

## **Annual Report 2016-17**

We started the 2016-17 Council year in a stable financial position due to our prudence in the 2015-16 financial year. We have raised the Parish precept a small amount in order to give ourselves some contingency in a year where we had absorbed the reduction of the Council Tax Support Grant.

We have completed the 2016-17 with a positive balance of £48,000 in line with the expectations. We will move a portion of the balance into reserves in line with our long term policy of building reserves to support the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan.

As many will have seen, all three of the major sites where new housing is being built, progress is being made very rapidly. Some of the houses are now occupied and when a certain number of houses are occupied on a development it triggers payments of Section 106 money. Overall we should have enough money coming from the developments to fund a very large proportion of the build of the new leisure facility,

We have an expectation that the supermarket, which will be built and operated by Aldi will open in mid to later 2017. We are hoping that Aldi can be persuaded to take an active part in supporting activities and facilities in the village.

During this financial year we secured an extension to some Section 106 funding totalling £143,000 which resulted from an earlier development. The funds are held by Harborough District Council, as the planning authority and the intention is to draw them down to support the development of leisure facilities in the village.

We have continued to make significant progress in delivering the main item in the Neighbourhood Plan which is the new community Leisure Centre which will be built on land adjacent to Thomas Estley Community College.

We have been using a consultancy, RPT, who are specialist in Leisure provision, to guide us through the process of setting up a contract to design, build, operate and maintain the proposed centre. This has made good progress and we expect to sign a contract in the early part of the 2017-2018 year with a target for opening of late 2018. At this stage it will be a dry facility but there will be space set aside for the potential addition of a pool, however at this time the very large additional cost cannot be supported.

The audit of the council was unqualified with only some observations. This reflects the hard work of the staff across the year.

As a result of the closer working with Thomas Estley Community College, we have taken on the task of redirecting the footpath which currently runs across the TECC playing field. This will reduce the burden on TECC in terms of supervision staff on

the field and demonstrates a clear benefit of these Neighbourhood Plan Delivery working sessions.

We continue with the maintenance of the all our facilities and in particular the play area on the Recreation Ground. It has long been a real asset to the village and we need to provision to maintain this to provide the best facilities we can for the residents and those who come to visit and enjoy Broughton Astley.

We have a full complement of Parish councillors' and there are boundary changes being debated at District level which may alter the wards for District Councillors in due course. We will update residents as soon as we know the outcome.

We have had a change in staff in that the deputy Clerk, having successfully completed her training to qualify as a Parish Clerk, has decided to pursue other opportunities. We thank her for her work during her time with us. Nicola Elson, previously our administration assistant having also passed her qualifications to be a Parish Clerk in her own rights will move up to Deputy Manager, continuing our preference of recruiting and developing people to maintain the strength in depth of the Parish team. We will recruit a new administration assistant once we are in the new financial year.

We have recruited an additional part-time Grounds Person as one of our long standing employees has looked to taper their hours down. We welcome Michael Hughes who brings much experience in grounds maintenance and horticulture to the role.

In the battle against dog fouling we issued over 153,000 bags; despite that we still have occasions where dog waste is an issue. We can only hope that the very few dog owners who don't take their responsibilities seriously start to do so for everyone's benefit. We want to eliminate the problem as it effects many people who have no connection to owning a dog

We continue to support the annual Carol Concert in the Village Hall which this year had the South Leicestershire Salvation Army band play. Additionally we supported through grant funding village events such as the Christmas Fayre, Party in the Park and the Santa Fun Run and other events across the year. We have helped set up a new Boccia club in the village to help engage with those less physically active but looking for a healthy diversion. Please contact the Parish Office if you are interested in attending.

In closing this report I can summarise that we have remained financially stable, have progressed with the largest capital development project the Parish has ever undertaken and passed the financial audit with a clean bill of health for another year.

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Finally I would like to encourage all members of the public to attend our Parish Council meeting. Please see the notice boards and the Broughton Astley Parish Council web-site for the dates and times.

Clive Grafton-Reed

Chairman – Broughton Astley Parish Council.