

Leighton and Eaton Constantine Parish Council

Chairman's Report March 2017

It gives me great pleasure to report on the activities of your Parish Council in the past year.

Firstly, I would like to thank all my fellow councillors for all the time and work they have given freely as volunteers to the Parish. I would also like to thank our Severn Valley Councillor Claire Wild for her attendance at all our Council meetings and her valued support. It is much appreciated. I would like to thank our new clerk Lorna Pardoe. Lorna kindly stepped in as a locum to help us out when our previous clerk left in April last year. I am pleased to report that Lorna is now our permanent clerk. Finally, many thanks to Cllr. Elaine Parton and Cllr. Janine Hayter for giving all their time and their experienced HR support when appointing our new clerk.

Statistics

- The Parish Council held 6 meetings during the year – May, July, September, November, January and March.
- Interviews of applicants for the appointment of Clerk to the Parish Council were held in June 2016 by a working party consisting of three Parish Councillors. The working party reported back to the full Council at the July meeting where it was resolved that Lorna Pardoe would become our permanent clerk.
- Cllr. Susan Jones was re-elected Chairman at the May meeting and Cllr. Janine Hayter was re-elected Vice-Chairman.
- There are a total of 7 councillors on the Parish Council. All unpaid. The Clerk is the only salaried employee of the Council.
- Severn Valley County Councillor Claire Wild attended all Council meetings.

Crimes reported in our Parish

As our Annual Parish meeting is early this year due to elections in May I do not have the annual figures from the Police due at the end of April. When these become available we will put them on our website at www.leightonanddeatonconstantineparishcouncil.co.uk

Planning matters

- With regards to the current Shropshire Council's 'Site Allocation and Management of Development Plan', which is a document that gives planning guidance when looking at planning applications, our Parish has a settlement status as 'Open Countryside'. Details of Shropshire Council's Planning policy can be found at www.shropshire.gov.uk
- Part of our Parish lies within the Shropshire Hills AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Details and maps can be found at www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk The AONB can put in strong recommendations for/against planning applications but it does not carry a particular weight on decision making.
- Parish Councils are important consultees to the planning process. At present Parish Councils are notified of a planning application and then there is a 21 day consultation period provided for comments. We currently can apply for an extension of time to allow comments to be submitted, which is useful if the Parish Council only meets bimonthly like we do. Shropshire Council is looking to increase the consultation period from 21 days to 31 days. It is proposed that Parish Councils will still be able to request an extension of time but this should be an exception and not the rule and may not be granted. Instead, Extraordinary meetings of the Parish Council may have to be held to fit in with the 31 day consultation period. Also changing is the way Parish Councils receive their applications and how they respond. From June 2017, all will take place electronically through email. There will be one person from the Parish Council, usually the clerk, designated to respond online. There will no longer be paper copies of applications sent automatically to the Parish.

Planning Applications:

- Morrells Wood Farm, Morrellswood Lane, Leighton Shrewsbury SY56RU validated wed 12 Oct 2016 ref no 16/04647/FUL – Change of use of agricultural land to siting of a Shepherds Hut for holiday let accommodation in association with existing holiday-let business.

Permission Granted

- Manor House, Leighton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY56RN
Validated Thu 10 Nov 2016 ref no 16/05149/TPO – Various works to trees protected by Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council

No Objection

- Orchard Cottage, Garmston Lane, Upper Longwood, Shrewsbury SY56RL
Validated 28 April 2016 ref no 16/01846/LBC – Works to facilitate the removal of thatch roof and replacement with water reed roof.

Permission Granted

- Proposed Agricultural Building North East Of Eaton Constantine, Shrewsbury Shropshire validated 2 Sep 2016 ref no 16/03830/AGR

Prior Approval Required and Refused

Planning decisions continued from previous year's applications:

- Spring Cottage, Spout Lane, Leighton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY56RU
Validated 24 Aug 2015 ref no 15/03184/ FUL – Demolition of an existing conservatory and erection of a new Winter Garden extension to the rear of Spring Cottage.

Refused

- Old Stables, White House Farm Barns, Leighton Shrewsbury Shropshire SY56RN
Validated 9Mar 2016 ref no 16/01043/LBC - Installation of 2 velux windows to front elevation and widen existing kitchen door, open up the internal ceiling and installation of roof light to side elevation affecting a Grade 11 listed building.

Permission Granted

Finance

The Parish Council has taken the decision to increase our Precept for the year 2017/2018 for the 206 household eligible for Council Tax. A Band D property will see an increase from £20.54 to £20.83 an increase of 29 pence. This represents a 1.5% increase. The reasons for the increase are:

- To protect our reserve funds. It is important that we preserve our level of reserve funds to provide a contingency for unexpected costs.
- Concern over the continuation of our Environmental Maintenance Grant(EMG). At present we receive an EMG to fund grass cutting in our Parish. With Shropshire Council in a dire financial position we have been warned that although this Grant is protected for the year 2017/2018 there is no guarantee that it will continue after that year. Maintaining our reserves is important in case we do lose this Grant.

Highways

The Parish Council has submitted a 'Community Led Concern' application for funding road improvements in Leighton and Upper Longwood. Details of our application are on the Parish Council website at www.leightonand Eatonconstantineparishcouncil.co.uk . We are awaiting decisions from Shropshire Council. If we are successful we will hold a Public Meeting to give details before any final decisions are made. We hope that the measures applied for will help control the speed of traffic through the villages and make the roads safer for traffic and pedestrians.

Litter and Fly-tipping

This is an on-going problem. We are regularly receiving reports of fly-tipping. If anyone has any information on the culprits please report to the Police on 101 or phone Shropshire Council .

Cllr. Paul Brewer organised a 'Community Litter Pick' in Leighton. 4 Volunteers helped Paul litter pick from one end of the village to the other. It ended with a very pleasant drink in the Kynnersley Arms. Please look out for future 'Litter

Picking' events on our website and on the Parish noticeboards. They are fun and the beautiful environment where we live benefits hugely. Many thanks to Paul for all his efforts, they are much appreciated.

Broadband and Connecting Shropshire

Connecting Shropshire is the name given to the project to bring superfast Fibre Optic Broadband to Shropshire.

We have been told that 150 properties in our Parish will be getting the option of FTTP (Fibre to the Property). It has been a very frustrating time waiting for this to be implemented. Timescales keep changing which is so frustrating for those people trying to run a business in the Parish. We have received several complaints from residents about the Broadband service they are receiving which we passed onto BT and Connecting Shropshire. However, we have been told that all complaints have to be done on an individual basis directly with the individual's Broadband Provider.

As soon as we have any information on completion dates for the Fibre Option and when it will be available to order we will put the information on our website. We will also hold a Public Meeting and ask Connecting Shropshire to attend so that you can get all the information you need. The Parish Council will keep pushing for options for all properties in our Parish to receive a decent Broadband service.

Finally

I would like to thank all residents and Councillors who give up their spare time to attend meetings and contribute to the well-being of our beautiful Parish.

Susan Jones

Chairman Leighton and Eaton Constantine Parish Council