

Chair's Report 2013-14

This year is an improving year for our council and we are building on the foundations of stability and progress of last year. We have become a council which has seen more activity and engagement with our community and neighbours.

Significantly we have increased the number of councillors and as you can see most of the seats are occupied. The number of Parish Councillors has been reduced following the loss of Chadwick End. And of course it's not simply about numbers because there is quality here to! Our new councillors have thrown themselves in with gusto and engaged fully with a variety of activities. This present council is unrecognisable from the one which existed not so long ago.

The Governance Review

The Governance Review recommendation for a new parish has now been completed and established. A new parish of Chadwick End has been created and came into existence on 1 April 2014. New Councillors have been elected and we wish them well.

Our New Office

This year we have seen the opening of our new offices above the police shop where the clerk now works. This has placed the council much more centrally within the parish and has been a big improvement to the administration of the parish. It has also been much more suitable for councillors and others to meet with the clerk.

Completion of the Cemetery Extension

There has been progress in the completing the final phase of the extension to the cemetery at Temple Balsall with the imminent blessing of a designated section of the land. A blessing with invited guests and refreshments is planned as part of the celebration. We are indebted to parishioners and particularly to the Reverend Kathy Lloyd for their help.

CCTV

We have seen work carried out to the CCTV cameras and these are all now up and running. We are in the process of getting the cameras improved to enable the police to receive better quality images and increased coverage.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

SMBC gave a helpful presentation to us about developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Due to the nature of the way our parish is divided their advice was that they would not look at an individual NDP which did not include areas which were in Berkswell parish. We have resolved to produce a joint plan with Berkswell and there has been an initial meeting. There has been an appeal against SMBCs plan which will need resolving before meaningful progress can be made.

HS2

Balsall Parish council and Berkswell council are presently pre-occupied with the HS2 petitioning process as HS2 continues to be a major issue for our community. There is much activity and we continue to communicate with interest groups, local and national councillors and MPs to put

our case for protest and mitigation. An initial stab has been made at our petition and we are engaging the services of BDB to work for us. We continue to work with interested parties and have allocated funds to help our representation and concerns.

Jubilee Youth Project

[Judy giving me some input for this.]

Conclusion

We continue to support the village of Balsall Common which accounts for the majority of our catchment and other projects in the area. We provided grants to the Jubilee Centre for their important youth work, the Balsall Common village hall as well as other groups like the Hornets football club, the Scouts and the library.