



# **CLENT PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT AND PARISH NEWSLETTER 2007**

**Chairman - Ed Sheppard**

**Clerk to the Council - Pat Harris  
Tel: 01562 886269**

## **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2007**

**MONDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>. APRIL 2007.**  
**THE PARISH HALL, CLENT**  
**AT 7.30P.M.**

**SPEAKER - KEVIN DICKS**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**BUSINESS OF THE MEETING**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING 2006**  
**MATTERS ARISING**  
**CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS**  
**AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2005/06**  
**ESTIMATED ACCOUNTS 2006/07**  
**BUDGET 2007/08**  
**POLICE REPORT**  
**OPEN FORUM**

**ALL ELECTORS MOST WELCOME**

**REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE FROM 7.00P.M.**

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## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

As I write this report, not only is the end of another council year approaching, but also the four year elections for Parish and District Councils. Most of your current councillors have already put themselves forward for re-election on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Combined with two new interested parishioners, this should give us the required number to apply for Quality Parish Status (QPS) next year. This is only one of the nine requirements needed to achieve this status, which would give us, as a Parish, a passport to increased grants etc.

At the beginning of March work finally commenced on the cricket pitch in Centenary Field. The main reason for the delay was the long list of planning conditions demanded by Worcestershire County Council for the granting of planning permission. These conditions included, the reptile fence, (which I understand gave untold pleasure to many dogs on their daily walks), Health & Safety meetings, daily

reptile checks by our Clerk, Pat Harris, just to mention three of the twenty six that were imposed on us.

Nevertheless, with the removal of the top soil, the end is finally in sight.

Affordable Housing has also taken a great deal of time again this year with several meetings between ourselves, the housing association and the District Council planners. The result of these meetings will be evident when the first proposals are put forward for your comments.

We have had several more people attend our meetings this year, either to comment on a problem that worries them or to just watch the Parish Council at work as it tackles the more mundane tasks of running the Parish. This can only be achieved by the dedication that all councillors have shown again this year in whichever position they took on at the beginning of May 2006. I thank them all on your behalf, for each one, from my Vice Chairman, the planning sub committee members, the tree officer to the footpath warden, each has given freely of many hours of personal time without payment.

Our Parish Lengthsman is now into his second full year and this co-operation between ourselves and Worcestershire County Council is proving a great success with the continuing improvement in the appearance of our Parish, even down to such things as painting of railings, cleaning road signs and unblocking drains, they all make a vast difference and I thank Geoff for all his hard work. The Parish Council is also fortunate in having, as members, County and District Councillors namely, Ed Moore and Margaret Sherrey, both of whom have been invaluable with their help throughout our current year.

I have only mentioned a small amount of the work carried out on your behalf, there is much more I could write about such as, grass cutting, street lighting, new picnic benches and even the new superb signs that will soon adorn the playing field and car parks. These have taken up much time and effort not to mention cost, but whether you, are like our hard working Clerk, Pat Harris or a volunteer councillor,

the aim is to serve the community and improve our Parish of Clent.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

Ed Sheppard

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Estimated 2006/07

#### Income

Precept	42000.00
Bank Int.	4682.00
Concurrent Functions	10209.00
Charity Int./Wayleaves	231.00
Grants	<u>23323.00*</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£80445.00</u></b>

#### Expenditure

Administration	19693.00
Open Spaces	16154.00
Public Lighting	13331.00
Grants (ex.S137)	820.00
Section 137 Exp.	3860.00
Highways (NB)	615.00
Parish Lengthsman	1893.00
Eq. Purchase	<u>899.00</u>
<b>Estimated</b>	<b><u>£57265.00</u></b>

\* £20,000.00 spent in 05/06 for Skateboard Park.

The Council has given grants under its statutory powers to the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Post Office, Clent Church Yard/Clock and Bromsgrove Rural Rides who provide transport for the elderly for hospital visits and the like.

