

SHREWLEY PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

MONDAY 25TH MARCH 2024

PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Cllr Robert Wesbury

The Council

Parish Council elections were held on the 4th May 2023 and there were 8 Councillors to be elected. The 7 existing Councillors were nominated and agreed to stand and as there were no further nominations, these Councillors were duly re-elected.

In October, Sally Lowe was co-opted to fill the remaining vacancy. Sally lives on Shrewley Common and was born and brought up here and with strong local connections is a welcome addition to the Council.

The District Council representatives on the Parish Council are Kyn Aizlewood and David Armstrong from the Green Party who were newly elected and Richard Hales (Conservative) who was re-elected. Jan Matecki continues as our County Councillor.

Planning

The PC, as a statutory consultee on planning applications, has commented on 14 applications during the year. Shrewley Parish is in the Green Belt and any new development must meet the requirements of both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Warwick District Council (WDC) Local Plan.

South Warwickshire Local Plan

A new South Warwickshire Local Plan is currently being developed with a second call for sites. This is a new joint plan with Warwick and Stratford upon Avon District Councils working together to produce a new plan to cover the combined area to 2050.

Stage 2: A second Call for Sites ran concurrently with the Issues and Options consultation stage between 9th January and 13 March 2023. A number of local landowners have proposed sites for inclusion in the plan and these can be viewed at the South Warwickshire Local Plan/Second call for sites website.

It is important to note that these are presented for information at this stage and have not yet been assessed for their suitability for inclusion in the plan, nor are they endorsed.

Stage 3: The Preferred Options and public consultation stage which was planned for the end of 2023, has now been delayed until November this year.

Highways and Rights of Way

After a road traffic accident in 2019, the new vehicle activated sign (VAS) outside Barn Close Nurseries was destroyed. A new sign was finally installed in 2022. However, it stopped working within a few weeks and despite repeated requests to WCC Highways to repair it, we are still waiting.

The PC engaged a local contractor in 2023 to maintain the village green at Shrewley Common after many years of relying on a local resident, and we are pleased with the new arrangements.

A number of Highway and Rights of Way problems have been reported by Councillors over the year and progress on fixing these is regularly monitored by the PC.

Canal Towpath

After many years of pressing the Canal & River Trust to carry out improvements to the towpath at the south-east end of Shrewley tunnel which often flooded and was very muddy, major works have now been carried out which have resulted in significant and hopefully more permanent improvements.

Parish Website

Linda Wesbury, a local resident, created and has maintained our Parish website for many years. However, with changes to legislation, technology and web hosting services, we have recently reviewed this. A new website will be developed and maintained by Parish Online in the future.

This will provide more flexibility, security and continuity for all the organisations which use the site. We would like to include photographs of Shrewley and local activities at the design stage, so please let us have your contributions.

Grants to Local Organisations

The PC and Warwick District Council provided grants for the very successful Coronation Lunch on the 6th May held in front of the Village Hall with a lot of community support.

The PC also gave grants to the Ferncumbe Youth Club to support their activities and to the Friends of Hatton Station for a new platform planter.

Finally, my thanks to our Clerk, all Councillors and members of our local organisations for their efforts and support over the year and their contribution to our community.

SHREWLEY PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT – Clerk, Eleanor Choudry

The 2023/24 budget set by Shrewley Parish Council was £7,172 and has increased for 2024/25 to £9,475. The increase includes a £1,000 that is available for groups providing a tangible benefit to residents of Shrewley Parish. This year the Parish Council has supported the Friends of Hatton Station to purchase a planter, donated £75 towards the launch event of Shrewley, Wroxall Environment Action Team (SWEAT) and also donated a £400 grant towards the very successful Kings Coronation Big Lunch that was held at Shrewley Village Hall. We also supported Ferncumbe Youth Club with a small grant towards play equipment. We have had a local contractor carry out the grounds maintenance to ensure the entrance to the village is presentable and welcoming.

The Reserve Account balance is £5,500 of which £3,500 is ringfenced for election costs. The precept equates to the equivalent of £36.63 for a Band G household. 2023/24 ends with a healthy balance of £3473.

