

## Chairman's Report 2004-2005. Antrobus Parish Council.

It is time to reflect on another active year for Antrobus Parish Council. A year of projects completed, started and ongoing and as always a year of change and growth.

This time last year we entered three categories in the Community Pride Competition. The results were very gratifying as we were fifth in our category in the Best Kept Village Competition, reached the final six in the Vibrant Village Competition and best of all the Community Shop won the Community Project award for Vale Royal District. This year we have again entered the Best Kept and Vibrant Village Competitions. I would like to thank all those who helped in the completion of the forms and all who took part in the litter pick this weekend. Special thanks go to Mike Barker for organising the event and the Community Shop for providing the bacon butties. However, necessary as it was, one big clean up is not sufficient. We all need to be aware that we have a role to play in keeping the village free from litter and attractive for residents and visitors.

During last summer Cheshire County Council installed a new street lighting scheme in the centre of the village and also laid tarmac on the alleyway between Knutsford Road and Old Orchard. Although there were some comments that this made the centre of the village less rural in appearance the scheme met with general approval because of the increased safety obtained.

In May 2004 we received a letter of resignation from our Clerk, Inge Cosgrove. We were fortunate to receive a number of enquiries about the vacancy and following interviews to be able to appoint Sue Richards as our Clerk. Clerks are pivotal to the efficient and effective running of the Parish Council and I would like to thank both Inge and Sue for their contributions to the work of the Council.

Because of the change of Clerk we have had to delay our application for Quality Parish Council Status but this is, together with Sue's training, is now ongoing.

Another issue that is still ongoing is the Application for a Permit to Operate an A2 Installation and the Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use of buildings, land and premises at Senna Green Farm. We were asked by Vale Royal Borough Council to comment on these applications. This was the only agenda item at the August Parish Council Meeting and an additional meeting in October 2004. Thanks to Ray Lawton and Deborah Hodd for their valuable assistance with this issue.

During the year we have dealt with many Highways and Planning issues. These together with the accounts are the most time consuming agenda items at the monthly meetings. Our sphere of influence is limited, as is the Highways budget, but some improvements have been made. We will continue to raise concerns. One issue we will continue to work on is the very poor state of many Lane, Street and Road signs around the Parish.

One innovation this year has been the appointment of a financial sub committee. We continue to reduce our reserves in accordance with the auditors' instructions. To this end the budget for the year 2005-06 has been set at £6153.38 and the precept set at £5744.00.

Much has been achieved since the meeting in November 2003 when a Committee was appointed to write the grant application for the Parish Plan. We were notified of the success of the application just before the Fete last July and worked towards a 'drop in day' to gather opinions in November. This was very well attended and many ideas were put forward. These have now been formulated into a questionnaire that will be delivered to every household in the next week. It is important that people complete and return their questionnaires. We really do want to be able to draw up a Parish Plan based on the views of all residents. It has been interesting and stimulating to Chair the Grant Application Committee and to be part of the Co-ordinating Committee. Most gratifying has been the number of people who have become

involved. Thank you all. Special thanks go to the members of the Grant Application Committee and the Co-ordinating Committee for their dedication, perseverance and many hours of work.

The Parish Council cannot work in isolation and we value our links with Vale Royal Borough Council, Cheshire County Council, The Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils and Cheshire Community Council. Most important are the links that we have made with individuals in these organisations. Nearer to home one link that has been strengthened this year is that with St Mark's School and we look forward to developing this further.

The Annual Report can only give a flavour of the work of the Council. We would welcome any ideas on how the work of the Council can be better publicised. One change we have recently made is that the first quarter of an hour of Parish Council meetings is available for people to come along to talk to individual Councillors or the whole Council about any Agenda items or study plans that will be discussed.

Alongside innovations the Council has undertaken its traditional role on Fete Day at the Remembrance Day Service and the holding of a Charity Dance. This year the dance raised £1,225. The main beneficiary was the Vale Royal branch of the Alzheimer's Society and we were also able to help the local groups and organisations, Church, Chapel, The Friendship Club, Antrobus Village News and the Georgian Social Relief Fund. I would like to again thank my fellow Councillors and their families for their help with this event.

The Parish Council has a collective responsibility to work for the benefit of the people of Antrobus. May I take this opportunity to thank the Councillors for their work throughout the year. My special thanks to those who serve on sub-committees or attend extra meetings on behalf of the Council. In particular I thank our immediate Past Chairman, Mike Barker and our Vice-Chairman Ray Lawton for their commitment and the additional responsibilities that they undertake.

We have a strong foundation for our work next year, the completion of the Parish Plan and our submission for assessment for Quality Parish Council Status.