

Chair's Report 2018/2019 – Plans for 2019/2020

HIGH LEGH PARISH COUNCIL

I would like to thank all fellow councillors for their continued work, time and effort that they put in on a voluntary basis to help our great community. Without all of this work the village of High Legh would not be the place it is, and indeed without this support it will not become the place we all envisage. I would also like to thank the many volunteers and helpers, from the Village Hall Management Committee, and Community Association to the afternoon teas and all the other great teams across the Parish. In particular, I would like to say special individual thanks to Mike Walker for his efforts in maintaining the village hall, to Nick Gerrard and team for their work on the neighbourhood plan, and to Helen Wright for the day to day running of the village hall. The smooth running of the council is largely down to the enormous patience and persistence and dare I say “excessive” hard work of Doreen Walker, so on that note I would like to begin by proposing a vote of thanks to Doreen.

This year has seen Cllr Jenny Morton resign from the Parish Council - her loss will be greatly felt and her commitment for the years is to be praised. Our continued focus for the year has been around roads and transport; ensuring the sustainability of the village; planning a consistent approach; and local improvements and amenities.

Roads and Transport

The Parish Council continues to be very concerned for traffic in and around the Parish. The Council installed the first vehicle activated speed reminder (VASLR) on West Lane. We have then purchased a second which is on the West bound A50 east of the Belfry entrance. The council are looking also at getting a portable VASLR to replace the portable version that usually is positioned near the northern junction with the Avenue. We continue to see enforcement as a key issue in the area and not just for speeding but the HGV transgressions on Swineyard Lane towards the industrial units in Appleton are an ongoing problem. We thank our local Police for sparing what resource they can and continue to press for more as well as better methods from Cheshire East. Cllr Sykes has been liaising with the various Warrington meetings and businesses to try and ease the HGV situation. Cllr John Sykes also takes the lead on the positioning and timing of the VASLRs in the parish and any suggestions can be directed to him, but we note that best practice means that these should be moved periodically.

The Council are continually examining a variety of traffic calming and safety initiatives. Cheshire East have agreed to one in particular around the village hall which will involve some traffic islands, realigning of lines and a central refuge for pedestrian crossing. In addition to the traffic and speeding issues, the Parish Council continues to press Cheshire East for better maintenance and management of the roads, particularly given the increased volume of traffic now using them.

The local bus review was conducted and initially High Legh looked like it would have no buses. We are glad to report that a limited service has been retained, the No 47 which is now running from Warrington to Knutsford via High Legh (Mon-Fri).

HS2

The Parish Council continues to Monitor HS2 developments, meetings took place June 2018 and comments from attending Parishioners were sought. We lobbied and continue to lobby through any and all relevant channels against the whole concept of HS2 in this area and also against the details in order that if it does go ahead, we are able to try and mitigate the outcome and disruption. Particular thanks go to Cllrs Coenen and Adams.

Planning Consistency, Village sustainability

The council continues to press Cheshire East to adopt as open and consistent approach to planning as possible. Our main focus has been to maintain the rural setting of High Legh, respecting the Greenbelt and managing a strong future for the village. We continually press, in so far as we can, to get applications reviewed in a timely manner and for there to be good consistency in the approach. Cllr Cooper has done a great job as Chair of the Planning committee and managing to keep a consistent approach for the Parish while keeping up pressure for response from CE.

The need to have a good functioning school is, we see paramount to the continued success of High Legh and the funding of that school is something we will be pressing CE and our MP about as we move forward. The Neighbourhood Plan is being developed on behalf of the PC by a great team of volunteers nobly lead by Cllr Adams. It has made great progress and responses to the latest round of questionnaires show how committed many are to the future of High Legh. We would like to thank all those involved in the project, especially Cllr Adams and Nick Gerrard.

Rural Broadband

The Parish have continually tried to get better broadband for the outlying area of the Parish, however despite many approaches to different suppliers none have committed to undertake installation and as yet we still are trying to find solutions.

Local improvements and amenities

This essential, but often overlooked, element of Parish Council work was given new impetus this year as we set up the Improvements, Amenities Appearance Committee (IAAC). These many, often small improvements are what keeps High Legh such a nice place to live and thanks go to Councillors Coenen, Morton and Wright.

There will no doubt be many more challenges in the forthcoming year, but I would like to end my report by reiterating what a great place High Legh is to live in, what a great community there is and what a great future it has. I look forward to the opportunity of serving on the Council and thank all the councillors and any other volunteer who helps to make High Legh so special.

Cllr William Hind
Chair