

Chairperson's Annual Report –Upto 31st March 2021

This annual report marks my last one as Chairperson and I write this with very mixed feelings. While the Parish Council has moved on in many areas such as a significant improvement in its financial position, development of a website, successful village fete's, development of a three year Village Green Strategy and actual implementation of many aspects of the Village Green Strategy I have found the behaviours and commitment of a number of the Parish Councillors in the last 12 months to fall below in some instances the expectations as detailed in "The seven Principles of Public Life" which I have shared and promoted previously. The exception to this is has been the Parish Clerk, Mrs Olive Fisher, who has given 17 years continual service to the Parish Council and continues to be a positive role model of those behaviours. As Chairperson of the Parish Council I would like to put on record my personal thanks Olive for your continued support and guidance and on behalf of the Residents and other key interested parties in the Parish thank you for that excellent service and wish you good health and happiness in continuing your other pursuits. I would also like to thank Mrs Lynne Berry for her long service as a Councillor and wish Lynne good health and happiness as Lynne now steps down. I would also like to thank Chorley Councillor Kim Snape for her continued support, guidance and role model in living the public life principles.

Rivington as an area is such a special place for so many including both residents and non residents alike from both its natural beauty and its numerous man made features from the reservoirs, Lever Park and Leverhulmes Terraced Gardens. As a result it attracts people from far and wide and therefore the Parish Council needs to work strongly with key stakeholders. It was therefore highly pleasing to myself that I managed, after numerous attempts, to persuade United Utilities and other key Stakeholders in the area such as Chorley Council, local businesses, the High School, Lancashire CC and Rivington Heritage Trust to participate in a Community Stakeholder meeting to discuss a sensible way forward for the Rivington area as no one entity can solve its challenges or prepare it for the future. While the follow-up from the Chair of this Group from United Utilities has been slow I am sure this can be followed up.

With growing pressure on public finances and changing demographics in the area I now believe it is time that Rivington Parish Council should explore and consider joining or approaching neighbouring small Parish Councils to consider amalgamating. Rivington has circa 40 houses and approximately 80 residents which is extremely small and therefore combine resources, efforts and budgets may provide better outcomes and value for money. It would be imperative though that change must have some sort of appropriate representation from each area so that no one area dominates.

It would be inappropriate in my annual statement not to mention the COVID-19 pandemic which has affected so many lives. 2019 and 2020 was truly unprecedented and the challenges still remain although the vaccine has given so much hope for society in navigating its way through this. The pandemic severely limited activities in the year and delayed a number of things which hopefully can be moved on now as we emerge from the pandemic.

The financial standing of the Parish Council has been significantly improved over the last 3 – 4 years to the point we have significant funds now which is much in excess of what we should be holding. The receipt of the CIL (Construction Infrastructure Levy) has been a significant receipt in the year and we must use this wisely and in accordance with the guidelines from Government on what it should and can be spent on. The Village Green has improved significantly although not complete yet which I am sure will be completed over the coming years. With the CIL funding this should be used much wider than Village Green so that the Parish Council funds benefit more residents beyond the Village Green itself and improve other areas. This is something as a resident of Rivington I will look out for in the future from the Parish Council and I would suggest the Village Green strategy should now be updated to include a wider plan for Rivington which includes working more closely with key stakeholders in the area.

Kind Regard



Steven Jones – 22nd July 2021 - 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.