

ANTROBUS PARISH COUNCIL.

Chairman's Annual Report. March 2006.

It is time to report on another active year for Antrobus Parish Council and to reflect on what we have accomplished. It has, yet again, been a time of change and growth and a year of achievement.

During the past year there have been 12 Parish Council meetings, 7 meetings of the planning sub committee and 2 meetings of the financial working group. Members of the Parish Council have attended a number of other meetings as either representatives or delegates. These include the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, Cheshire County Council's Local Councils Conference, Cheshire Planning Forum, Parish Plan meetings, the Police Forum, Vale Royal Area meetings, and the Village Hall Committee. It is important that we see our role in its wider context and meeting with others gives us an opportunity to learn about best practice and share some of our achievements.

Within the village, besides being involved as individuals in many village organisations and groups, Parish Councillors attended the Fete and Fete Service and the Remembrance Day Service. During the past year we were also present at the VE/VJ Commemoration and the turning on of the Christmas Tree lights. In the past the Parish Council had an annual outing. This has now been reduced to one outing every two years. In October we spent an interesting evening visiting the Secret Bunker near Nantwich followed by an excellent meal on the way home.

Much of the time at Parish Council meetings is spent on highways and planning matters. Some of these issues take a very long time to resolve especially matters relating to the condition of the roads as financial restraints mean that short term temporary actions rather than long term solutions are employed. However there is some progress to report, the surface of Gibb Hill is much improved and our concerns about the long standing problem of the A559 at the junction of School Lane has been acknowledged. An item finally off the agenda is the dangerous trees on School Lane and Old Lane that have now been felled. Still ongoing is the application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use of buildings, land and premises at Senna Green Farm. This is the subject of an appeal in April. Also ongoing is the application for a permit to operate an A2 installation at Senna Green Farm.

We are continually looking at ways to improve our communication with parishioners and streamline our ways of working. Besides the monthly article in the Newsletter and notices around the village the first quarter of an hour of the monthly meeting is available for people to look at plans and talk to Councillors. The names and phone numbers of all Councillors are published in the Newsletter.

In our efforts to improve our ways of working we have reviewed our Standing Orders and adopted two policies one on Complaints Procedure and another on Grants to Village Groups and Organisations. The envelope sent to Councillors prior to meetings contains an agenda and a number of documents, including financial statements, to study. Whenever possible reports from representatives, summaries of documents and feedback on actions taken regarding highway matters are included. Other documents and plans are circulated between meetings. The adoption of these measures has only been possible because of the work undertaken by individual Councillors and our Clerk and I thank them for this. The numbers of documents received by or generated by the work of the Council is increasing. We have begun the task of archiving our records at the County Archive Office in Chester.

We believe that Antrobus Parish Council is responding positively to the increase and change in our role and work. Meetings are purposeful and lead to action. Speakers at meetings have included regular updates on the progress of the Parish Plan, Richard Ellison, Head of Planning and Building Control Service at Vale Royal, discussing Planning Enforcement and Mrs Edna Samlofski telling us about her role as a representative on Weaver Vale Housing Trust.

It is impossible for us to work effectively in isolation. We have been supported in our work by Malcolm Byram our County and District Councillor, individual staff members of Vale Royal and Cheshire County Councils, staff of Cheshire Community Council and the Cheshire Association of Local Councils. We thank them all.

Having been in post for eighteen months during which time she has attended a number of training sessions our Clerk, Sue Richards, has completed her portfolio to gain accreditation. Once this is obtained we will submit our application for Quality Parish Council status.

Now for three highlights of the past year, that is the Community Pride Competition, the Parish Plan and the Charity Dance. It now seems difficult to believe that prior to 2004 the Vibrant Village Competition did not feature in Antrobus community life. In 2004 we reached the final six in Cheshire and in 2005 we came third in our category in the Best Kept Village Competition and were Runners Up in the Cheshire Vibrant Village Competition. For this we received a framed certificate and a cheque for £75 from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office. We have entered the competition again this year and our first major project will be a Village Litter Pick during the weekend of the 1st and 2nd of April. The second highlight of the year was the completion of the Parish Plan document. This time last year the questionnaires were being distributed to all households in the village. This was followed the collation of the results, the writing, printing and distribution of the plan and the launch of the document in November. These projects involved not only the Parish Council but many other people and I thank them for their work to date. Both projects are ongoing and require strong community support. Time and effort will be needed but I feel confident that we will move forward and turn action plans into reality. The third highlight of the year was the Charity Dance in February when the magnificent sum of £1313 was raised for the Samaritans of mid Cheshire and the Antrobus churches. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to make this event such a success.

Within my two year term of office a change to the working of the Parish Council has been the forming of a financial working group. This group works on the preparation of the application for the precept and monitors the accounts. The precept for the year 2006-2007 has been set at £6856. Later in this meeting Sue will present a summary of the accounts. This summary forms part of the Annual Report.

This Annual Report can only give an overview of the multifaceted work of the Council. That so much is achieved is attributable to the dedication of our Clerk and Councillors. Many thanks to Sue Richards for her work as Clerk. I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for the time they freely give to work for the benefit of the people of Antrobus. Each Councillor makes an individual contribution so that collectively we can be an effective and efficient Council. My thanks to those who take on additional responsibilities, produce documents or attend extra meetings on behalf of the Council. For their commitment and the additional responsibilities they undertake I thank our immediate Past Chairman, Mike Barker and our Vice-Chairman, Ray Lawton.

The achievements of the past year provide a good foundation for our work next year, the translation of the Parish Plan action plans into reality and our submission for assessment for Quality Parish Council status.

Ann Barlow. Chairman. Antrobus Parish Council.
March 2006.

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