

## Rock Parish Council Chairman's report for 2017-2018

This year seems to have flown by with no major problems for the PC to deal with.

My thanks are due to the Clerk for all his help and support and for his continuing efforts to keep us all informed and up to date. Thanks are also due to fellow councillors, especially those who have put extra effort in, attending other meetings

on behalf of the PC or who have spent time addressing concerns of their neighbours when problems have arisen. Thanks are also due to the Lengthsman,

Colin Link, for his time and his continuing good work around the parish.

The regular presence of County Councillor Rebecca Vale at our meetings has been much appreciated. She has endeavoured to keep the council abreast of activities at County level particularly when they affect our area. District Councillor Rod Wilson has also, despite poor health, given us regular reports on WFDC matters which affect our patch. When he has been indisposed, his wife has, very kindly, attended the meetings with a written report for us to read out. I am sure I speak for the whole PC in wishing him a full and speedy recovery.

Thanks are due to the Police who have, unfortunately, not been able to attend as many of our meetings this year as in previous years. They have managed to send reports when possible which is much appreciated.

This has been a relatively quiet year for the Parish Council with about 43 planning applications to consider and to report on. These varied from modest porches to a small housing development.

We have also had to comment on WFDC's Local Development Plan which has

potential impact particularly on the inhabitants of Far Forest and Clows Top. In the event, WFDC held several well attended open sessions around the district to enable those concerned and interested to discuss the plan in detail with the planners themselves. Thanks are due to the members of the PC who organised a well attended meeting at Far Forest where the details of the plan and the options

available were put before the parishioners. A meeting was also held at Clows Top Victory Hall which was organised by the Victory Hall committee in conjunction with Bayton PC.

About 40 concerned parishioners also attended our monthly meeting at Callow Hill to make their feelings known. The PC took steps to stress the importance of attending one of the WFDC sessions, to get the full picture, and of submitting views

on the plan to the WFDC. It was pointed out that we had no influence on the plan and were consultees as well. In the event, we reported our preference for option A and stressed the concerns and strong feelings of our local communities regarding the impact that either option would have on them.

We were also asked for our comments on the West Mercia PCC's proposals to bring the Fire and Rescue services of Hereford and Worcester, and Shropshire under his control. The majority of the PC was not in support of the plan as

presented and felt that more information should be provided. Clearly others disagreed and the plan has been adopted.

We have been able to continue to give our support to local young people with our Apprenticeship Support Scheme and currently have two young people each receiving a grant.

At the September meeting, we had a presentation given by Alex Powell, Coordinator for Community Led Housing. We are in discussions with WFDC, and Alex, about a possible site for a project in the Parish.

Progress has been made on our plans to put “gateways” on the major roads into the principle communities in the Parish namely; Far Forest, Clows Top, Bliss Gate and Callow Hill. There are still some highways issues to be resolved.

Our proposal to add to the Parish’s network of defibrillators, by installing one in the defunct telephone kiosk in Bliss Gate, had to be abandoned when it was badly vandalised. It was considered that, in the circumstances, such a site would be too vulnerable and it was decided to remove the kiosk at the request of concerned neighbours. As yet, no alternative site has been found.

In February this year the Parish Council finally took over responsibility for the playground in Oakleaf Rise, Far Forest together with the remainder of the section106 funding which will help to cover the ongoing maintenance costs and enable us to keep it open. Our thanks are due to the Clerk who, on behalf of the Parish Council, negotiated the transfer from the District Council.

We have been able to make Support Grants to 11 local Community groups this year, with a further two applications arriving after the deadline. We are planning to increase the budget for these grants for future years. We have also given upkeep grants to the three local cemeteries in the continued absence of grants from WFDC The PC is planning to celebrate the centenary of the end of WW1 later this year

with the RBL joining us for our service at the War Memorial in Callow Hill. We are also planning to join in the nation wide chain of celebratory beacons. We are pleased that the committee of Heightington Village Hall, who are holding a celebratory event on that day, have agreed to us putting our beacon in their car park which is a high point in the Parish, and should be clearly visible to the surrounding area.

Christopher J.L.Price

Chairman Rock PC 2017-18.