All parish financial information is available on the Parish Council page at www.shrewley.org.

WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR - Jan Matecki

The year has still been dominated by the cost of living crisis. The County Council continued to provide advice to families, and supported residents with financial support through various grants and schemes, which were made available through the Household Support Fund. These schemes close at the end of March 2024.

The new all through school in Bishop's Tachbrook, Oakley School, is still on target to open in September 2024. The first year 7 intake that started in September 2023 have spent their first year in Myton School's new 6th form centre, and will move to the new school building this September 2024, along with a new year 7 intake and a new reception class intake. There was no catchment area set for pupils wanting to start at Oakley School in September 2024.

The 'Task and Finish' group, set up to look into the inequalities of education throughout the county, continued to look at what drives these inequalities, and visited schools within Warwickshire and neighbouring counties, that had achieved better than expected results, to further understand how the results were achieved. The group, which I am part of, continues to meet and will hopefully put out a report in the very near future.

The new 'on demand' bus service, IndieGo Plus, which replaced the old No.16 bus service, was a finalist for 2 awards at the national Citti Awards, which were held in London. It took first prize in the best 'Public Transport Award' category. It continues to increase the number of passengers, and this year has exceeded the number of passengers that travelled on the old No 16 service in the last year of its operation.

The County Council secured over £7.5m of BSIP Plus funding from the DfT. The BSIP Plus will support, protect and enhance bus services and support new initiatives. The funding will help ensure Warwickshire can take forward some of its BSIP priorities and, coupled with the extension of the government's £2 bus fare cap, will help encourage patronage growth across the bus network.

WCC was also successful in securing £3.3m for Warwickshire through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, to provide hundreds more charging points across the county. This will help to facilitate the switch to low and zero emission vehicles. Potential sites, especially in rural areas and areas with little or no EV infrastructure, were sought from the public and community groups. These sites are now being evaluated.

For 2023/24, WCC's budget for pothole repairs is £1.970m. In addition, WCC will spend approximately £1.75m of capital on small patching works. So far this financial year, 7,890 potholes have been repaired across the county's road network. Warwickshire has a strong reputation for making repairs and are ranked 4th out of 30 peer authorities in the National Highways and Transportation Survey for overall highways maintenance, condition of highway and how quickly we deal with potholes and damaged roads.

WCC Highways have also completed 63 schemes that delivered 21 miles of resurfacing works, a further 64 schemes that delivered 44 miles of surface dressing and 53 schemes that have delivered 10 km of footway reconstruction schemes.

The Public Health team are reporting measles in on the increase in the county. Residents have been urged to seek advice from their doctors on their vaccination record, to ensure they have had both doses of the vaccine. Those who have not had 2 doses are being urged to get vaccinated.

The WCC Council Tax increase for 2024-25 was set at 4.99%, which includes 2% for the adult social care levy. This has been driven by the rising costs of adult social care which has seen an investment of £28m, children's social care services which has seen an investment of £8m, supporting children and young adults with special educational needs and disabilities, and home to school transport which has just under £9m of investment to ensure the County can continue to deliver high quality transport for over 10,000 children each day.

The planned new poultry farm in Norton Lindsey, which was going to use land near Shrewley to store and spread the waste chicken manure and had planning permission refused last year, is currently being reviewed by the Planning Inspector as the applicant appealed the decision by WDC.

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCILLORS – Kyn Aizlewood, David Armstrong and Richard Hales

In May 2023 the District Council held elections, with Kyn Aizlewood, David Armstrong and Richard Hales elected as your councillors for Abbey and Arden. We welcome any issues or questions you want to raise with us, with contacts at the end of this report.

