

The Parish Council acknowledges that we have had a year that has had unexpected expenditure: demolition of the old Youth Centre, immediate costs to start the neighbourhood plan, repairs to Speed Watch equipment and the cost of a Barrister for the Gladman Appeal.

These have all been paid for from our reserve and have therefore depleted them by a substantial amount.

The full cost of the neighbourhood plan, is a somewhat unknown quantity. There are grants that may be applied for, but there is no reason to assume that they will be granted or that they will be available within the timeframe we

need. Some grants are spread over 3 years and this is too late for Goostrey, as we are expediting our Plan with utmost speed. Grants that are made available, have to be paid back if they are not fully utilised within the financial year and re applied for.

Councillors Morris and Rathbone (Chair and vice Chair of the NP Team) have estimated a figure of £10k for the plan, but this does not take in to account the use of Consultants or grants that maybe withdrawn.

(The cost of the Brereton Plan was over £20k, they did use a number of Consultants)

The Gladman Appeal Barrister Costs have been set at £15k, some monies have already been paid out and the barrister is estimating that £12k will be a realistic estimate. We have a small reserve in our figure for any unforeseen extras.

The base budget has seen a number of changes: - a reduction to a number of PC Donations, but the addition of Three new donations. Homewatch, Speedwatch and Boothbed Lane Playing Fields.

With the small increase in salaries our base budget remains relatively unchanged.

It was agreed by the Parish Council that we increase the precept by the amount of £20k to cover the cost of the Neighbourhood plan, thus allowing for any unforeseen expenditure that may arise. We are also anticipating a small amount left at the end of the 2016/17 financial year to supplement our decreased reserve.

This increase will add the amount of £19.43 pa to the Council tax bill for a Band D House. I.e. £1.62 per month.

**STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS for the YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016**

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
Precept	£42,571.00	VAT Paid	£4,095.20
Council Tax Relief Payment	£1,247.00	Administration	£6,037.24
V Hall Lettings (incl.VAT)	£19146.92	Audit	£450.00
VAT Refund	£3203.87	Donations/Sponsorship	£4100.00
Bank Interest	£366.44	Maintenance in Village	£4,724.00
Senior Citizens Lunch	£490.00	Misc. items	£282.50
Wayleave	£1.19	Parish Projects	£2,031.64
CE Grant 1	£2,000.00	Salaries & Exp. – PC	£7,383.15
DCLG Grant 1 - CCA	£2,210.00	Neighbourhood Plan	£3,330.10
DCLG Grant 2 – Village Design	£5,790.00	Village Hall Expenses	£2180.92
Performing Rights Income	£213.46	Salaries & Exp. –V Hall	£12,243.03
Sale of Old Christmas Lights	£10.00	Spend from Reserves	£46,012.78
	<b>£77,249.88</b>		<b>£92,870.61</b>
Balance as at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015	£91,232.05	Current Account	£26,386.5
Deficit of Receipts over Payments	-£15,620.73	Deposit Account	£49,224.38
Balance at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016	<b>£75,611.32</b>		<b>£75,611.32</b>



# Goostrey Parish Council

## Annual Report 2015/16

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2015-2016 (Cllr. Peter Godfrey)

#### Introduction

This has been a challenging year for the Parish Council in which we have had to make some very big decisions on behalf of the community. So my report is going to concentrate on the key projects that the Council has sponsored this year in addition to its ongoing roles and responsibilities. That is not to say that the normal business of the Council has not continued as before and I would contend that despite the additional workload we have continued to improve our core operations. I should also add that we have plans to further improve our operations with a new website and a new accounting system next year. There is one event I must mention whilst I have so many residents here tonight. On Friday June 3rd there will be a tree planting ceremony on the Bogbean to mark the Queen's 90th birthday Flagpole Cherry tree will be planted by children from Goostrey Community Primary School at 2pm on 11th June. Please make a note of this date and time and do your best to join us and the school children for this happy event.

#### Parish Council Projects in 2015-16

##### Neighbourhood Plan

The first major project the Council has sponsored is the Goostrey Neighbourhood Plan. This had just been launched at the last Annual Parish Meeting but was still in its infancy. As we have got further into the project, we have developed a better knowledge of both its costs and the grants that we may be able claim towards those costs. In view of the slow progress being made by the Cheshire East Local Plan, the Council decided that it was even more important to develop a Goostrey Neighbourhood Plan. It was also clear from the questionnaires filled in as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process that there was wide-spread support for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan amongst residents. The Council voted unanimously that we should continue to support the development of our Neighbourhood Plan as quickly as is practicable. I am very grateful for the efforts of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee led by Councillor Rathbone and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (which comprises some Councillors and some other residents) which have enabled them to make the excellent progress they have made so far. I would also like to thank Goostrey residents for their enthusiastic involvement in the process. We expect to be able to complete our Neighbourhood Plan within the next financial year. You will be hearing much more about the project under item 5&6 on our agenda later on this evening.

