

# Disley Parish Council Annual Report



Chairman's Review of Disley Parish Council's work for 2017-18 given by Cllr. David Kidd at the Annual Parish Meeting 25th April 2018

## 1. Election of Officers for the year 2017/18

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May 2017, Cllr. David Kidd was re-elected Chairman, Cllr. Jackie Pattison was re-elected Vice-chairman, Cllr. Liz Chavasse-Hadfield was elected Chairman of the Finance Committee and Cllr. Pattison was elected Chairman of the Planning Committee for 2017/18.

## 2. Disley Parish Council services/activities

**Parish Council office relocation:** In 2017, a 3-month building project was undertaken in the Community Centre to accommodate the Parish Office. The move to the new office went smoothly, whilst maintaining services, thanks to all the staff, and by mid-December the offices were fully operational. The purpose of the relocation was to improve public accessibility to the Parish Council, improve the working environment and to create a Community Hub, drawing together the Parish Council, Cheshire East Council Library, the Community Hall and the Police Community Support Officer. A Phase 2 of Community Centre improvements is due to be considered by the Council and will include consultation with residents and hall users.

**Sale of 19 Buxton Old Road:** The Council's former offices at 19 Buxton Old Road were placed on the market with a planning application for conversion to a house. An offer of £150,500 was accepted. The capital proceeds from the sale have been placed in secure investments and legally must be used to fund community assets. Proposals include further Community Centre improvements, a replacement Community Bus and a Handyman Service vehicle.

**Community Hall:** 52 diverse groups used the Community Hall in the last year, an increase over the previous year. Several new one-off and regular bookings were received including a weekly sewing class, monthly Long Table Lunch and Messy Church and children's birthday parties. Through generous contributions from Disley Traders and residents and topped up by the Parish Council, an external defibrillator unit was fitted at the Community Centre. The Disley WI have generously donated towards the costs of a folding baby-changing unit in the foyer toilet.

**Village Handyman Service:** The Parish Council's Handyman Service maintains and improves the village's appearance as well as looking after the Council's assets. In the last year Village Handymen Dan Hodgkiss and Colin Eckersley have undertaken a wide range of improvement projects. These include clearing the 'hole' on Market Street, repairing a bench on Jacksons Edge Road, reattaching the bird to the Ram Green bike sculpture and installing a new standpipe at Springfield Allotments. The Handyman Service also provided invaluable assistance with the relocation of the Parish Offices.

**Community Bus:** The Community Bus Scheme currently has a membership of 169 with 42 new members last year and over 100 members using the bus over that period. The regular trips continue to be popular with new destinations including Southport, Knutsford and Skipton. A new monthly lunch outing has proved popular and shorter, half-day, trips have been introduced to accommodate less mobile members. Group memberships also continue to grow. The team of 9 volunteer drivers is crucial to the success of the Scheme and the Parish Council thanks them profusely for their commitment. The Council has set up a project team to investigate funding sources and specifications for a replacement bus. The project team includes representatives from the volunteer drivers and bus users.

**Allotments:** The Parish Council provides 33 allotment plots over its sites at Hagg Bank, Springfield and Greystones (Newtown). There were some new tenants in 2017/18 with only one plot currently vacant. Site improvements have been carried out including new plot number posts, combination locks for each entrance gate, fencing repairs at Hagg Bank and installation of an additional standpipe at Springfield.

**Communications:** The Parish Council publishes the Disley News newsletter three times per year which is delivered to over 2,000 homes in Disley and Newtown. The Disley & Newtown eBulletin is issued every few weeks and there is a Twitter feed @DisleyPC. A Facebook Page and new website are due to be launched later in the year.

**Christmas tree lighting:** The 2017 Christmas Tree Lighting event was again a highlight of the village year with the Council's new tree lights proving to be a winner. The event was well-attended and supported by many local volunteer groups and businesses. Pressing the plunger was Liv Hoshy who had taken part in the BBC Children in Need Rickshaw Challenge.

**Health & Well-being Show:** The Parish Council organised Disley's first Health & Well-being Show in September 2017. The event boasted a variety of exhibitors and was well-attended by residents. Organisations such as Age UK, Dementia Awareness and the British Red Cross were represented along with local exhibitors like the Schoolhouse Surgery, Disley Footpaths Society and Disley Community Choir. This year's show has been booked for 26th July 2018.

