



Oswestry Rural Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT

2019/2020

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We have seen an increase in the numbers of members of the public attending the parish council meetings and this is very pleasing as the parish council exists to represent and support the people who live within the parish area. Parish council meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month and members of the public are encouraged to attend and speak on issues affecting the Parish. The December meeting takes place on the Tuesday falling in the week prior to Christmas normally in the date range between 10 to 19 December, this year falling on the 15th December.

We have seen one councillor resign from the council and this vacancy has been filled by new councillor Claire Mahoney who we are delighted to welcome to the parish council.



We have been successful in making a bid for matched funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's safer roads partnership initiative to install a vehicle activated sign in Trefonen and this is progressing well. Bids will be made for other Wards in the parish if funding is announced again in 2020.

Shropshire Council is currently completing an ongoing review of the Local Plan, which can affect parts of the Parish with Trefonen being identified as a Community Hub where potential housing development can be considered and this has been opposed by the Parish Council and although several sites were put forward by local landowners none have been allocated for development in the period leading up to 2026 and hopefully until 2036 when the next review will be completed. The parish would like to retain its open countryside status,

The Covid-19 Corona Virus Pandemic has had a major impact on public meetings being held and for the first time in history the parish council hosted a virtual parish council meeting online on the 14th April 2020 with members of the public in attendance. This worked extremely well with 11 councillors' in attendance with the clerk and 4 members of the public. A link to the public had been placed on the parish website. It is likely that virtual parish council meetings will continue for the foreseeable future until Covid-19 restrictions on conducting and attending public meetings are lifted at some point in the future.

Grant awards for worthy causes within the Parish have been advertised but due to Covid-19 have been postponed at the moment as has the 2020 Tony Cheetham Community Service Award.

I have enjoyed my year as Chairman of the Parish Council and due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the cancelation of the annual parish meeting the existing parish council appointments will roll over into the next year with no changes and will be reviewed again in 2021.

*Cllr. Peter Richardson
Chairman
May 2020*

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Maesbury with Aston Ward

Martin Jones
07989 036708

Tony Milner
01691 610742

Peter Richardson (Chairman)
01691 679932

Morda with Sweeney Ward

Janet Barlow
01691 658134

Les Maguire
07595 589429

Phil May (Deputy Chairman)
01691 829064

Paul Milner
07581 223599

Robert Milton
01691 676110

Rhydygroesau with Llanforda Ward

Peter Davies
01691 52853

VACANCY

Sychtyn Ward

Elliot Roberts-Jones
01691 652843

Trefonen with Treflach Ward

Pam Broomby
01691 653479

Bob Kimber
01691 679646

John Davies
01691 657977

Claire Mahoney
07545 376231

Forthcoming Parish Council Meetings

Since the COVID-19 lockdown earlier this year the Parish Council has been unable to hold physical meetings due to social distancing rules. We were scheduled to hold a meeting on 24 March at Trefonen Village Hall but we had to cancel and, therefore we did not hold this meeting. At that time we were waiting for the government to allow local authorities to hold virtual meetings because of the important business that must be transacted e.g. end of year audit. In the interim period we trialled virtual meetings, first using Microsoft Teams but we found that not all Councillors could join the meeting. We then trialled Zoom and found that this was the most conducive way of holding virtual meetings, not only for Councillors but also for members of the public. We held our first formal Zoom Council meeting on 14 April 2020, the only drawback was that we had to keep re-joining the meeting since the free version only allows a 40 minute meeting. We have now purchased a monthly subscription so we are no longer limited by time.

For the foreseeable future we shall continue to hold future meetings using Zoom and you are all welcome to join us. You will find the joining details on each agenda and you can join the meeting by clicking on the link.

Meeting dates

2020

28 July
25 August
29 September
27 October
24 November
15 December

2021

26 January
23 February
10 March
27 April
25 May (Annual Parish Council Meeting)

Annual Parish Meeting

Next year's Annual Parish Meeting, which is for the electors of the parish, will take place on **Tuesday 18 May 2021**. The minutes from last year's meeting can be viewed on our website.

