

Goostrey Parish Council

Annual Report for the year April 2019 to March 2020

Author: Councillor Ken Morris, Chairman.

Date: 30th April 2020.



Corvid-19

Inclusion of an item in the Parish Council Annual Report on a global pandemic is unprecedented. However, the spread of the Corvid-19 virus is currently causing a crisis around the world. To avoid any possible risk to residents and in accordance with Government advice, the Parish Council has decided to postpone the Annual Parish Meeting planned for May 2020 and provide only a written report at this time.

The Village Hall is closed for any meetings until further notice. Since March 2020 the Parish Council has met on the planned dates by video-conferencing and members of the public are welcome to join all meetings either electronically or by phone.

The Council is also giving support to the initiatives undertaken by LoveGoostrey including the volunteers across the village who are helping vulnerable residents with shopping and collecting prescriptions. Thank you to all the volunteers in the community, to everyone who is self-isolating and thereby minimising risks for others, and of course to all those who are providing daily service roles of all kinds.

Parish Council Members

On 2nd May 2019 Cheshire East held elections for Councillors to represent their local towns and parishes for the next 4-year term. In the case of Goostrey Parish, nine Councillors were returned unopposed and another Councillor was subsequently co-opted to make up the full complement of ten. The Councillors in alphabetical order are: Neil Beckham, Sara Lord, Paul Morgan, Ken Morris, Ian O'Donoghue, Terence Rathbone, Dave Roberts, Colin Ross, Julian Sulej and Emma Williams, all of whom live in Goostrey village.

I would like to thank all the Members for their activities during this past year and also for electing me and supporting me as Chairman for 2019 to 2020. I'd also like to thank Councillor Terence Rathbone for standing in for me in his role as Vice Chairman and last but not least I'd like to thank Mrs Sharon Jones for all her work as both the Parish Clerk and Financial Officer and also for overseeing all aspects of the operation of the Village Hall.

As well as postponing the Annual Parish meeting in May it has also been decided to postpone the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and review the situation in September 2020. This means that all Councillors will remain in their current roles and on existing committees for the time being.

Village Hall

I'm pleased to report that a number of improvements have been made to the Village Hall during the year. These include upgrading all the windows to double-glazing in the kitchen, lounge and main hall and a complete modernisation of the stage lighting and control system. This has been organised by our Clerk and brings our facilities up to modern standards. A new bar servery has also been designed and manufactured for the area between the kitchen and the lounge with better sound proofing and fire safety shutters. However, because of the Corvid-19 situation, the building work to carry out the physical installation has been put on hold.

In September 2019, our Village Hall Cleaner, Sue Sproson 'retired' and has moved from Goostrey with her husband to live in North Yorkshire. We wish them both well. We were pleased to have had the

enthusiastic and friendly services of Janet Keates as Village Hall Supervisor during the year and she also took on the cleaning role. However, Janet has also now moved to a fuller time role in Gawsorth. We also wish Janet well. In view of the Corvid-19 related closure of the Village Hall, the Council has decided not to fill this vacancy until the way forward is clearer.

Community Events

As in previous years the Council organised a successful Senior's Festive lunch in November and sponsored the Scout's event to switch on the Christmas lights at the Bogbean in December 2019. We were pleased to see both events were very well attended by residents.

The Parish Council participated in the usual Remembrance Sunday parade and service at St Luke's Church in November. A team has also been working on a plan for the VE Day 75th Anniversary Commemoration on 8th May 2020, working with the Royal British Legion and other groups in Goostrey. Again, due to the Corvid-19 pandemic this event has also been postponed.

Railway Sidings

In January 2020, the old railway sidings (6.4 acres) were put up for sale by the Receivers on behalf of the owners of the land, Pochins. The Parish Council received several interesting ideas about how the land could be used for the benefit of the community, but there was a very short time in which to decide whether we should make an offer to buy the land. The Parish Council was very pleased that 615 residents replied to our questionnaire within one week, with 88% voting in favour of purchase and 12% against. After in-depth discussions, an offer was made before the closing date. Unfortunately the Land Agent received a higher offer from another party, so we were unsuccessful. At this time, we do not know who has purchased the land or what is the intended use.

Highways and Police Matters

After many years of discussions about the safety issues on the Railway Bridge, I am disappointed to report that Cheshire East Highways have abandoned their plans for a pedestrian walkway, safety barriers and traffic lights, mainly due to construction issues. Their current intention is to install an advisory speed limit of 20mph with enhanced signing and rumble strip.

Meanwhile a stalwart group of volunteers continue to operate the SpeedWatch monitoring guns around the village. A total of 17,822 vehicles have been monitored with 598 vehicles logged at 35mph and above. The maximum speed monitored is 55 mph. Speeding incidents are reported to the police who do follow up with the miscreants.

