

Saltford Parish Council Chair's Report April 2017

Saltford Parish Council is a statutory body set up to serve the interests of the community of Saltford. It is the only organisation in Saltford that must by law have its views considered. It is the first tier of local government closest to the residents of Saltford. Responsibilities are carried out by the councillors individually and collectively, supported by the Parish Clerk. I am delighted to report the work and achievements of **Saltford Parish Council** for the Council Year just completed and to thank all those that have contributed to this - Saltford Parish Councillors, and members of committees and working parties. Explicit in our standing orders is that councillors must always act in accordance with the 'Nolan Principles' for public bodies which are: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Decisions made by the Council are corporate decisions.

2017 marks the 26th anniversary of Saltford Parish Council in the modern era. A Parish councillor receives no allowance. It is a voluntary task undertaken in the public gaze by people wishing to make the Parish Council a force for good in the village.

In May the Council adopted once again the "General Power of Competence" under the Localism Act 2011. Essentially, this allows the Council do whatever an individual person may lawfully do and affords the Council more flexibility to respond to the needs of the village. The Parish Council is a member of the National Association of Local Councils which gives us access to a network of 9,000 councils and professional advice. Saltford Parish Council wishes to be an efficient Council. Saltford Parish Council is becoming a "paperless" council. All agendas are emailed to councillors who no longer receive hard copies in the post. The Parish Council has e-banking which is saving time and also ensuring bills are paid as promptly as possible. We have set up our computer system to allow remote working by our clerk when it is not practical for her to be at her computer in the library.

This Council agreed at its first meeting in 2015 to adopt a five-point vision for Saltford to help guide its decision making • Green Belt land surrounding the village protected from development including fracking and a road bypass. • Its own re-opened railway station. • A decreasing carbon footprint. • A positive, healthy and caring community that encourages Fairtrade and which values and protects the local environment including its heritage. • and is a good neighbour to surrounding villages, towns and cities. We are happy to be judged on the progress towards that vision over this Parish Council's term of office

The Parish Council seeks to promote community engagement. There is public time at all of our meetings to allow members of the public the opportunity to speak briefly about any agenda item. This evening, Saltford Parish Council has recognised the efforts and achievement of individuals and groups in the village in the fifth year of its Community Award scheme. Volunteer team of the year in Saltford has been awarded to the Hinton Close Day Centre volunteer team. Organisation of the year in Saltford has been awarded to the Saltford Business Network. An Individual award has been made this year to Steve Glavin for his service as Chair of Governors at Saltford School and a posthumous award to Audrie Guthrie for her service to the community of Saltford and for charitable causes.

The Parish Council actively promotes the setting up of Neighbourhood Watch schemes and, last October, the Council held its annual Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators meeting.

The Parish Council sets aside an amount of money each year *for* financial assistance grants that local groups can apply for to support an initiative *or* development. The Council made a grant of £1300 to Salford District Guides towards their new heating system for the guide hut. The Council gave a grant of £1,000 to Salford Community Association towards the 2017 Salford Festival. The Council made a grant of £1,000 to St Mary's PCC towards re-decoration, new secure door locks and modernising the lighting for the establishment of a Salford Heritage Centre in St Mary's church hall in partnership with the Salford Environment Group (SEG). The Parish Council has made two grants to the Salford Brass Mill volunteer group - one to replace some of the 'starts' which support the blades and a second grant to install non-slip decking strips on the access footbridge. The Parish Council gave a grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau to cover the training of one volunteer in this area.

My thanks to Mr Brian Cooper for organising the Annual Village Walk again which this year was a lovely walk out into the countryside around Salford. I should also like to thank Salford Community Association on behalf of the Parish Council for the enormous contribution it makes to the well-being of our community.

Cllr Phil Harding, on his initiative and supported by the council, arranged for a blue plaque to be put up on Salford House to mark the historic residency there of Admiral Benedictus Marwood Kelly, liberator of slaves and benefactor.

As is customary, the Parish Council was represented in the Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade and laid a wreath at the War Memorial.

Over 200 people attended the meeting the Parish council hosted at Salford Golf Club in December on the draft West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Joint Transport Study and the proposed south Salford orbital road and Bath Road tramway.

Our public liability insurance covers us collectively and individually but only if we act responsibly. The Parish Council has a direct responsibility for the maintenance of St Mary's churchyard (because it is categorised as a "closed" churchyard) and also has oversight of the Wickhouse Close allotments. Following a further professional survey commissioned by the Parish Council, essential tree maintenance at St Mary's churchyard has been carried out. The Council has a 5-year Licence agreement with Curo for the Wickhouse Close allotments with 2 years remaining. The Parish Council appreciates the help and advice given by the informal Allotment Tenants' Association to the management of the allotments. The Parish Council was pleased to freeze allotment rents this year.

Much of the Parish Council's work involves persuading other authorities and bodies to carry out actions for the benefit of Salford. Most of the services affecting Salford are carried out by Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES) and other agencies such as the Police, Curo etc. The Parish Council welcomes any assistance to ensure that standards are maintained. The Parish Council will help residents notify the appropriate bodies of any actions required over issues such as litter, faulty street lights, graffiti, and overgrown footpaths. Individual Salford Parish councillors attend B&NES Parishes Liaison meetings, and meetings of the Avon local councils association, Keynsham Area Forum, Salford Community Association management committee, River Avon Users Consultative Committee (RAUCC), Salford Environment Group, Salford Business Network, and the Salford Fair Trade group.

I would like to record my appreciation for the hugely important work of the Planning Committee led by its Chair Cllr Adrian Betts. B&NES Council is the planning authority but in

law the Parish Council must be notified of planning applications in the Parish and have its representations taken into account. The Council has considered over 50 planning applications in the past twelve months with a large majority being requests to extend existing homes. The Council listens to views and comments by residents. Every planning application is considered by the Parish Council on its merits having regard to national and local planning policy and guidance as well as local knowledge and experience. Planning enforcement is a B&NES Council responsibility. Cllr Betts and Cllr Harding have worked tirelessly on behalf of Saltford at meetings convened by B&NES Council relating to the draft Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Vision which will be a blue-print for housing development and transport infrastructure in this region for 30 years. For us, preservation of the protective green belt around Saltford is paramount.

I would like to thank all councillors who attend other bodies and organisations on behalf of the Parish Council. Thank you to Tricia Golinski, our Parish Clerk, for her continuing dedication and professionalism. I would like to record my appreciation to councillors and a number of local residents for their unseen work of studying documents, attending briefings and hearings, researching issues and taking part in discussions. It is important that motions proposed and decisions made are informed by knowledge and evidence, and with an understanding of the broader picture. Examples include the Council's responses to the draft West of England's Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Strategy and the draft conservation area character appraisal.

This Parish Council is a low tax Council. It raises a relatively small amount of money (the precept) each year which is collected with the Council tax. The precept for 2017/18 has been set at just over £32,000. The 1% rise in the Parish Council's precept for the coming financial year is well below expected inflation. This precept continues to be one of the lowest for comparable Parish Councils.

The Council has worked hard and I am proud of what the councillors working together have achieved in the past year. I thank Cllr Phil Harding, the Vice-Chair, for all the hard work and the many ideas he has contributed.

Finally, thank you to you all and the fantastic community of Saltford for making Saltford such a great place to live, visit, and work.