

LLPC CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023

Full local elections were held in Cheshire West and Chester in May 2023, including those for the parish councils. Of Little Leigh's existing Parish Councillors, five members stood again and were re-elected and we are pleased to welcome new Councillor Sue Beecroft. We are expecting to be able to co-opt a seventh member imminently, with Councillors' approval.

Councillors Martin Beecroft and Rachel Tomlinson did not stand for re-election to office this time. Their contribution to village life was praised and we thank them again for their service, especially for Councillor Beecroft's three years in the Chairmanship.

A working group under the Chairmanship of Councillor Beecroft was formed to develop a walking, riding, wheeling and cycling strategy for the village. Contacts have been established with the Canal and River Trust, CWAC and Sustrans to investigate a route along the canal and work has started on improving the towpath surface. Volunteers will be needed to complete the work. The Parish Council had funded a picnic bench which CRT had installed alongside the towpath.

This working group and LLPC contributed to CWAC's bid for Levelling-up Funding for the Winnington Corridor scheme and will contribute to re-submissions in any further round of LuF.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee was celebrated over the long weekend of 2nd – 5th June 2022. Prior to this, a cherry tree was planted in the play area in a small ceremony. Over the Jubilee weekend, a number of events and entertainments were held in the village hall and marquee. The beacon lighting, in the evening of 2nd June, was well attended. The whole weekend programme was seen as very successful.

Following negotiation with CWAC the Parish Council had planted wildflower verges along the Runcorn Road. The village planters looked stunning again through the season.

Village cycle rides and walks were organised for a number of occasions and were enjoyed by those who participated.

The Holly Bush public house and outbuildings had been sold to private individuals. A company had been formed to purchase the pub on behalf of the community and an Asset of Community Value listing was placed on the ancient orchard and field. LLPC had a number of contacts with Planning Department about the site and the use, without Permission, of one building for bedroom-only accommodation. We have objected to a recent Application that would entail constructing a new car park on the orchard site.

The annual Village Show and Dog Show were held on 17th September with events for all the family. A non-competitive basis was used for the Village Show this time, with stallholders paying small fees that went to charity – and was found to be successful.

Our customary 'Carols Around the Tree' event was held in the Village Hall garden in December and was well attended and enjoyed.

We had a number of contacts with local residents and the leadership of the school about the problems caused by the parents' parking when dropping off and picking up children. Following representations from the Parish Council, the school authorities wrote to parents regarding parking and the police were attending regularly.

Our annual road defects (potholes) survey was carried out through the middle months of 2022. Around 60 potholes and other highways defects were reported to CWAC and some repair work followed but we remain very concerned about the condition of the minor roads and have expressed this to Highways Department and our Ward Councillors. The next survey, for 2023, has just been started.

Along with other Parish Councils in the area and Ward Councillors, we have made a number of representations to CWAC about the long delays in completing the highways repairs at Soot Hill – which are having impacts on the traffic flows in Little Leigh and Barnton.

The Parish Council had commented on many planning applications during the year, including those associated with the still-ongoing redevelopment of the Horns Inn site. The Chairman had written to the MP regarding the telecommunications infrastructure and the installation of additional telecommunications poles in Ash House Lane.

LLPC responded to Cadent's second consultation on the proposals for the HyNet hydrogen pipeline system, which would include the laying of at least one underground pipeline through part of the parish.

At the end of February '23, Bob Screen stood down as Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee after many years of service and was thanked by many in the community, including LLPC. VHMC is continuing now with responsibilities shared amongst the Committee members.

A successful event was held at the Village Hall on 1st April '23 to celebrate Easter and included a village walk, a lunch and games for children.

A programme of celebrations was enjoyed on 6th – 8th May '23 on the occasion of the coronation of King Charles. These comprised a concert on the Saturday evening, a Big Lunch event on the Sunday with a children's entertainer and a village walk, and games for children, on the last day.

The financial year had closed with £13,524 in the accounts.

Finally, since I am stepping down from the Chairmanship this month, I want to thank all of you for your support and contributions to LLPC's activities over the last twelve months. I'm sure we will have a good year under our new leadership.