Section 137 Power has been used to give a grant to the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Clent Brownies and for the collection of litter

### **PRECEPT**

The Council has precepted upon the District Council the sum of £49,000.00 for the year. This takes into account the loss of the Concurrent Functions Grant

### **PACT MEETING**

**MONDAY, JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2007 at 7.00p.m.**

**AT THE PARISH HALL,**

Police and Community Together.

This is an opportunity for the residents of Clent Parish to come and air their views on policing matters affecting them.

The Council regularly receives complaints about speeding and parking, so please attend to add strength to its efforts on these and other issues.

### **PARISH PATHS WARDEN'S REPORT**

The national strategy for improving access on public rights of way for all, is underway in Clent. A number of stiles have been upgraded to self-closing gates and many more are planned for the coming year. The majority of land-owners, when approached, are happy to take advantage of the materials and grants that allow such upgrades to be done, at no cost to them.

I hope to develop a 'Three Churches' route linking, St. Leonard's Church, Clent, through to St Peter's in Broome and back via Horsall Lane finishing at St Oswald and St Wulstons Catholic Church in Holy Cross Green. It will be largely gated and level all the way. A start has been made in Clent, replacing existing stiles with gates, with the land-owner permission of course, and more are planned for 2007. Ploughed paths can cause problems when they are not re-instated, particularly ones at the edges of fields. It is an offence not to re-instate these. However, the process to prosecute is long and there are many demands on too few staff. It is important to report incidents to the County Council, who will keep a record on file. The current grant system, available to landowners, requires them to demonstrate good husbandry. The administrators do check these records, particularly where there are public rights of way involved and will withhold some funding if landowners have not been seen to comply with the regulations.

A request to all dog owners, please respect the Country Code and keep them on leads, especially where there is livestock and stay on the permitted paths. Finally, please 'clear up' after them. Those who don't, give us all a bad name.



A New Kissing Gate

## **HIGHWAYS**

**A 456** - the Highways Agency has carried out a study of the whole of this route. The proposal is to reduce the speed limits from the M5 Junction 3 to its junction with the A449 in Kidderminster

The Council has been asked to comment and it is asking for the 40mph to extend 170m in the south westerly direction, to beyond the Broome Lane/Stoney Lane junctions.

**Notice Board** A new board has been erected by the French Hen Inn, which will serve that part of the Parish. The Council will always consider requests for further Notice Boards if you would like to make suggestions.

The Council has replaced the damaged board at the junction with Pinewoods Avenue and the A456.

**Quiet Lanes Initiative.** This Government policy has yet to be implemented by the County Council, but Clent Parish Council is continuing to press for some lanes to be part of this scheme.

Stakenbridge Lane/A456 junction was again subject to flooding. The County Council has taken action, which it is hoped will prove successful.

**Walton Pool.** Following a request from residents a grit bin will be provided.

**Bromsgrove Road** The Council is still hopeful that the vehicle activated speed signs will be provided by WCC during this current financial year.

## **STREET LIGHTING**

The request for a new lamp in Brookland Road has been deferred due to a number of objections received. The upgrading of the lighting in the Parish is now completed, but this has caused some residents to complain about the brightness of the lamps. Where appropriate, baffles have been inserted to alleviate this problem.

This year has seen a few problems with vandalism from the use of air rifles. The Police have been made aware of the issue and will monitor the situation.

## **OPEN SPACES**

The major project this year has been the commencement of work for the Cricket Pitch in Centenary Field. Everyone is looking forward to the completion of the infill work so that work on the Pitch can begin.

Meetings have been held with Clent Cricket Club to define areas of responsibility as and when the work is completed.

It will be a wonderful opportunity for the young people of the Parish to become involved in this sport.

The Council is aware that Clubs in the surrounding area have waiting lists.



**A Cricket Pitch in the making!**

## **PLAYING FIELD/RECREATION AREA**

The new picnic bench is being used and it is hoped that, as it is made of re-cycled plastic it will last a long time.

Councillors continue to make weekly checks on the equipment in both sites. If you notice any damage or items that require attention, please contact the Clerk.

