

Chair's Report 2014-15

This year has been a busy one for the Parish Council. The village centre continues to be a focus for us all and we are committed to improving this. We have embarked upon some positive dialogue with SMBC to get some much needed improvements to the village centre and we hope that you will soon observe the improvements.

We have also petitioned against HS2, consecrated the Cemetery, embarked upon the Neighbourhood development plan and made representations following a number of planning applications for proposed new development.

The village continues to face an unprecedented number of challenges with the proposed HS2 and potential further development in the borough.

HS2

We have petitioned against the hybrid bill with Councillors appearing before the Select Committee to make representations on behalf of the Parish Council. We will continue to monitor this situation.

Consecration of the Cemetery Extension

The Parish Council Cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of Birmingham. A formal ceremony at the Cemetery took place with a significant number of parishioners also being present. Reverend Kathy Lloyd Roberts arranged for refreshments at the Old Hall following the blessing. We will be improving the Cemetery further with new plants and a section for wildlife.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

We are working with SMBC and Berkswell Parish Council to progress the NDP. Additional to this, a meeting with the chief executive Nick Page and several SMBC officers was held in Balsall Common. Following this meeting, a number of issues in the village centre will be addressed to include, increased litter pick on the approach into the village, painting of lighting columns, cleaning of the drainage channels, placing a permanent barrier in the library car park, decluttering of street furniture and looking at improving parking in the village.

We will continue to engage with SMBC and other parties to progress the NDP and action further vital work needed to improve the village centre.

Planning applications

This year has seen a number of planning applications by developers. Although we have seen some applications granted, we have been successful in defeating other applications.

Harper Fields will be extended with development of a further 39 units. Additionally, the sites at Kenilworth Road have been brought forward for development. We have made representations and objected to both these applications and we will continue to make the views of the community known to SMBC. We managed to secure the withdrawal of an application to develop land at Magpie Lane. We will no doubt see future applications of a similar nature with Balsall Common becoming a popular and attractive place to live.

Conclusion

We will seek to build upon our achievements so far and will be looking at improvements to the recreation areas in this coming year. We hope to improve the village centre further with exciting floral displays and new planters. Our wish to increase membership of the Parish Council remains as Peter Lea and Douglas Money leave the Parish Council. We send our thanks to both for their time and commitment.