

Annual Parish Meeting – Monday 8th April 2024.

Chairman's Report

The objective of this report is to try and cover the important issues within Woore Parish, I apologise again this year if I have not included the issues that are most important to you but remind you that the Parish Councillors are always willing to talk to residents about issues of concern, with some Councillors having specific areas of responsibility which you can find more details of on the WPC website.

Currently the Parish Council has 8 appointed Councillors, with 2 new appointed in the last month, Cllr. Tony Gath and Cllr. Carol Gath, who are both welcome tonight, we still have vacancies for 2 further Councillors, if you are interested, please contact myself or the Clerk for more information. I must take this opportunity on behalf of the Parish Council in wishing Cllr Malcolm Blake a speedy recovery who unfortunately has been absent from the Council for the majority of the Year.

Even with the reduced numbers of Councillors it has been business as usual, and I would like to thank them for their commitment for the work of the Parish Council throughout the Year. Thanks also go to George Daville who resigned from the Parish Council due to moving away from the Parish earlier this year.

Tonight is the first Annual Parish Meeting for the Clerk, Chelsea Burnard- Channon who is now settling into the role of Clerk as well as including Financial Responsible Officer. I would like to thank our previous Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Helen Jackson for the handover and guidance earlier this Year given to Chelsea.

Achievements during the Year.

The last 12 months have been challenging and reviewing the activities and achievements of the Parish Council include the following.

I reported last year about the Parish Council holding remote Monthly Meetings with Shropshire Council and with the current pressures that Shropshire Council are currently enduring and the announcement of HS2, these meetings are now on "hold". We do still have the contacts and make regular communications on highways, drainage, enforcement, planning as well as the public rights of way and footpath issues.

Following the success of the Jubilee Celebrations in 2022, the Kings Coronation celebrations on the weekend of 6th-8th May again proved successful and thanks to the Village Hall and volunteers in making this event another memorable occasion.

The Woore Cricket Club Bonfire Night was supported by a donation from the Parish Council and very well attended by the Community.

The Parish Community Speed Watch Team have again been active throughout the year led by Cllr. Colin Hamilton who will provide a more detailed report of activities later this evening. Speeding is the Parish Council's number one priority on the Parish Councils West Mercia Police Charter and with the continued work with West Mercia Police, we will work to continue on the reduction of speed throughout the Parish. Currently due to the existing MVAS now on its final stages of life, the Parish

Council are investigating sourcing 3no SID's (Speed Indication Signs) to be installed on the A51 and A525 Newcastle Road. We were unsuccessful in a recent Grant Application to the Police Commissioner for West Mercia Police but will not let this deter the Parish Council by CIL Funding or other opportunities to provide these signs. Locations have been identified, one of which the A525 Newcastle Road requires the agreement of Shropshire Council Highways. West Mercia Police in attendance tonight will also provide an update as well as activities later tonight. Part of the Parish Councils initiatives also includes providing speed limit signs for placing on wheelie bins and hope the residents that front onto the A51 and A525 will pick up their relevant signs tonight and support this initiative.

Phase One of the Village Green Project is now completed in the removal of the overgrown trees and bushes with new fencing at the entrance to Ash Mount. The intention of the Parish Council is to make better use of the Village Green for all the residents of the Parish.

Cllr. Goodman is leading on the Project to ensure that the St. Leonard's Play Area is fully compliant with the recent ROSPA report. Included in the plan is to remove the Outdoor Gym from the rear of the Village Hall and this to be sited at the Play Area. This will save on having two annual ROSPA reports and hopefully the Outdoor Gym will become more available and get used more. The Parish Council initiative is also working in conjunction with Woore School who also have requirements from their ROSPA Report and the savings by the appointed Contactor have been shared.

Those of you who attended last years Annual Parish Meeting will recall the mention of the Project for the land on Newcastle Road, this is still on the Council's agenda, and we are still seeking the list of priorities from residents to enable a consultation to take place. The Parish Council have leased out the land on a short-term lease, to generate some income until such times progress is made on the delivery of this Project.

A number of residents started an initiative with Openreach, Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme for the roll out of full fibre to our communities which the Parish Council has been supporting. We were hoping tonight to have Openreach in attendance but due to illness and holidays there are no representatives present. The latest situation is that there as been steady progress in residents and businesses signing up to the Voucher scheme reaching 68% pledging for the full fibre. This is for residents and businesses that currently receive broadband from the Pipe Gate Exchange, so this also includes neighbouring villages and hamlets outside of the Parish. Once a target of 75% pledges is reached, then survey work will commence by Openreach, hopefully by the end of June, on the route to the properties. If you have not already applied for the Voucher, please contact and assistance as well as advice will be given by the Openreach Team.

