**GREAT BUDWORTH PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024.**

The last 12 months have been active for the Parish Council in various ways.

**Parish Clerk –** After nine months as Parish Clerk, Janet Bennett resigned on 15th October working a month’s notice. This caused some difficulties as we were unable to recruit a Parish Clerk until 14th December 2023. This resulted in problems concerning the transfer of passwords, computer systems, files, IT equipment, VAT returns, HMRC, access to the Parish Clerk Google mail account and Bank accounts. This increased the workload of various Parish Councilors especially Karen Hammond and Dave Wilkinson. We did receive support from Alison Willis for a few hours which was helpful, thank you to Alison

**Recruitment –** Using the job description previously produced and with support from Cheshire Association of Local Councils the position was advertised in the Budworth Bulletin and CHalC website. There were many expressions of interest. 3 applicants were shortlisted for interview although one withdrew. Caroline Constable accepted the offer of employment on 14th December 2023. Thank you Caroline. You are a great asset

**Parish Council Membership -** At the **Annual General Meeting in May 2023** I was elected Chairman and Dave Wilkinson was elected Vice Chairman. Other items discussed included budget reviews, potential review of the bank mandate and review of all current policies and procedures.

* **Membership 2023-2024**. A full team of councilors were elected.

During the year some have taken specific portfolios;

1. Steven Jennings provided excellent advice and support relating to the fencing around the school field. Thank you also to Anna Lee and Jenny Bowman for their input into the proposals
2. Justin Culver HS2 and Aircraft noise
3. Chris Wise helped Janet Bennett with the GB Parish Council website.
4. Thank you, Malcolm Torrance for his invaluable knowledge about trees
5. Karen Williams has worked closely with local residents to resolve issues of flooding
6. Steve Coppell has responsibility for keeping the defibrillator functioning
7. Dave Wilkinson and Karen Williams have provided valuable information and knowledge about the village and dealing with resident enquiries

I would personally like to thank all Councillors for their advice, knowledge and support particularly Dave Wilkinson and the clerk, Caroline Constable

**Aircraft Noise Consultation -** Justin Culver met with Steve Balfour who was employed as an aircraft controller at Manchester airport to discuss current plans. The latest plans show no material increase in Great Budworth in expected aircraft noise, but it is an ongoing situation that needs to be watched. As a result, Steve offered to speak to residents about the current situation relating to aircraft traffic, developments at Manchester airport and the national picture. The event was well supported. The Heritage Society funded the event. Thank you to Anna Lee and Ros Barclay for providing the refreshments and cake

**IT systems -**  Karen Hammond, Caroline Constable and Anna Lee received training from Nick Baron Morgan relating to uploading documentation and maintaining the web-site

**School Field**- During the year further discussion continued with Great Budworth Primary School. Revised plans were submitted to the Parish Council. As the height of the fence had been lowered there was no requirement for planning permission. The Parish Council continued to lobby the school, up to January when the erection of the fence began. The major concern now is ensuring access to the field for villagers after school hours and holidays. Especial thanks to Steven Jennings, Jenny Bowman, Louise Tottle and Anna Lee for all their research, input and lobbying

**Lower Pumphouse issues:**

* **Water Testing -** following a comprehensive water test on 7th December 2023, the water was found to contain a high level of nitrate. Bill Anderson and myself met with Madelaine Davies who advised that the water was unsafe to drink. A notice was installed in the pumphouse but was removed and ignored. Further communication was received from Madeleine Davies on 16th April 2024, again advising the Parish Council that signage stating the water was unfit to drink needed to be in place . These were **again** removed. However, as Chairman, I believe the future of the pump house needs to be discussed with residents as this is going to be an ongoing problem. Thank you to Bill Anderson for meeting with Madaleine Davies and myself for his knowledge and advice

**Filming in the Village**

**Britlocations-** informed the Parish Council they would be filming scenes for a Netflix drama called 'Missing You'. Bakery Cottage was the location for the filming. Some action also took place on the High street. The filming was scheduled for Friday 22nd March between the hours of 0930-2000,however it was changed to Saturday 23rd March. The filming required, road closure, use of the village, the hall and some car parking. We were able to negotiate the payment of £1000 paid to the Parish Council

**Bank Mandate.** Following the changes in membership of the Parish Council, the bank mandate needed extensive revision. I believe we have successfully done this, but it will need to be further amended to reflect the composition of the Parish Council looking forward. Do not underestimate the difficulties of dealing with NatWest or other clearing banks. Thank you to Caroline Constable, Dave Wilkinson and myself who have struggled with the matter.

**Parish precept**. Unfortunately, we needed to increase the Precept this year in line with inflation and increased costs. While expenditure during the year has been contained, a small amount of additional revenue from filming, increased the bank balance. However, fixed overheads consume a disproportionate amount of the revenue, leaving little for Council initiatives.

**Potholes**. The Parish Council puts significant pressure on Cheshire West and Chester but in many ways representations from individual cyclists and members of the public have a greater impact. We are assured that these would be responded to quickly but it would be good to see appropriate long lasting repairs.

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