## **CLENT HILLS**

The representatives on the Clent Hills Advisory Committee have attended the regular meetings and give reports on the maintenance work being done. The public meeting called by the National Trust was attended by many residents. The outcome appeared to be that most people were opposed to any commercial development on the Hills and that they should remain in their unspoilt condition. The National Trust has advised that it will not re-opening the toilet facility at the top of Adams Hill. The Pay and Display at Walton Hill was vandalised Within one day of being erected. The trust will be replacing the machine as soon as possible.

## **CLENT PAROCHIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Council was delighted to assist with the narrowing of the driveway entrance to make it safer in the interest of the safety of the children.

New barriers were also erected to prevent children straying onto the drive.

The School continues to thrive with over 100 pupils attending.

## **LOCAL POLICING**

The Council appreciates the attendance of PC Chris Lord at most of the Parish Council meetings. He is able to update the Council on crime issues within the Parish, most of which are vehicle crimes, especially at the National Trust Car Parks for the Clent Hills where Satellite Navigation Systems are proving attractive to the thief.

This year has seen the theft of high powered motor vehicles from private dwellings. The advice is, do not leave your car keys on view.

Garden Sheds have also been targeted, but the police have had some success in apprehending the suspects. Steve Hackett is the Community Support Officer for Hagley, Clent and Belbroughton and is already becoming a well known figure as he travels around the area on his pedal bike. Steve has visited all the schools to ensure the pupils are aware of his presence.

## **OUTSIDE MEETINGS**

Councillors and the Clerk continue to attend all meetings arranged for Parish Councils whenever possible.

The Vice Chairman and the Clerk attended the meeting to discuss the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Document Phase Two. This document has important implications for the whole of the West Midlands and is produced by the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The purpose of the RSS is to produce a coherent framework for regional development. The Stage Two process dealt with housing, employment, waste and transport.

All Parish Councils were encouraged to complete the questionnaire and the Vice Chairman and Clerk for Clent Parish Council spent many hours considering its comments.

Whilst new housing projections were released by central government, Worcestershire County Council, who is not responsible for deciding on growth levels, has advised the region on what is reasonable and sustainable.

The final part of the revision, Stage Three will deal with issue such as environmental, critical rural services, recreational provision and gypsies and travellers

## **PLANNING**

2006/0731 & 0732 - New Dwellings - 33-39 Western Road. As you are aware the Parish Council strongly opposed this proposal, which was subsequently refused by Bromsgrove District

Council. The applicant has now appealed to the Secretary of State against this refusal and the Council is still awaiting the outcome.

On a general note, Bromsgrove District Council area is covered by a 91% Green Belt policy, this provides an important buffer zone between the Birmingham Conurbation and Worcestershire. The designation has to be used in connection with all planning applications, as do the Conservation Areas and Areas of Landscape Value Policy Planning Guidances. Listed Buildings also have special restrictions, for example permission is required for a Satellite Dish on a listed building.

A Parish Design Statement will, when adopted, be used as a Supplementary Planning document.

## **PARISH LENGTHSMAN**

As the Chairman has said in his report Geoff has painted some railings around the Parish and it is hoped to commence work in Odnall Lane soon.

## **PARISH PLAN**

The Council were delighted to receive a Certificate which acknowledges that a Parish Plan has been completed.

As a business plan for the future of the Parish the Plan was reviewed in September with the following issues being addressed:-

- a) Dog fouling
- b) Frequency of the newsletter. As part of the process for Quality Parish Status, the Council will produce a quarterly newsletter, which will be available to all residents.
- c) Police presence. See above for details of PACT meeting.
- d) Neighbourhood Watch. The Council will be delighted to assist in the setting up of a scheme anywhere in the Parish.
- e) Quiet Lanes - ongoing.
- f) Parking on Pavements
- g) Centenary Field - additional seats. This will be looked at when the cricket pitch is finished.
- h) Play Area around Pinewoods Avenue. The Council is looking for land to provide a facility.

## **MEETING DATES**

The regular meetings of the Council are held on the third Monday of each month, unless it happens to fall on a bank holiday. All electors are made most welcome and there is always an opportunity to address the Council prior to the commencement of the business.