Wilpshire Parish Council Annual Report 2022/23

The past year has seen the country steadily recover from the negative effects of the COVID pandemic and begin to move forward again.

The Parish Council has continued to see a turnover in councillors for all kinds of reasons. We said goodbye to Malcolm Edwards who moved out of the area and to Peter Burrows who, unfortunately, was forced to resign due to his job in the RAF taking him away more frequently from his home in Wilpshire. We thank them both for their interest and wish them well.

In return, we welcomed two new members of the Council – Ian Roberts and Anne Marie Keegan both of whom are local residents. During his time on the Council, Malcolm Edwards was proactive in highlighting concerns around speeding traffic on local roads, particularly on Knowsley Road. Among other efforts, he encouraged local residents on that road to place 20mph stickers on their bins to reinforce the need for drivers to adhere to the speed limit. Likewise, the Parish Council has supported measures to place the ‘Slow Down Save Lives’ posters on local lampposts as well as the positioning of the mobile flashing speed reminder screens on Knowsley Rd and Whalley Rd.

Each month the Parish Council receives the crime statistics for Wilpshire and they show that reported crime in our area is extremely low – mainly opportunistic theft from parked vehicles.

During the course of the year the Parish Council receives copies of numerous planning applications from Ribble Valley Borough Council for scrutiny and comments where appropriate. Occasionally, a more significant planning application is received which affects the wider community. The application to build a large estate of houses and bungalows on the fields behind Wilpshire Bank and called Salesbury View sparked a great deal of concern and many objections from local residents.

In order to enable the views of the local community to be heard and shared the Parish Council called a public meeting for residents of both Wilpshire and Ramsgreave Parish Council areas. This meeting was well attended and a very positive one. Our local RVBC Councillors, Sue Bibby and Stuart Hirst, addressed the meeting and gave a comprehensive overview of the application and answered numerous questions. This meeting highlighted one of the benefits of having a parish council as it can act as a forum for the local community to express its views, ask for advice or share relevant information.

As a result of the significant number of objections sent in and the work of the Borough Councillors, the application was withdrawn just before RVBC Planning Committee was due to discuss it. No doubt another planning application for the site will be submitted.

The work of the Parish Council to enhance the local public footpath network continued during the year with a grant from L.C.C. being used to carry out strimming and repairs. To make the network more accessible and easier to use, the Parish Council agreed to purchase ten self-closing metal gates to replace stiles. These are now in store and will be fitted by our contractor during the coming months. We were pleased that Wilpshire was included on the route of the Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail a 65 miles’ circular route around the Ribble Valley created and implemented by our local RVBC Councillor, Stuart Hirst, during his mayoral year.

A precept of £19 665 for 22/23 was agreed. The Parish Council has a long term ambition to upgrade the equipment for younger children on the Durham Rd Play Area which it looks after. This will take a significant sum of money and reserves are slowly being accrued for this purpose.

During the past year donations were given to several local organisations and included N.W. Air Ambulance, Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue, Little Green Bus, Samaritans, Clitheroe Citizens’ Advice Bureau and to Wilpshire Methodist Church (Room Hire). At Christmas a donation of selection boxes was given to Child Action NW following their appeal. Again, the parish Council supplied local businesses with Christmas trees to attach to the outside of their premises. A grant was received from RVBC for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and this was used to purchase a commemorative bench which has been installed in the grounds of the Methodist Church and available for the public to use. In connection with the Jubilee the Parish Council provided funding to create a red, white and blue floral display and bunting at the traffic lights’ garden area. A similar display will be arranged for the forthcoming Coronation celebration.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank our Parish Clerk, Lesley Lund, for her support and advice in enabling council business to run smoothly and to thank our local Parish Lengthsman, Chris Walton, for doing his bit to keep the local area looking tidy. Finally, I should like to thank my fellow councillors for their interest, enthusiasm and positivity in working together to do the best for the local community of Wilpshire.