



Newsletter Summer 2013

PARISH COUNCIL CHANGES

NEW CHAIRMAN

At its Annual Meeting on 23 May, part of the routine business was to elect a new Chairman. Cllr Steve Ranger was elected and he replaces Cllr Nich Guthrie, who has been Chairman for the last two years and now becomes Chairman of the Strategy Committee.

Further details of the appointments made at the Annual Meeting can be seen on the Council notice boards and web site

NEW CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Following her appointment earlier in the year, Nicola Clarke became Clerk of the Council at the end of the Annual Meeting and has now taken up her new duties. Nicola has been Assistant to the Clerk for the past 5 years so is not a newcomer to the Council.

Nicola comments:

"I have now taken up my duties as Clerk of the Council and have a hard act to follow in David Cowgill! Hopefully I have gained enough experience over the past five years to appreciate the nuances and aspirations of Holmes Chapel in order to continue to serve the Councillors and residents.

I will continue to work in the office at Church Walk and we are pleased that, due to the appointment of a new administrative assistant, the office will now be open from Tuesday to Friday morning. Contact can also be made by email or via the Council web site. All comments are welcome".

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

To assist Nicola with her duties, the Council has appointed Rose Raine as Admin Assistant and she joined the Council on 1 June. Rose has spent her working life in local government, first in the north east and more recently with Cheshire East Council so she has a wealth of experience in how local government works. She will usually be in the office on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings and will be only too happy to advise and assist in any matters relating to how the parish council operates.

COMMUNITY AWARDS

The Parish Council are considering introducing an annual community reception at which the activities of local organisations are celebrated. At the event awards would be presented to those organisations and individuals who have made significant contributions to the life of the village in the past year. Nominations would be sought each year from the residents of the village. Please let the council know what you think of this idea.

COMMUNITY CINEMA

The Parish Council is looking at a proposal to set up a community cinema in the village, perhaps using the new performance facilities being developed at the Comprehensive School. The idea would be that a current popular commercial film would be shown each month. The council would welcome your thoughts on this and in particular would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in helping with the scheme.

MIDDLEWICH ROAD PLAY AREA

By the time the newsletter is published work will have begun on the refurbishment of Middlewich Road play area. Most of the equipment is in need of replacement, and when the Parish Plan survey was carried out in 2008, this area featured heavily on the list of priorities for attention.

Working with Holmes Chapel Partnership, a grant was obtained from WREN with the remaining amount being funded by the Parish Council.

The work is due to be completed by the end of July 2013 and it is hoped an opening ceremony and party will take place once completed. The Parish Council thanks the hard work of the Project Board and looks forward to beginning the next project the Elm Drive play area in the near future.

TRAFFIC RE-ROUTING REPORT

Following an initial public meeting held in the library in July 2011, the Parish Council, Traffic Task Group and Ward Councillors, Cllr Les Gilbert and Cllr Andrew Kolker have been working hard to press Cheshire East Council to consider traffic re-routing through Holmes Chapel.

The report has now been published following extensive physical traffic counts and computer modelling. The report is over 50 pages long and gives various options on alleviating heavy goods vehicles through the village. A display has been in the library for some time with an opportunity for feedback to Cheshire East Council.

A public meeting is to be held on 6 July 2013 at the Victoria Club to give members of public an opportunity to listen to CEC officers.

The Parish Council will keep residents up to date on the conclusions of the report through the web site and newsletters.

RETIREMENT OF DAVID COWGILL

The staff changes mentioned above have been brought about by the retirement of David Cowgill, who has been Clerk of the Council for nearly 43 years. In an address to members, at the end of the Annual Meeting, David said that he could reminisce for hours but time did not allow him that luxury. However he covered a wide range of issues including the following points:

- When he was appointed on 1 July 1970, famous footballers who are now retiring, like David Beckham, had not been born; and the Prime Minister was under 4 years old.
- He has loved doing the job so retirement does not come easily; however he felt that as he approached his 65th birthday, now was a good time to retire and to allow a new Clerk and the Council to develop new ideas.
- He felt that it had been easier to make achievements during the first 10 years of his Clerkship than during the remainder of the time, largely due to the fact that money was more readily available then and more help was available from officers of the District and County Councils.
- In those first 10 years, the Council made a substantial contribution to the leisure centre, refurbished the Middlewich Road play area and renewed a lot of the street lighting in the village so that it could be handed over to the County Council as part of the highway network. It was pleasing, therefore, that he was leaving at a time when grants have been obtained for important work and before long we should see a further refurbishment of the Middlewich Road play area and work starting on the Dane Meadow scheme as well as planned highway improvements.
- He was envious of the Town Councils in the area, who had full time Clerks and fully staffed offices and who were able to raise money much more easily through their rate precepts, but praised many of their achievements and the help they had given to Holmes Chapel.
- He talked about ways in which the Council had been able to improve its effectiveness over the years by investing in equipment, renting an office, employing staff, using the services of a consultant to source grants and other funding, working with Holmes Chapel Partnership to provide schemes and working with other Councils.
- He subscribed to the view that because a growing amount of Cheshire East Council's budget was going on education and social services and it was becoming a "service council", those towns and villages which would do the best for their residents in the future, would be those who were prepared to raise funds and carry out schemes.
- Finally he thanked all those who had helped him over the years, including family, Council staff and members and Clerks of other Council. He wished the Council well for the future and asked the Council to do its best for the people of Holmes Chapel who ask for and deserve the best that can be provided in these times of austerity.

David's retirement brings to an end a 66 year connection between the Council and the Cowgill family between 1947 and 2013, David's father Norman having been a member of the Council from 1947 to 1994.

DANE MEADOW

Work is due to start on the construction of new pathways at the Dane Meadow in late summer and further details will be posted in the Autumn newsletter. However, work is continuing in the meadow by the Friends of Dane Meadow. They held a Bio Blitz weekend on 7 and 8 June 2013 where all manner of activities took place from early morning to late at night including: bug hunts, bird and mammal watch, wildflower searches, bat watching to name a few. Further details of the Friends of Dane Meadow can be found by emailing danemeadow@hotmail.co.uk

PLANTING AROUND THE VILLAGE CENTRE

The Parish Council would like to thank the following people for their contribution in making the village centre a more colourful place through the summer:- Paul Jackson (Channel Island Plants Ltd) for supplying the hanging baskets; Gregg Freer of Stocks Lane Nursery for providing plants for the flower bed outside the Health Centre; and Alan Maddocks who re-positioned the planter outside Barclays with his skip lorry. Of course we also thank the Village Volunteers for their continued work in the village centre.

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

We are thinking of changing the format of the newsletters in the future and would be glad of any comments. Please send comments or suggestions to clerk@holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk

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** Except as shown, all email addresses have the domain name holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk

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For more details of items in this newsletter and for other communications, please see

- The Parish Council website (www.holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk)
- The Council notice board located outside the village library

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