.15hrs

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