##### Gladman Developments Appeal

The second major project the Council has sponsored is opposing the Gladman Developments Appeal against the refusal of their application to build 119 houses north of Main Road. When we held our last Annual Parish Meeting we were still awaiting the decision on the original planning application. In July, the application was refused by the Cheshire East Strategic Planning Board. Over the summer, Gladman Developments lodged an Appeal against that decision. The Parish Council

#### PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Cllr. Peter Godfrey	533745 (Chairman)	Cllr. Cath McCubbin	535139 (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. Roger Bennett	532723	Cllr. Ken Morris	534622
Cllr. David Craggs	534314	Cllr. Ian O'Donoghue	537268
Cllr. Graham Lenihan	535180	Cllr. Terence Rathbone	537461
Cllr Ian Macfarlane	532777	Cllr. Emma Williams	533403

Sharon Jones  
Parish Clerk

535825

also available at the Parish Office  
Monday 9.30am – 12.30pm, Wednesday 1.00pm – 4.00pm,  
Friday 1.00pm – 4.00pm

decided to apply for the right to make its own case at the Appeal in October (this is known as a 'Rule 6 application'). This was because it believed that;

- The proposed development is far too large for our community
- If the appeal were to succeed it would open the door for many, many further applications in Goostrey
- Most Goostrey residents were against it

In addition to its potential to interfere with the operations of the Jodrell Bank Observatory and its impact on the setting of Swanwick Hall, a Grade 2 Listed Building, the proposed development is not sustainable as Goostrey lacks the services needed to support a development of this size. The Council further decided that to have a real chance of influencing the Appeal we needed to instruct a Barrister to present our case to the Inquiry. The unanimous decision to engage a Barrister was endorsed in January.

The Parish Council didn't have to do this and indeed our easiest course of action would have been to do nothing and hope that Cheshire East and Jodrell Bank be able to persuade the Inspector to turn down the Appeal. However, we thought we would be failing in our duty if we did not act in line with our beliefs and in line with our understanding of what the majority of residents wanted and do everything we could to oppose the Appeal. The Appeal is to be heard in May and we expect to find out the Inspector's decision later this year. There is still no guarantee that the Appeal will be refused and there is no way of knowing whether it would have been refused without a separate Parish Council case being made. However, the Parish Council believes that residents would not have forgiven it, if the Appeal were to be successful and the Parish Council had not done what it could to oppose it. I would like to thank Councillor Morris for producing an outstanding document setting out the Parish Council's case which has been submitted to the Appeal (it is, to use an overworked but, in this case, fully justified word, 'awesome!'). In my view the quality of the case Ken has prepared further justifies our decision to employ a Barrister to ensure it is professionally presented

### **Precept for 2016/2017**

Thus the Council found itself between 'a rock' and 'a hard-place'. On the one hand there were two exceptional projects we believed both to be in the village's interests and to have the support of the majority of its residents and on the other hand we have no money in our budget which was not committed to the ongoing activities of our Council. After considerable heart-searching, the Council decided unanimously that we should take the unusual step of raising the Precept to enable us to finance the two exceptional projects. The Council estimated that we needed to raise £20,000 through the Precept which amounted to an increase of around 48% in that part of the Council Tax which residents pay to the Parish Council. That percentage looks horrendous until it is converted into actual amount to be paid by each household. This varies between £13 and £39 per year depending on the Council Tax band the house is in. The Council is minded to make this a one-off increase in the Precept but in view of the many uncertainties we face in the planning arena, we are not able to make guarantees on this point.

### **New Youth Facility/Scout Hut**

There is one other important community project which I must talk about. When we held the last Annual Parish Meeting, the Parish Council had just completed the transfer of half of the Old Youth Centre site to the 1st Goostrey Scouts to enable them to build a Scout Hut and Youth Facility for the

benefit of the whole community. Since then we have marvelled both at the energy and enthusiasm which the Scouts have put into fund raising for this building and at the generosity, willingness to get involved and support for the project shown by an amazingly broad range of Goostrey residents. As things currently stand the Scouts have raised about £150,000 towards the new building.

It is important that we all remember that the ingenious idea of splitting the plot into two parts came originally from the 1st Goostrey Scouts. The whole rationale behind splitting the Youth Centre site was that, as well as providing a plot for the new Scout Hut and Youth Facility, the sale of the other half of the site would raise money for community projects (including, but certainly not restricted to, the Scout Hut and Youth Facility). No decision has been made on how the money will be spent. I take full responsibility, as Chairman, for that situation as I have refused to allow any debate on what would be, until the land is sold, a hypothetical question. When the land is sold and we know the price, I believe that the Parish Council will want to allocate some of the proceeds of sale towards the cost of building this popular and long awaited community facility. It is important to stress that the money from the sale of the land belongs to the community not the Parish Council and, when taking its decisions on how to use the money, the Parish Council must attempt to reflect the views of the whole community. I would like to thank Councillor McCubbin for her tireless leadership of the Parish Council's input to this important community project over the last 4 years. We all hope that we will be able to conclude the sale of the land in the near future.

### **Final Comments**

I would like to end with a few comments about Cheshire East our Unitary Authority. Parish Councils have a duty to develop effective partnerships with their Unitary Authorities. In my view, effective partnerships are based on open communication and honesty and so I believe it is important to highlight those areas in which your Parish Council believes Cheshire East is failing to meet residents' expectations;

- Failure to deliver a Local Plan and to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and the classification of Goostrey as a Local Service Centre have all contributed to opening Goostrey up to unwanted attack from Developers.
- Road surfaces continue to degrade and pothole repairs appear wasteful and ineffective. Booth Bed Lane was raised at last year's meeting and is still the Parish Council's highest priority for highway maintenance work.
- The safety of Goostrey Railway Bridge remains a concern for the Parish Council and yet we cannot even engage with Highways about implementing their recommended solution.
- The failure of Connecting Cheshire to deliver superfast broadband to some areas of the Parish remains a major disappointment.
- The failure to obtain Section 106 money from Bloor Homes to spend on the Booth Bed Lane Play area.
- I hope that at next year's Annual Parish Meeting there will be some real progress to report on these areas of concern.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for electing me as their Chairman and for their help, support and encouragement throughout the year. I particularly appreciate the unanimity there has been on all important decisions this year which has made my job as Chairman a lot easier than it might have been. I am sure all Councillors would all like to join with me in thanking the Parish Clerk, Sharon Jones, for the excellent support she has given to the Councillors and the Council over the last year.