

ROCK PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2011

I would like to start my report by thanking the past chair Mr Douglas Godwin for his work as chair the previous three years, my thanks also goes to the Councillors for their help and support that they have given me this past year, I would also like to thank our clerk, Mr Stephen Clee on behalf of the Council for his guidance, keeping us well informed on new and important issues and most of all keeping me organised.

After the sad loss of councillor John Simmonds, Richard Whiteman was co-opted on to the council. Congratulations Richard. In remembrance of John a tree was donated to us by the forestry commission and has now be placed at far forest show ground , by kind permission of the show ground committee.

I have very much enjoyed my year as chairman, My year started by organising the annual dinner for us all which was held at Warton Park, I invited the chairman of Worcestershire County Council, Councillor Mrs Mary Drinkwater and her husband and Consort Peter, we all had an enjoyable and fun night, Sadly Peter was taken ill later in the year and passed away only a few months ago.

Our budget for Rock Parish Council during 2010-11 stands at £22,000.00 or £18.50 on a Band D property.

I have attended the following meetings during the year:-

Grow with the Wyre, this is a scheme organised by the Wyre Forest Landscape Partnership, The Forestry Commission is the lead partner. Some Funding comes from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, this is an ongoing project in keeping habitat protection and restoration, special trees and hedgerows therefore rejuvenating traditional orchards, I visited a cherry orchard at the hop-pole, Bewdley which has been restored with traditional varieties of fruit. The mill on Dowles Brook has also had some restoration. Dexter cattle have been purchased, helping the small holders with grazing. This project also seeks to create an archive and recording centre with documentation of historic activities within our area, something for our children in the future

I have attended meetings at the Council Offices in Stourport on Severn for Mayors and Chairmen of Parish Councils with cabinet member Marcus Hart, housing was a main theme on the agenda, discussions are ongoing with finding appropriate land for the travelling community. Some councillors commented on bill board and poster problems on local grass verges and sign posts, also discussed was the increase of cost of parking around Bewdley.

I have attended Parish Forum meetings at Duke House in Kidderminster. There was an in-depth update on Flooding and the barrier system in Bewdley. Emergency Planning was also looked into, we as a council had completed our Emergency plan and sent this to the District Council for their records. Some concerns were brought up about roadside advertisements and fly celebratory posting which would be a distraction to motorists passing.

CALC AGM - Meeting County Hall Worcester.

This meeting went over the reports of the year and discussions we based around the subscriptions for the forth-coming year.

I helped to organise the Remembrance service, which took place on Sunday 14th November at Callow Hill. There was a strong turn out of parishioners, as well as the service at Callow hill there was also a Church service at Rock Church it is important to remember our war heroes and what they did for us and our country.

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Road Peace Service held at St Ambrose Church. This was a very sad service, where we remembered all those that had died in traffic accidents from around our area and those surrounding; a large number of people attended this church service

Localism Bill, The Bill aims to shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. The bill will be divided into seven parts Local Government, EU Fines, Non-Domestic Rates, Community Empowerment, Planning and housing, It's had a second reading in the House of Commons, a number of amendments have been proposed to the Bill, and now will move on to the House of Lords, we await the outcome in the near future.

Parish Forum and CALC joint meeting

The first speaker was Sue Fry from Social Enterprise a community interest company, qualified and experienced advisor to offer a range of support, information, advice, training and mentoring for those who want to start a new business. This was useful to people thinking of starting a new business; this will help overcome the recession and may offer more jobs to our area. Angela Preece gave a talk on litter picking and fly tipping. Richard Levett, Worcestershire CALK talked more on the Localism Bill we will soon have the information as to how it will effect us as a Council.

St George's parade at Far Forest Church with scouts, Guides and the British Legion, The British Legion celebrating its 90th Anniversary. Dennis Judd and Pete Johnson conducted the service. It was nice to see so many young people having an active part to play.

Friends of Rock Church had an official opening of the Art and Craft Exhibition; items on display were from the surrounding local areas. Mr. Mark Gardnier, M.P for the Wyre Forest, opened this event.

I have attended Meetings with the committee of The Bliss Gate Field, to get there field back in to some sort of working order, so that local children have somewhere safe to play. Grant monies have helped the renovation of the play equipment. I have also supported the race night to raise money for the Playing field.

We have looked at and made recommendations to Wyre Forest District Council on Sixty-Four planning applications this year. And we as a council have purchased two bus shelters which are in place at Callow hill and shortly One is to be installed at far forest. Also purchased this year were a set of traffic calming signs, which will be in use very soon. Negotiations have taken place with Worcestershire Highways Manager David Hunter as to where the signs can be positioned around the parish, warning motorists to cut their speed. A notice board has also been ordered for Heightington the last one be placed around our parish.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Sergeant Chris Aimes and the community support officers for there active involvement in the parish and for there regular police updates at council meeting from happenings within our parish and surrounding area.

Our Lengthsman scheme is still in operation; as you can see the benefits throughout the parish. During the bad weather last year Colin worked hard keeping some roads open that gritters could not get to. He continually maintains drains, gullies and cleans and monitors traffic signs along parish roads. He has cut hedges for motorist's visibility just to name a few jobs he undertakes as our lengthsman.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for giving up their time for the good and well being of our community.

This concludes my annual report for the 2010 - 2011 year.

Sue Morris
Chairman 2010 - 2011