

Goostrey Parish Council Annual Report 2021 – 2022

The Parish Council had a full complement of 10 volunteer local residents as Councillors during the year and I'd like to thank them all for their time freely given. Sara Lord left the Council in September 2021 and has been replaced by Arthur Freeman. The Clerk, Sharon Jones, retired from the Council after 9 years' service and I also thank her for all her work and at the same time welcome our new Clerk, Emma Bambrook. We also welcomed our new Village Hall supervisors Yvonne and Chris Duke. During 2021 the Council moved up from the Local Council Award Scheme Foundation level to Quality level and has submitted an application for accreditation for the Gold Award. This confirms that the Council is following all best practises in its processes.

Covid-19 restrictions continued to restrict hiring of the Village Hall in 2021, however it was possible to hold the Senior's Festive lunch and 'normal' activities have now resumed. The Hall is heated and lighted by oil and electricity and the large increase in prices as well as increases in national insurance and inflation have meant that hire charges have had to be increased after being static for the last 2 years. The Hall does not, and has never made a profit, it is subsidised by the Parish precept. The building is owned by Cheshire East Council and their Building Control Department have advised us that the loft space, accessed by a ladder, cannot be used by the public and there are insurance, fire and safety risks. As a result, we regretfully need to empty the loft by the 1st July 2022.

Various improvements have been made around the village during the year. In particular the phone box on Main Road has been completely refurbished and repainted to prevent decay. It houses a defibrillator which is available to anyone 24x7 and is maintained by the Council. Also 400 crocuses have been planted on the Church Bank side of St Luke's. This will serve as a memorial to all those who sadly passed away as a result of Covid-19 and the impact of the pandemic on everyone.

A questionnaire was distributed to gain residents' views on other environmental improvements on green areas in the village. The returns have been analysed and it is intended to plant a new hedge on Shearbrook bank in the Autumn of 2022. Outline proposals for changes at the corner of Boothbed Lane and Main Road have also been agreed. There is some limited money available for improvements to the Boothbed Lane playground, though any expenditure would need to be made by Cheshire East Council who own and maintain the facility.

Donations during the year include those made to the Goostrey Scouts for tree planting and the Christmas lights event, Cheshire Wildlife Trust to preserve plants and animals in the Dane Valley, 'Goostrey Men in Sheds' and the Open Gardens event which will take place in June 2022. A donation has also been made to the Red Cross Ukraine appeal

Speeding continues to be a problem in Goostrey. The speed indicators show that more than 70% of all vehicles passing the Shearbrook camera are exceeding the speed limit (this of course includes residents). The SpeedWatch sessions have been temporarily suspended partly due to Covid but also due to lack of resident volunteers. The Council continue to liaise with the Police to encourage them to use their TruCam in Goostrey (which can issue

on the spot fines) and average speed cameras are being investigated. There is a proposal by Cheshire East Council to remove permanently fixed speed indicators which Goostrey Parish Council (together with many others) are resisting. Another meeting took place with Cheshire East Highways at the Boothbed Lane junction but unfortunately the Borough Council (who own the roads) have decided not to carry out any further improvements (beyond the new signage and white lining installed 2 years ago).

The Council has responded to all planning applications in Goostrey in the last 12 months by following the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. It has also responded to the Cheshire East Local Plan Part 2 consultation which does not allocate any new sites or housing in Goostrey, although this does not exclude 'windfall' applications. The Parish Council also responded to the Jodrell Bank Supplementary Planning Consultation.

The Parish Council continues to encourage all residents to report Highways faults direct to Cheshire East Council via their website, that includes potholes, street lighting, pavements, drains, fallen branches, road sign issues and any other type of hazard, for their attention.

Next May will be the end of the Council's 4-year term and all positions will become vacant, any resident is welcome to put their name forward at that time for election. In the mean time we look forward to welcoming all residents to any of the Parish Council meetings and Committees during 2022.

Cllr. Ken Morris
Chairman