This year saw the introduction of No Mow May for the first time at WDC. This allowed over 2 million m² of grass to grow in May, increasing wildflower coverage, supporting biodiversity, and even helping reduce flooding. Our survey of residents found the majority were positive about the impact, with photos of nature and biodiversity springing up in our competition later in the year. Despite the positives everything didn't go perfectly and lessons were learned for 2024. New equipment has been purchased by our contractors to avoid issues cutting the long grass, and additional areas will be mowed throughout where appropriate. We have also included Abbey and Arden in a trial to reduce weedkiller use across the District, which along with a new Biodiversity Action Plan should continue to improve the area's wildlife and environment.

The Council has also nearly completed moving out of its Head Office in Leamington, saving significant amounts each year. We are creating a £500k Energy Generation fund to enable more renewable energy to be developed, for example via rooftop solar installation, and ringfencing money for retrofitting of Council owned houses, decreasing energy bills and improving efficiency for residents.

The new budget was approved in February. This includes an increase in the WDC part of Council Tax of 2.99% (approx. £5 per year for a band D dwelling) which given the below inflation increase in the government settlement was seen as key to keeping the Council finances in a stable state.

Castle Leisure Centre had its official opening on the 24th February, providing a modern new gym and leisure centre for residents. Alongside is a new Scout and Guide Centre, one of the biggest such facilities in the country. The swimming pool facilities at Abbey Fields have started to move again, with a contract signed and construction due to kick off in March.

Numerous planning applications have been dealt with in the Ward, with councillors getting involved where requested by residents. The most notable is the Honiley Road solar farm, where an inquiry met in February with the result still to be published.

Development of the South Warwickshire Local Plan continues, with discussions ongoing about the number of houses required and potential sites. Progress on the plan has been delayed, with the next formal consultation expected late in 2024. No sites have been selected or numbers approved as yet. All Abbey and Arden councillors are working to minimise the impact of the plan on greenfield sites in the ward. We welcome your views on this even outside of the formal consultations, to help feed into the ongoing discussions.

Kyn Aizlewood, kyn.aizlewood@warwickdc.gov.uk

David Armstrong, David.armstrong@warwickdc.gov.uk

Richard Hales, Richard.hales@warwickdc.gov.uk

THE CONNIE NEWTON TRUST – Robert Wesbury

The Trust provides assistance for persons over the age of 45 who live or have lived within Shrewley and neighbouring parishes and are suffering financial hardship.

The Trust has made 13 awards totalling £12,750 during the year.

If you feel that there is someone who could benefit, please contact a local Trustee in confidence (Sylvia Green, Christine Chesshire, Helen Greenley, Sandy Robertson, Norman Winnett or Robert Wesbury).

Their contact details are available on the Parish notice boards and on the Parish website

www.shrewley.org.

HATTON COMBINED CHARITY – Zara Hadfield

The Hatton Joint Charities include: The Charity of Catherine Throckmorton founded before 1652, The Charity of Jane Baker founded in 1849, The Charity of Jane Norcliffe founded in 1897, The William Edwards Coat and Gown Charity founded in 1818, together with a bequest made by Mr. Butler Miles. The first four charities were “combined” in 1909, and the Butler-Miles bequest added later.

50% of the income from the Throckmorton Charity continues to be used for the upkeep of the fabric of Hatton Church – the incumbent rector becomes a Trustee upon appointment. The remainder of the Charity’s income is used to provide some immediate short-term assistance to residents and students in need.

The charity welcomes Sally Whitehead who has recently been appointed as a Trustee.

Trustees meet three to four times a year to discuss current charity funds and establish who in the local Parishes would benefit from the Charity. This year the charity has been able to provide monetary support to residents towards household bills and essential household items.

This past year the charity has supported students who are in school or at college; providing funds to enable them to have 1:1 coaching from the ‘Head Start’ programme. The ‘Head Start’ programme offers support and guidance for those students feeling lost and wondering what to do next in life.

The charity has also issued a gift voucher to spend at Warwick Books to all 2023 Year 6 school leavers from Ferncumbe Primary.

Hatton Combined Charities is able to give monetary help to:

Those struggling on a low income.

People who have unexpected bills to pay.

Individuals with a change in financial circumstances.

Students and apprentices for the cost of books and tools.

People struggling to get to and from hospital appointments.

