



# **Goostrey Parish Council Annual Report**

## **for the year May 2020 to May 2021**

Author: Councillor Ken Morris, Chairman.

Date: April 2021.

### **Covid-19**

Due to the issues created by Covid-19, we were unable to hold an Annual Parish Meeting in May 2020, however the Parish Council has continued to hold all of its normal meetings using Zoom technology. At the time of writing it is uncertain when we will resume face-to-face meetings. In any event, members of the public are welcome to attend any Committee or Parish Council meeting and the details of venue, or Zoom link, are always published at least 3 working days in advance, on the Parish Council website and on the village noticeboard.

The Council has given support to the Covid-19 related initiatives in the village during 2020, in particular the volunteers across the village who have been helping other residents with shopping and collecting prescriptions where needed. Thank you to all the volunteers in the community, to everyone who has been self-isolating and thereby minimising risks for others, and of course, to all those who continue to fulfil daily service roles of all kinds.

### **Parish Council Members**

This has been the second of the four year term for Councillors. The Councillors are, in alphabetical order: Neil Beckham, Sara Lord, Paul Morgan, Ken Morris, Ian O'Donoghue, Terence Rathbone, Dave Roberts, Colin Ross, Julian Sulej and Emma Williams. All are volunteer residents of Goostrey and live in the village.

As it was not possible to meet face-to-face in May for our Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, a unanimous decision was taken to keep all posts the same for 2020-21, including the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Committee Chairs and Committee Members.

I would like to thank all the Members for their activities and also for continuing to support me as Chairman. I'd also like to thank Mrs Sharon Jones for all her work as both the Parish Clerk and Financial Officer.

Sharon has been busy during the lockdowns in preparing all the documentation for the Parish Council to move up in the Local Council Award Scheme from the 'Foundation Award' to the 'Quality Award'. This verifies that we are going above and beyond the basic legal requirements of Councils and we await the feedback with interest. Sharon has also updated and revamped the Parish Council website and we encourage everyone to sign up to receive an automatic email when news items are posted at <https://goostrey.info/>

## **Village Hall**

To comply with government regulations the village hall and lounge have been closed for meetings. However, we have made the hall available to the school, which has been open throughout the lockdown periods for the children of key workers, and open to all children again from March 2021. It is hoped that we will be able to reopen for community use after the lockdown is lifted (currently government rules say not before the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 at the earliest, depending on the Covid situation at that time).

We have been without a Village Hall Supervisor/Cleaner during the year, but with the prospect of lifted restrictions in 2021, we will advertise this vacancy in the near future.

In the meantime, we have taken the opportunity to complete the work on the new bar servery between the kitchen and the lounge which has now been updated with a more contemporary appearance as well as better sound proofing and fire safety shutters to separate it from the lounge. Also new lighting has been installed in the lounge and hall.

We also have a plan to give the front of the village hall a makeover. All of the old shrubs which were way past their best have been removed and we are looking to replant the border with a mixture of shrubs and flowers to provide an attractive display of colour and variety for our customers and guests. We are very grateful for all the donations we have received for this project – thank you!

## **Community Events**

The Senior's Festive lunch, normally held in November, had to be cancelled and instead the Council made a £1000 donation to the 'Storehouse' which is a Food Bank operating from the New Life Church in Congleton. It helps individuals and families in a wide area, including Goostrey.

Residents will be aware that the Scout's event to switch on the Christmas lights at the Bogbean, which is sponsored by the Council, was also cancelled as were the events being planned for the VE Day 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration in May 2020. The Council was able to have a representative at the socially-distanced Remembrance Sunday gathering in November at the memorial and the Christmas lights were illuminated without a ceremony.

## **Highways and Police Matters**

Speeding continues to be a matter of concern in Goostrey. The Parish Council has upgraded the speed indicator at the Shearbrook steps, so that it now records and stores the time and speed of all passing vehicles. We can download the data remotely and the results are showing that a high level of traffic (almost 80%) exceeds the 30mph limit.

Use of the SpeedWatch monitoring guns around the village is currently on hold due to the Covid restrictions. However, the police have continued to do spot checks using their TruCAM, from which they can issue on-the-spot fines for speeding.

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

We are still in discussions with Cheshire East Highways about pedestrian safety on the railway bridge and other village improvements. Unfortunately, obtaining responses from Cheshire East Highways is a slow process, to the extent that we raised a formal complaint in 2020. Despite our best endeavours, I have to report that this situation has, so far, not changed and other Parish Councils suffer the same frustrations.

### **Planning Committee**

The Parish Council continues to review and comment on all planning applications in Goostrey Parish. Where agreed by the Council, a representative of the Parish Council has also spoken at the Cheshire East Planning Committees. We have responded to two consultations on Part 2 of the Local Plan which provides detailed policies for Local Service Centres such as Goostrey. At the time of writing, no sites or new housing are proposed for allocation in Goostrey. However, this doesn't mean that developers are prevented from submitting speculative planning applications. The Parish Council is aware that there are two potential large developments being considered by developers, however at this time they have not been turned into applications.

### **Amenities Committee**

Several improvements have been made to the green space at the junction of Main Road with Church Bank. The Committee has also taken steps to improve the grass cutting of other areas in the village.

A new bench has also been installed on Booth Bed Lane, opposite the entrance to Meadow Avenue, which replaces the one that had to be dismantled a few years ago.

A questionnaire has been created to seek the views of residents on what improvements they would like to see at other green spaces in the village. This will be posted through letterboxes in April and we encourage everyone to respond (preferably electronically!)

### **Finance Committee**

For details of the Parish Council and Village Hall finances for the year, [please see the separate report](#).

The Parish Council has given some grants and donations during the year to local organisations which are supporting the community in Goostrey, though activities have been much reduced due to Covid-19.

## **Other Committees**

As noted last year, none of the Sibelco quarry is in Goostrey Parish (it is 100% in Cranage and Allostock) however we are representing the views of Goostrey residents on the Liaison Committee and so far, have found Sibelco to be responsive to any issues raised.

We are also members of the Manchester Airport Stakeholder Liaison group and the Jodrell Bank World Heritage Steering Group and have also attended various meetings with Cheshire East Council during the year.

Ken Morris

Chairman

April 2021

