

Chairperson's Annual Report to 31st March 2020

First of all thank you to all the Parish Councillors whose attendance at all our Parish Council meetings remains excellent. I would also like to place on record the continued and excellent support provided by Chorley Councillor Kim Snape, your help and support for our very small Parish Council is much appreciated.

Local participation in our meetings remain very poor and we are grateful for those that do attend. One notable meeting with the Head of Highways for Lancashire County Council was well attended as we discussed and debated the planned yellow lines outside the primary school. Following this debate some changes were made and it was also positive to see that the speed limit for Horrobin Lane is being reduced. This was no doubt influenced by the meeting with Parish Councillors and Local people. While speeding remains a constant challenge in the Rivington area we have successfully had the speed limits reduced along Rivington Lane upto Brown Cottage and into Rivington from Horrobin Lane. We continue as a Parish Council to raise our concerns and encouragement of enforcement of speed limits.

While public participation is minimal a number of us do bring views of many local people to our meetings and I have personally had numerous discussions with local people while out and about in Rivington. Varied conversations are had including speeding, car parking (and charges), protection of deer, drainage, fencing etc... Having contacted Lancashire Highways proactively about warning signs for deer it was very disappointing to be told these would only be put up if reports of deer being hit numerous times were recorded as Lancashire Highways don't want "sign clutter".

While Councillor participation at the meetings has been excellent and everyone supports the May Village fete which is excellently championed and lead by Councillor Vince McCully the workload in-between Parish Council meetings needs to be shared more. Moving forward I propose that certain Councillors lead on certain subjects or activities and take responsibility for those.

The Village Fete so excellently co-ordinator and organised by Councillor Vince McCully was a huge success again in May 2019 with a record amount raised for good causes with circa £1000 raised. The Fete is a key calendar item for the Parish Council and if willing and maybe in conjunction with other local community groups we could create a Winter Fete on the Village Green. One to consider for the future maybe....

The Rivington Parish Council website was considerably overhauled and added to by myself over the year and is a great resource for the Community. Building on this in forthcoming years should be a key activity for the Parish Council as we look to engage our direct community while also seeking feedback from others who may well visit the Village and the Rivington area.

Rivington Heritage Trust made significant progress with the Terraced Gardens capital works aided by the award of a Lottery Heritage funding. The main works became substantially complete in later Winter 2019 and the feedback from those visiting and remembering the state of the gardens before the works began has been hugely positive. The success of the gardens and the general appeal of the area and its local tea rooms and attractions has brought with it some challenges around vehicles and overwhelming numbers at weekends. The answer to this is a very difficult one for the residents of Rivington and therefore I propose in November 2020 the Parish Council host an evening for residents in a local venue to gauge ideas and options for the Parish Council to consider and subsequently engage with wider stakeholders such as Chorley Council, Lancashire CC, United Utilities and Rivington Heritage Trust.

The three year Village Green plan continues to make very slow progress following the withdrawal of a contractor to do works on the Green following agreement to do so. This was the third time this has

happened and Councillor Barry Keenan is thanked for his efforts in this regard with the third contractor. It was disappointing upon request from Councillor Keenan than other suggested contractors wasn't forthcoming from fellow Parish Councillors. Positively though I managed, by a chance discussion with a local resident, to source a Contractor to undertake the works which will commence in September 2020. Even more pleasing is that the contractor is a local resident.

Councillors Mr David Jones and Mr Vince McCully successfully completed a course run by Chorley Council for control of invasive plants such as Himalayan Balsam which are a blight on the Countryside and present in many areas of Rivington. Numerous areas such as those near "The Rivington" have considerable presence of Himalayan Balsam and it would be good to see these eradicated over the next couple of years through active management.

Further works to the Green planned for Summer 2020 where stopped due to the COVID19 pandemic and the inability of people to undertake construction works. It is positive though some works will commence in September 2020 and with a push in late 2020 we can hopefully complete the exchange of the flagpole with a fibreglass one which is much safer to lower and raise flags, purchase the new barrel planters and review options if any further simple benches would add benefit to the Green.

In the areas beyond the Village Green I have managed to secure £500 from Lancashire CC for works to "Right of Ways" and as part of this I have been undertaking an assessment of these Rights of Ways for improvement. A number are "lost" within the Parish or require some significant works to "fingerpost" them. This would be a good activity to engage any local people as part of finalising the assessment.

To conclude this Chairperson statement, I would like to advise with Parish Council elections due in May 2020 now postponed until May 2021 I would intend to hand over the Chairperson role following completion of this financial year in March 2021 to the next willing and successful person. Having been Chairperson by then for 5 years and overseeing the improvements in our financial position, seeing a host of new Parish Councillors, development of a three year Village Green Strategy Plan, improvements to the Village Green, creation of a Parish Council Website and success in influencing changes to speed limits in the Parish it feels appropriate that somebody else brings their own enthusiasm, energy and commitment to the Parish Council like I have done as Chairperson and previously for a short period as a Councillor. I am a resident of Rivington with my wife Caroline and we are both passionate about the area and its continued success.

On a very final note, I would like to extend my personal thanks to Parish Clerk Olive Fisher who continues to give excellent support to the Parish Council and personally to myself. Olive, you are an inspiration to local people for your community commitment and dedication over a long period of time, and on behalf of all on Rivington Parish Council I thank you for that.

Kind Regard



Steven Jones - 7th September 2020

Rivington Parish Council Chairperson

Councillors over the period: Mr Barry Keenan, Mr Vince McCully, Mr David Jones, Mr Trevor James-Ellett, Mrs Lynne Berry, and Mr Rob Wilson with Mrs Olive Fisher as Parish Clerk.