Those in need of help with funeral costs, beds, soft furnishing or white goods.

Students who are in school or at college, feeling lost and wondering what to do next.

Unexpected issues and traumas that have left individuals needing monetary assistance.

Only those who are resident in the Parishes of Beausale, Hatton, Haseley and Shrewley are eligible to benefit from the charity. It is not always easy for the trustees to be aware of people who would benefit from the charity; we are always pleased to hear from anyone who might be in need.

There is an advertisement in the Ferncumbe News giving details on how to contact the Charity. If you are aware of someone who would benefit, or you yourself is in need of help, and meet the above criteria then please do get in touch.

SHREWLEY WOMENS INSTITUTE – Beverley Baker

Shrewley WI members meet monthly on the first Thursday of the month at Shrewley Village Hall. On the 2nd April we sponsored a tile in the renovations at The Lord Leycester Hospital in the Name of Shrewley WI, which is now in the new grand hall roof.

The committee arrange a wide variety of speakers throughout the year:

April: Matthew from Holt Apiary Farm spoke about the life of bees throughout the year which was so informative and Matthew's enthusiasm for his bees gave everyone a great afternoon. Members could then purchase different honeys and honeycomb, all very tasty.

May: we had a Coronation lunch and toasted King Charles 111

June: a return visit from Jo Goldby when she entertained us with tales as a tour guide at Warwick Castle.

July: Heidi Mayer, Master of the Lord Leycester Hospital guided us through the process of becoming High Sherriff of Warwickshire

August: the summer lunch was followed by Janet Wroe "Fun with Antiques" with quite a few surprises

September: a members' afternoon giving ladies the opportunity to sit and chat

October: Sally Daniels from Henley Chocolates explained how chocolate evolves from the cocoa bean and let ladies sample different chocolates

November: following the Annual Meeting, Nicola, a funeral celebrant spoke about her role.

The December meeting was our Christmas party with a buffet and games

On 14th December Pippa Langhorne sang for us, together with visitors from other WIs and the village.

January: Steve Bruce entertained us with stories from his life as a valuer and auctioneer, followed by him valuing items brought by members.

February: Lesley Horton spoke of her varied working life at nurseries.

March: Christine Spriggs talked about helping improve general health and well-being and dealing with minor injuries ourselves.

We finished our charity year supporting Northleigh House School by presenting Viv Morgan with a cheque for £500. Part of this was raised by doing teas at Wren Hall in July, raffles etc.

FRIENDS OF HATTON STATION – Jenny Honeysett

The FoHS started 2023 with the installation of a new planter in memory of Cyril & Enid Lewis; Enid was the last employee based at Hatton Station and the planter was paid for with a kind donation from the family.

The station itself also received a spruce up from Chiltern Railways with the footbridge painted and new seating installed. The FoHS also kept busy weeding, watering, and tidying the wildflower border and the station carpark, which resulted in a lovely summer display. Thank you to the watering and planter teams for all your hard work and all the supporters of Friends of Hatton Station.

Finally with a grant from the Parish Council we were able to purchase a second planter to the right of the footbridge which will bring more colour for all users of the station to enjoy in the summer.

We are always looking for additional volunteers to help with the watering and weeding. If you are interested, please contact Paul ptilley17@btinternet.com or Jenny jenny.honeysett@gmail.com

SOCIAL CLUB – David Lawrie

In its 16th year, the Social Club screened a full programme of movies using the Hall's new AV systems, and held a number of successful live events such as the Quiz Night and the Retro Band Night.

The movies screened were "Swimming With Men", "Where the Crawdogs Sing", "Sunshine On Leith", "The Good Liar", "Mrs. Harris Goes To Paris", "Everest", "Elvis" and "The Miracle Club". The Hall's new AV system was used to good effect on these occasions.

VILLAGE HALL - David Lawrie

Now in its third year the children's play remains popular with young families, and its maintenance has been rewarded with a renewed safety certificate. New benches have been installed near the play area thanks to Henley Rotary Club.