**Community Grants:** The Parish Council awarded over £3,000 of Community Grants in 2017/18. Recipients were PRIDE Well-Dressing Festival, Disley School Association, Disley & Lyme Horticultural Society, Community Together, Disley Library, Disley Allotment Society and St. Mary's Church. The 2018/19 Community Grant Scheme is now open with full details on the Council's website.

**Civic Awards:** Four Civic Awards were presented in 2017 to residents who made a fantastic and varied contribution to the community. These were Margaret and Alan Buckel for their duties on behalf of St. Mary's Church and Churches Together, village planting and musical contributions at many local events. Jane Roberts for her service with community groups such as Churches Together and the weekly St. Mary's Tots group. And finally, Graham Wright for his tireless efforts to keep the village litter-free by collecting litter all around the village, in all weathers.

**Village issues/complaints handling:** The Parish Council received over 200 formal enquiries relating to issues including streetlighting (15%), potholes (10%), pavement trip hazards, fly tipping, dog waste, missed bin collections, overgrown hedges and footpaths, graffiti and vandalism. Where the Parish Council could not resolve the issue, enquirers were signposted to agencies such as Cheshire East, BT, United Utilities and The Environment Agency.

**Planning:** During 2017/18, 30 planning applications were considered by the Parish Council in its role as a statutory consultee.

## 3. Village Topics

**Cheshire East Library Service:** Following the Parish Council's vision of making the Community Centre a Community Hub alongside the library, it came as a shock to all when Cheshire East Council, in their pre-budget consultation, proposed the closure of Disley Library. Thanks to a large response from the community and the Parish Council, including Parish Council representation at the CEC Cabinet and Council meetings, this proposal was reviewed. Disley library will not be closed but, together with other libraries, will have to make budget savings through revised opening hours and staffing levels. The Parish Council is committed to work with the library and the community to help secure its long-term future.

**A6/MARR Mitigation for Disley:** The Parish Council has been working with Cheshire East Borough Council and Jacobs to secure A6 mitigation measures to improve future traffic management through the village to mitigate against projected traffic increases. Because of the Parish Council's serious concerns from the outset, a planning condition was incorporated into the MARR planning approval requiring measures to be in place before the MARR opens.

During 2017, Cheshire East Highways carried out extensive work to the A6 in the village as a first stage of carrying out mitigation measures to comply with the planning condition. The extent of this work was unprecedented and led to numerous issues causing disruption and the misuse of side roads, particularly Hollinwood Road, by drivers avoiding queuing traffic and road closures. The Parish Council, as the first local point of contact, received many complaints which were referred to Cheshire East Highways to address in a variety of ways. During the work, new traffic signals were installed at the A6/Redhouse Lane junction as part of the planning agreement for the Redhouse Lane housing development. These lights are now fully operational, and the Council has received many positive comments highlighting the safer exit from Redhouse Lane.

A second stage in the mitigation process is due to take place after public consultation.

**Air Quality - A6:** In 2010 a narrow corridor along the A6 from the village centre to the Redhouse Lane junction was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) by Cheshire East Council due to annual mean exceedances of the permitted levels of nitrogen oxide from traffic pollution. This remains a concern for the village, especially with the projected increase in traffic from the MARR and more public awareness of the national traffic pollution problem. Cheshire East Council has the responsibility of monitoring pollution levels and drawing up an Action Plan with the community. Residents have been invited to register interest in an Air Quality Workshop due to take place in June.

**Other highways improvements:** The Parish Council and local residents secured improvements to Dane Bank Drive, the entrance road to Disley Primary School, to address long standing problems with parking during children's dropping off and picking up times. Cheshire East Council is proposing further improvements to the turning circle in the new financial year.

**Neighbourhood Plan:** During the year the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, involving representatives from the community and the Parish Council, continued to undertake a considerable amount of work and further consultations to develop policies for the long-term plans of the village. The draft Disley and Newtown Neighbourhood Plan has now gone through its formal external examination process ahead of a referendum. The draft plan is available to view on the Council's website.