Potholes are an on-going problem and the Parish Council encourage all residents to report these, and any issues with street lighting, signage or blocked drains direct to Cheshire East using their on-line portal or by phone. We suggest that you make a note of the report number so that you can follow it up if necessary.

Surgeries with our local PCSO Liz Chesters have been held at Goostrey Village Hall through the year and are open to anyone, with no appointment necessary. At present the police can be contacted as normal via phone numbers 101 or 999 for emergencies.

Some complaints were received during the year about parking on pavements, on narrow roads (potentially preventing access for emergency vehicles) and preventing egress from driveways. We ask that all drivers are considerate when parking in Goostrey, especially on the roads around the central shopping area.

Committees

The Parish Council continues to review and comment, where appropriate, on all planning applications in Goostrey Parish. On 7th July 2019 Jodrell Bank Observatory was awarded UNESCO World Heritage Status, the Parish Council is represented on the Steering Committee and we look forward to the construction of the new visitors' centre.

Although none of the Sibelco quarry is in Goostrey Parish (it is 100% in Cranage and Allostock) we are representing the views of Goostrey residents on the Liaison Committee and have already raised several issues concerning traffic greater than 7.5t passing through Goostrey. These issues have all been followed up by the Sibelco team.

The Parish Council also continues to raise issues about the waste skip site on Bridge Lane with Cheshire East Planning Enforcement. The site has unfortunately been operating without the required planning permission for over 5 years.

The Amenities Committee, together with an Environmental Group have launched an on-going project called 'Wild About Goostrey' to encourage habitat improvement in gardens across the village. It was presented at Rose Day in the Summer and is open to everyone, please contact Councillor Morgan or the Clerk for more information and details of bronze, silver and gold awards that are available to residents for different levels of garden improvement. Several improvements have also been made to the green space at the junction of Main Road with Church Bank including the restoration of the bench, for which I'd like to thank Councillor Rathbone. The Committee has also taken steps to improve the grass cutting of other areas in the village.

Financial Report 2019 -20

Author: Councillor Paul Morgan, Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Date: 16th May 2020.

The Finance Committee oversees and monitors the budgets of the various committees and the Parish Council. Along with committee chairs, it tracks actual income (from the hiring of the Village Hall for example) and spending against that forecast. At this stage we have the year-end unaudited accounts to consider.

Through close control of spending the Parish Council has come within budget overall with the small underspend being transferred to reserves. The budget for 2020/21 was unchanged but a small change to the number of rateable properties in the village result in a slight increase in precept.

Our reserves may prove important over the next couple of years as we see how the impact of the coronavirus affects the Parish Council – we will be spending less in 2020/21 but also receiving a much reduced income from the hiring of the Village Hall. The reserves also cover committed expenditure, planned projects and one year's precept. The Parish Council is always keen to support local groups and welcomes applications for grants/donations.



Goostrey Parish Council

Unaudited Accounts

1st April 2019 to

31st March 2020

Unaudited Accounts

1st April 2018 to

31st March 2019

RECEIPTS

Adjustment	-£19.60	£0.00
Precept Payment	£44,012.00	£44,012.00
V. Hall Lettings incl VAT	£18,568.51	£17,415.49
Bank Interest	£1,171.17	£1,173.75
Lunch Ticket Sales	£693.00	£700.00
Pay Phone	£9.04	£1.01
Performing Rights	£157.67	£281.54
Exceptional Income	£0.00	£500.00
	£64,591.79	£64,083.79

PAYMENTS

PAYE Control	-£36.40	£20.74
VAT Control	-£778.98	£1,395.21
Administration	£4,777.23	£6,799.27
Audit	£760.00	£750.00
Donations/Sponsorship	£2,377.00	£3,137.32
Maintenance - around Village	£5,532.26	£5,853.23
Miscellaneous Items	£0.00	£210.26
Parish Projects	£3,209.34	£3,214.33
Parish Clerk Salary & Expenses	£12,528.42	£10,712.42
V.Hall Maintenance & Running Costs	£2,075.80	£4,187.70
V.Hall Staff Salaries & Expenses	£10,738.14	£14,136.05
Total Payments	£41,182.81	£50,416.53
Excess of Receipts over Payments	£23,408.98	£13,667.26

Balance at 01/04/19	£157,395.78	<i>Balance at 01/04/18</i>	£185,784.82
Excess of Receipts over Payments	plus £23,408.98	<i>plus</i>	£13,667.26
Less spend from General Reserves	less £10,840.96	<i>less</i>	£36,102.53
Less spend from Capital Reserves	less £12,159.99		£5,953.77
Balance of accounts at 31/03/20	£157,803.81	<i>Balance of accounts at 31/03/19</i>	£157,395.78

Capital Reserves	£96,936.55	£73,027.25
General Reserves	£60,867.26	£84,368.53
Total Reserves	£157,803.81	£157,395.78