The Hall's free-to-all Coronation "Big Lunch" party on 7th May last year was blessed with excellent weather and enjoyed by residents of all ages. The successful event was funded by Warwick District Council and Shrewley Parish Council.

A broadband connection was established at the Hall in August last year, so users now have the facility of free Wi-fi in the hall. This also simplifies the use of cashless payment systems at functions. New window curtains were installed in May and the curtain rails were refurbished; and a new rear emergency door was installed.

The success of the Village Show in September was enhanced by wonderful weather, and it was encouraging to see it attended by more children than usual. Next year we hope that the competition entries will increase, having declined a little because of the Pandemic.

A new sound and vision system was installed in September.

The "Craft Fayre" in November was a big success, followed by our "Retro Band" night on 9th December, a real fun night.

The horsebox coffee trailer you might have seen in the car park on Mondays and Fridays is an independent initiative which seems to be quite popular.

In general, the Hall seems to have recovered from most of the damage caused by the Pandemic, but we are still keen to see it used more intensively.

FERNCUMBE YOUTH CLUB – David Dyke

2023 has been a good year for the youth club, with our members enjoying the physical activity, interaction, fun, games and tuck shop treats.

We meet every Wednesday 7.00 – 9.00pm are open to all children in school years 5 and above for football, pool, table tennis or just to chill out with friends. The first week is free and then £1.00 per week.

We remain indebted to the small declining number of volunteers who make the club happen, and really appreciate the support and funding from all the local parish councils and charities as this makes a vital difference to the running and existence of the Youth club for all the children in the area.

SHREWLEY & DISTRICT GARDEN SOCIETY – Juanita Bolster

Talks for 2023

In **February** we heard the wonderful Rosemary Mitchell at Hatton Church, talking about Spring Shrubs and Flowers. Sylvia and team organised the talk, sponsored by Shrewley Garden Society. Tea and Cake was served.

March was a lovely start back in Shrewley Village Hall, with Speaker Harriet Rycroft giving an illustrated talk on the seven years she had been part of the Gardening Team with her 'Gardening at Cotswold Wildlife Park and Zoo' talk. Her photographs were superb too.

In **April** Richard Harvey talked about his journeys round Britain to 'British Castle Gardens', including the Castle Gardens of Kenilworth and Warwick.

In **May** we saw local plantsman Alan Rollason from Lapworth talking about his passionate love for 'South African Succulents', bringing plants along for us to buy. Some rare in-situ photographs too.

In **June**, Mick Schilling, gave us a wonderful talk on Dragonflies called 'Helicopters or Stealth Bombers' He recommended we all go out and look for them - again stunning close-up photography.

Our Summer Party was held in **July** at the enchanting Haseley Mill Labyrinth, so kindly hosted by John, Becky and Jack Cooper.

In **September**, our Speaker was unable to attend, so thankfully Michael Brown stepped in with his excellent illustrated talk on 'Many a Sundry Flower - Medieval Plants and their uses'. This talk was based around his latest book, completely fascinating.

In **October**, Alison Levey talked about her beautiful functioning garden - The Blackberry Garden from first thoughts to present day.

The **November** Talk was cancelled due to nearly all the Committee being ill with Covid or chesty colds!

In **December** we had our AGM and the Christmas Party, which was very well received.

For a variety of reasons, attendance numbers had been gradually declining, so it had been decided, that as the Chair and most of the Committee were stepping down, rather than the Garden Club folding, going forward for 2024, Membership would cease completely, and instead be replaced with just the two talks, in March and November, plus the Summer Party in July.

So for 2024, Herbert has agreed to remain as Treasurer, Juanita as Secretary and Val as Committee Member. Each occasion will be 'payment on the door' which should be sufficient to fund the following Speaker.

We are hoping that these three occasions in 2024 will be well attended, open to the public and thus creating opportunity for further Speakers being arranged for 2025.

We are delighted that Shrewley Garden Society will be continuing - albeit in a different format.

