

Salford Parish Council Chair's Report April 2016

Salford Parish Council is a statutory body set up to serve the interests of the community of Salford. It is the only organisation in Salford that must by law have its views considered. It is the first tier of local government closest to the residents of Salford. 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 **Salford Parish Council** for the Council Year just completed and to thank all those that have contributed to this - Salford 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.

2016 marks the 25th anniversary of Salford Parish Council in the modern era. In 1991, the first Parish Council was elected by the voters of Salford and it was fitting that 25 years later the current Council was also elected democratically by the voters of Salford last May. 16 candidates stood for 11 seats. There was a high turnout of 76% and a real buzz as people came along to Salford Hall to vote for who they wanted to speak for Salford. My thanks to all those who stood for election. 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 was in a position to adopt 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 has rejoined the National Association of Local Councils which gives us access to a network of 9,000 councils and professional advice. Salford Parish Council wishes to be an efficient Council. The Council has installed new notice-boards to replace the previous notice-boards which had become dilapidated and hard to view. Salford Parish Council is making use of the 50" flat screen in the Avon Room linked to the Parish Council lap-top at meetings. This makes it easier for members of the public and councillors to follow proceedings, especially discussion of planning applications, on the large screen. Salford 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 set up e-banking which is saving time and also ensuring bills are paid as promptly as possible.

The Council agreed at its first meeting to adopt a five-point vision for Salford 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 four year term of office

The Parish Council has met with the leaders of B&NES Council to discuss the current position on the re-opening of a railway station at Salford.

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. The Council has held a "conversation" with residents and businesses asking

for their views on parking issues in and around Saltford prior to forming recommendations for action. This evening, Saltford Parish Council has recognised the efforts and achievement of individuals and groups in the village in the fourth year of its Community Award scheme. This is the first year of the "Group of the Year in Saltford" Award and that has been awarded to the Saltford Brass Mill project volunteer group. Individual awards have been made this year to; Graham Bush, Diane Hooper, Owen McDermott, Bob Perkins, David Phillips, and Jill Williams. The Parish Council actively promotes the setting up of Neighbourhood Watch schemes and 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 Parish Council gave £500 to Keynsham and District Dial-a-Ride for heavy duty wheelchair restraints for use on its buses. The Parish Council awarded £300 to local students Leo Noland and Seb Howard towards their attendance at an international science exposition in Mexico. £500 was provided to Owen McDermott for the production of two steel plaques for the war memorial recording details about the service of those named on the war memorial. The Parish Council has also donated £500 to support the cost of producing the 6 bi-monthly editions of SCAN.

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 Saltford. I should also like to thank Saltford Community Association on behalf of the Parish Council for the enormous contribution it makes to the well-being of our community, including last year's biennial Saltford Festival.

The Parish Council had a Working Together Agreement (WTA) with B&NES Council to provide the mobile youth service provision in Saltford. This ended in January. The Council remains ready to support further youth work in Saltford.

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

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 3 years remaining. The Parish Council appreciates the help and advice given by the informal Allotment Tenants' Association to the management of the allotments.

Much of the Parish Council's work involves persuading other authorities and bodies to carry out actions for the benefit of Saltford. Most of the services affecting Saltford 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.

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.

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 Saltford Air Quality Management Zone consultation, the West of England's Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Plan.

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 rise in the Parish Council's precept for the coming financial year represents about £1 per household per year. 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. I am standing down as Chair at the beginning of May. I feel privileged to have been Chair of the Parish Council and I wish my successor and all the councillors well in the coming twelve months representing the wonderful people of Saltford.