

Cradley and Storridge Parish Council Annual Meeting – 25th May 2021.

This is a double report, because our May meeting wasn't held until 25 May due to changing advice about COVID. The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council took place in person immediately after the Annual Parish Meeting (reported elsewhere). Council noted the resignation of Cllr David Kingston, wished him well, and expressed thanks for his contribution.

The Annual Meeting is focused on business processes. Cllr Anne Scarsbrook was elected Chair for a third year, and Cllr Diane Merker was elected Vice Chair. Council agreed some changes to its working groups. The Communications, Employment, NDP Monitoring and Churchyards working groups were disbanded, and the Recreation and Environment working groups were combined. A new group was set up to cover Highways. Each group has a minimum of 3 Councillors, and we are aware that as there are only 7 Councillors at present we are stretched rather thinly! Members of working groups don't have to be councillors – so if you are interested in any of these areas, we'd love to have some volunteers. Please contact the Clerk if you would like to know more.

Our Lengthsman has decided to concentrate on growing his business providing outdoor activities with young people and so has resigned from his role with the council. We are very grateful for his efforts around the Parish, and wish him well for the future. We are advertising for a new Lengthsman now, and hope to secure a replacement as soon as possible. In the meantime, some tasks may not be done as rapidly as usual, and Councillors will be emptying bins in recreation grounds until a new contractor is appointed. We hope that parishioners will be tolerant of the inevitable reduction in service.

Finally, although we are all sorry to see the Butchery close, Council welcomed the prospect of a new store on the site, and we hope that this will soon be established as a valued local community store.

It didn't seem very long before council met again as scheduled on 8th June. It was really good to see a number of people from the parish coming along again – all council meetings are open to the public, and you are very welcome to attend and raise any issues or comment on council business at any meeting.

We discussed three important projects.

New benches and tables for Chapel Lane and Buryfields have been ordered and should be installed by the end of the month.

We've been discussing adding a sensory garden at Chapel Lane. We looked at a draft plan (which we think will really improve the space) but we will be putting our plans out for comments: look out for them on our website soon.

We got a lot of informal feedback last year in favour of a traffic regulation order to close the lane between the entry to Pixiefields and the junction with Chockbury Lane to motor vehicles. We've been working on this with Herefordshire Council, and they're now moving ahead with their process. The first stage is to carry out a more formal consultation with people who live in the area – you may be contacted, and we'll make sure that the consultation is publicised when it happens.

Finally, back to council business. Every year we publish our accounts and parishioners have the opportunity to inspect the council's books and records. Our publication date will be 28 June, and the books and records will be available for inspection for 6 weeks after that.

The parish council meets next on Tuesday 13th July at 7pm at Cradley Village Hall. Please do come along if you'd like to raise anything with the council, or contact the clerk through the website (cradleyparishcouncil.gov.uk) or clerk@cradleyparishcouncil.gov.uk.