HS2

Early in October the Government announced the cancellation of HS2 Phase 2a for the line from Birmingham to Crewe, this was most welcome news to all of the Parish as well as surrounding areas. The seven years of ensuring the Safety, Health and Wellbeing of the residents in gaining the Assurances and Undertakings by HS2 Ltd. in attending both the petition hearings of the House of Commons and House of Lords now will not happen. Some of these Assurances and Undertakings were and should have been provided by Shropshire Council during this seven-year period but now due to the financial restraints of the Local Authority look very doubtful to happen. One of the

Assurances was to provide a new Puffin Crossing to replace the Pelican Crossing at the school and provide better signage as well as safety at the school entrance. Meetings with HS2 Ltd. are still continuing with in February the remote Annual HS2 Phase 2a Town and Parish Council Meeting taking place with several questions submitted by Woore Parish Council on the Assurances and Undertakings. The response from HS2 Ltd is that they will not be providing these. Shropshire Council were provided with additional money from the Government due to the savings on HS2 to be spent on road safety in the County. The Parish Council have contacted the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Highways in Shropshire Council that Woore Parish should be given priority in the use of this additional funding as it was the only Parish in Shropshire that was engaged in the HS2 Project. Hopefully, our Ward Councillor, Cllr. Aldcroft will provide an update in the Shropshire Council Report later. On a final note, regarding HS2, our MP who as been copied in on all communications regarding HS2, responded last week that she has submitted "Parliamentary questions to the Department of Transport related to this– on a similar theme to the ones that were put to HS2 at the recent meeting". The Parish Council await the response from the efforts of our MP but feel the Parish should be compensated as well as be provided with what was expected from the Assurances and Undertakings for the work of the last seven years. STOP PRESS – Only today ITV Central have contacted the Village Hall who are doing a piece on the impact of the closure of the HS2 Grants that both the Hall and Cricket Club were in the process of submitting.

Planning & Woore Neighbourhood Plan

Another remarkably busy Year with Planning Applications, the majority of them been extensions, alterations, change of use, demolition and re-build and has kept the Parish Councillors active in ensuring that the proposals are in-keeping with the Woore Neighbourhood Plan. There was a re-application for the 10no dwellings at Ireland's Cross, which was Granted by Shropshire Council, a further additional dwelling on Audlem Road, increasing this development to 6no in total when completed.

The current position in dwellings to start which are Granted permission for Woore Parish is, 14no at Station Yard Pipe Gate, 10no dwellings at Ireland's Cross and 3no at Audlem Road, this number well exceeds with previous applications Granted, the Neighbourhood Plan which envisaged around 30no additional dwellings from 2016-2036. The Parish Council have advised Shropshire Council on all Planning Applications there concerns on the current infrastructure including drainage both surface water and foul drainage, which currently is unable to manage these additional developments.

With the delay of the Shropshire Local Plan due to Examiners requiring further information, the decision to review the Woore Neighbourhood Plan is awaiting the outcome of the Shropshire Local Plan so that this can take account of changes that may impact on some of the Policies.

The Local Government Boundary Review was completed, but Shropshire Council is undertaking Community Governance Reviews, focusing on the parish boundaries of five areas within Shropshire, which includes Market Drayton and Adderley Parishes, this incorporates Woore Parish, the consultation concludes on the 10 May 2024. The Parish Council will again review the documents/proposals and comment accordingly if necessary.

Finance

It is pleasing to report that for the fifth consecutive year the Parish Council agreed not to increase the precept which is set at £31,250 for the coming budget year. Yet again we will have to work even harder to service and enhance the Parish when costs in the economic climate are increasing.

The Woore Place Plan (updated version available on the Parish website) which was submitted by the Working Party and the Clerk was recently approved at Cabinet of Shropshire Council. This Place Plan will allow the Parish Council working with Shropshire Council to carry out strategic projects on potential infrastructure within the growing Parish. The funding for these projects is money paid to the Parish from the number of new houses been built, called Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), we are pleased to report that Woore will receive a further £50,126 this year. The Parish Council welcomes residents as well as community organisations to inform them of any proposals they may have, which can be included in the Woore Place Plan.

All the Parish Council Accounts are audited in accordance with Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) and again through the demanding work entailed by the Financial Responsible Officers there were no specific issues or recommendations from either the internal or external Auditors for last year's Accounts. Thanks to the Councillors who function as scrutineers during the year.

Parish Councillors also represent on a number of local and county wide groups and organisations and it is appreciated the voluntary time they give in representing the Parish.

I end this report in offering my thanks to all the Parish Councillors, Tree & Path Wardens, Sally and Carol and the number of increasing volunteers who support the Parish, with planting, watering, painting, conducting maintenance on the defibrillators, sorry if I have missed anyone. As I have said previously it is your efforts that make Woore Parish a wonderful place to live.

End.