

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

I was delighted to be appointed Chairman of the Council again for the 2009-10 year with Councillor Tilston appointed Vice Chairman for the first time.

Parish Council Play area

The Parish Council Play Area remains our most valuable asset and the location for the Village Fete thereby an important Community facility, which remains a continuous focus for the Parish Council. A new seat was installed in July 2009 in readiness for the Village Fete.

The play area receives weekly inspections by Councillors on a rota basis and is inspected once a year by Wicksteed Leisure Ltd to ensure that it meets safety standards.

Minor highways work

The Parish Council again conducted the minor highways work on behalf of the County Council and as a result the drains, gulleys and grips are kept clear and the road signs kept clean. Our contractor is well experienced in this work and by now is aware of all of the areas which need and receive attention.

Quality Council

Stowe by Chartley achieved Quality Council status in March 2005 which needs to be renewed every 5 years. I am happy to report that the Council's Quality status was renewed in May 2009

Parish Plan

One of the outcomes of our Parish Plan was for Stowe by Chartley Parish Council to engage more with neighbouring councils. The Council were therefore delighted that both Weston with Gayton and Salt with Enson Parish Councils sought advice about their Parish Plans. Vice Chairman Cllr Chris Tilston with the help of the Parish Clerk talked to each Council about our Parish Plan – what went well and what went not so well.

Neighbourhood Watch.

In August a meeting was held with all of the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators also attended by our local Police P.C Paul Ryan and P.C.S.O Neil Williams.

Included in the autumn edition of the Parish Council Newsletter were new Neighbourhood Watch door stickers plus a window sign relating to doorstep sellers.

Regular Trading Standards alerts and Neighbourhood Watch alerts are emailed to more than 75 residences in the parish.

Church

St John the Baptist Church in Stowe again won a Silver Award in the Churchyard Competition collected on behalf of the Church maintenance group by Peter Crookshank.

Councillor Gordon Hudson

Gordon Hudson has been a Parish Councillor since 2003. Living in Grindley he was a great advocate for Grindley Residents and resigned in June 2009.

Councillor Mrs Sue Grimes

The Council are delighted to welcome Mrs Sue Grimes as the latest member. Although a resident of Hixon Cllr Mrs Grimes was a member of Stowe Parish Council for a number of years and has a wide knowledge of Stowe by

Chartley parish and its residents. As the local correspondent for the Staffordshire Newsletter Cllr Mrs Grimes has regularly attended Parish Council meetings and is therefore up to date with the Councils business.

Telephone Kiosk

The Telephone Kiosk has been purchased by the Parish Council. It considered that it was an important part of the Village Streetscene, however maintaining it will have an annual cost and the Council are still considering suggestions on how to make the best use of it.

Councillor Training

Members of the Parish Council plus the Clerk attended Roles and Responsibilities training in February organised through the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association.

Fly tipping

The most serious case of Fly Tipping experienced in the Parish in the past ten years took place in November in Drointon Lane. Thankfully the Borough Council are well equipped to deal with this nuisance and was cleared the following day.

Police Surgery

A Police Surgery was held in Stowe Village Hall on Saturday 27th February attended by P.C Paul Ryan and P.C.S.O Neil Williams. Apparently the response from residents was very low.

Planning Application S.09/16/4009 W

By far the most important event in the Parish this year was to support Hixon Parish Council in their objection to the planning application for the Composting scheme on Hixon Airfield.

In summary a Parish Meeting was held on 29th October to explain to residents the details of the application and to request guidance from residents on the action they would like the Parish Council to proceed on. This meeting was attended by over 70 residents.

An action group of four Stowe residents was formed, separate and independent from the action the Parish Council were requested to take,

More than 40 letters of objection were received by the Planners at Staffordshire County Council from Stowe alone.

The first Planning Committee meeting was held in January and the decision deferred until a site meeting was made to Etwall, in Derbyshire.

The second Committee meeting was held in March and attended by more than 25 Stowe Residents, the result was that the application was refused.

A clear example of how people power can be used to good effect.

We are sure that the applicant will appeal and that will be another issue for the Council to address in due time.

Parish Clerk

John Blount has been our Parish Clerk since the inception of the Parish Council in April 2000.

I am sorry to report that John has decided to retire, at least from being a full time Parish Clerk, in May, although we may have the benefit of Johns experience for the following few months acting as a mentor to the new Clerk.

Bearing in mind that when the Parish Council was formed as a result of the Stowe Parish Council dividing into two Parish Councils, all but one of the new councillors had no experience of being a Councillor or what the role involved.

The Council depended heavily on John's extensive experience and guided us through the Legal minefield a Parish Council can encounter. Naturally over the years we have had Councillors leaving and new Councillors co-opted and John's experience was invaluable in these situations.

It is no doubt that the Council have received excellent service from John over the years and has been extremely good value for money; we will certainly miss his good advice and guidance and wish him a healthy and happy retirement.