What we've done over the last fiscal year

Val Smout was the winner of last year's Tony Cheetham Community Service Award. Val was previously Clerk to the Council and is still actively involved in the community.

Last year it was brought to our attention that William Roland Carpenter was not included on the War Memorial in Maesbury. He died of wounds sustained whilst serving as a Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineer in Tunisia in the Second World War. We have now arranged for his name to be added and the Memorial will be cleaned at the same time.



We have applied to Historic England to list Spiggots canal bridge in Maesbury due to its historic importance. This road bridge crosses the Montgomery Canal and was designed by William Jessop, the consulting engineer, and Thomas Telford who was the resident engineer. Historic England has recommended the listing to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and we are awaiting the outcome.

We have also replaced a number of notice boards throughout the parish.



This one on the left is one of our old ones. You can see how small it is and how the notices are exposed to the elements.

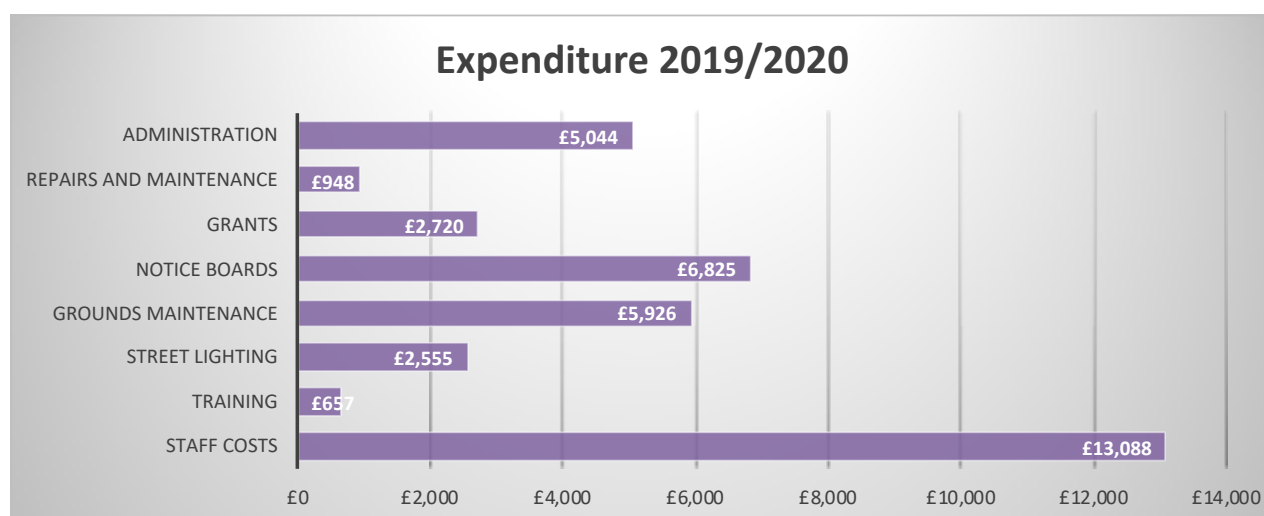
On the right is one of our new ones. They are all made from Oak so they are more durable and will shield the notices from the weather. They are also able to hold more information.



Budget 2019/2020

The budget for the last fiscal year was £46,653 and the precept was £45,583. Total expenditure was £37,765 and income received was £1,127. We also received £7,547 in Neighbourhood Funds from Shropshire Council which can be spent anywhere in the parish to improve the locality. We have used some of this fund to upgrade the street lighting in the parish.

The chart below shows where money was spent. Further information is available on our website at: <https://www.oswestryrural-pc.gov.uk/financial-information/> or by application to the Clerk.



Our expenditure includes £2,652 in grant awards which were given to local groups and worthy causes as shown in the chart below.

APPLICANT	AWARD £
Knockin & Kinnerley Cricket Club	595.00
Trefonen and Treflach P3 Group (portable hedge cutter)	120.00
Trefonen and Treflach P3 Group (artistic signs to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Offa's Dyke Association)	595.00
Morton Playing Field Association (towards the cost of a defibrillator)	595.00
Shropshire Bums on Tums (towards administration costs)	595.00
Royal British Legion	152.00