LITTLE SHREWLEY TELEPHONE KIOSK – Linda Wesbury

The Little Shrewley telephone box was purchased by the Parish Council in 2017 and remains a focal point in the village, maintained by local residents. A map of the village is shown inside together with a history of the village. The next objective is for the box to be repainted and this will hopefully be carried out this summer.

SHREWLEY VILLAGE SHOW

The 58th SHREWLEY VILLAGE SHOW took place on Sunday 3rd September 2023 at Shrewley Village Hall and grounds. On one of the warmest show days for many years, record numbers turned out at the Village Hall to view the many magnificent vegetable and fruit displays, including a beautiful array of flowers together with a photography section, superb handicrafts, very tasty home produce, home brewing and a superb full and interesting junior section for our younger exhibitors in 3 age groups; under 5 years, 5-8 years, and 9-15 years.

At 10.45am prompt the doors of the Village Hall were closed and judging commenced. There were some outstanding entries which were awarded either first, second or third prizes and the very best exhibits were awarded a certificate of merit.

The Show itself opened at 1.30pm, with free parking again this year at the Durham Ox to ensure less congestion along Shrewley Common, with the very popular raffles and this year a gourmet BBQ together with numerous activities in the Village Hall Grounds, ranging from the traditional bowling, chocolate tombola, bottle stall, milk the cow, face painting, bouncy castle etc. The well stocked bar serving beers, wines, prosecco as well as soft drinks was more popular than ever as visitors enjoyed a drink and burger relaxing in the warm sunshine.

A highlight of the Show was the ever popular beautifully decorated tea tent which was particularly well supported again this year, serving an extensive range of delicious home-made cakes with tea and coffee. The tables set outside the tea tent in the reserved tea tent area were beautifully laid out giving everyone one the chance to sit down over a cuppa and a chat whilst watching the activities at the Show.

New for this year was a dog show which proved very popular with plenty of dogs on show winning the various categories including best in show. Throughout the afternoon there was background music and later in the afternoon was the egg throwing competition which is now a firm favourite with visitors to the Show.

The afternoon is rounded off with the presentation of the cups and trophies to the winners and a special presentation to all the children who exhibited in the Show. A lot of hard work is put in throughout the year by the Village Show committee and new ideas are always very welcome. If you would like to be involved, please contact Herbert Andrews (Chair) on 07836 360301 or Simon Lister (Show Secretary) on 01926 843450.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: Plans are now well advanced for the 59th Shrewley Village Show on Sunday 1st September 2024. The committee is hoping for even more exhibits this year. As before, the Show will start at 1.30pm with a magician, Punch and Judy show, band, BBQ, pizza van, bar, tea tent and other attractions. Here's hoping for great weather again. Details will be on the website at www.shrewley.org where details of the exhibits can be downloaded, so get planting and exhibit. It's your Show. The Show has its own Facebook page with an ever-growing circulation. You can help us in publicising the Show by sharing our FB page.

HATTON STATION PHONEBOX - Sheona Alemi

Hatton Station Phonebox is more than just a Phonebox, it's remains a central part of our little community. It brought a group of volunteer neighbours together to renovate it and the What's App group continues to grow with over 85 local residents. The group and box continue to be a vital part of community life by connecting local residents who can now use the book exchange, share excess fresh produce and seeds from the garden. A second crowd fund was set up in December 2023 by resident Sheona Alemi, to raise funds for the annual Christmas Tree with lights and batteries. A big thank you to Barn Close Nursery for their help with the tree as always. The remaining funds of £173 are being held in reserve for any future repairs and renewals that the box might need.

Some of the internal shelves have fallen foul of damp due to the unsealed glazing. Many of the recent book donations were sadly taken to the local tip for recycling as they were all damaged. Some of the shelves have been emptied to allow time for them to dry out. It's hoped that over this coming year we could seal the windows to prevent this happening again in the future. A notice has been put up to encourage residents not to leave books on the floor as they too become damaged due to the damp.

The box underwent a full repaint in August 2023 - a big thank you to resident Richard Fell and the paint team. The planter was also given a spruce up and a few new plants added.