

Chairman's Report 2025/2026

The Chair Councillor E Aldridge presented her annual Chairman's Report for the year 2025/2026.

The chair's report is an opportunity to summarise the achievements and activities of the Parish Council for the year May 2025-April 2026. Over the past year the Parish Council has continued to actively support our community, maintain local facilities and provide effective communication between residents and Shropshire Council. It has been a busy year and one of the biggest changes has been changes to the Councillors over the year.

For many years we have been lucky to have a core of councillors who have given of their time to help the communities, but inevitably there will be changes and this year we have said goodbye to Ingrid Millington and Deidre James who between them have served as Councillors for over twenty years. They are missed and our thanks for their contributions to Council activities are recorded here.

We have been extremely lucky to have secured new Councillors, eager to make their mark over the year – Karen Rouwenhorst to represent Rudge, Mark Writtle for Worfield and Georgina Humphries also for Worfield. They have joined the Council with enthusiasm and the desire to represent their communities. We have one vacancy on the Council to represent Ackleton and we have one potential councillor willing to take up the baton. Hopefully we will be able to confirm this over the next month.

Other staffing changes resulted from the resignation of Connor Furnival, our Clerk who left us in October for promotion to a Town Council (Church Stretton). Our best wishes to Connor who left us very well prepared for the new incumbent and we were very lucky to have secured Ralph Morgan as our new Clerk. Ralph came to us with a wealth of experience and qualifications and we were fortunate that he had just left a large Council Clerk's position to retire and wanted to continue to work as a Clerk on a part-time basis. He has and continues to provide us with calm advice and keeps us abreast of the latest requirements from Government and the local council.

In May our local Councillor was elected, Dawn Husemann, head of the Reform Group for Shropshire. The involvement of our local member cannot be underestimated and Dawn has proved herself equal to the challenge. She presents a monthly report for Councillors detailing all work undertaken on behalf of the Council and also provides a very transparent link between Shropshire Council and ourselves. She introduced monthly surgeries held at the Coffee Morning in St Peter's Church and residents are welcome to attend and raise issues with her directly. She has also been instrumental in tackling issues with the 114 bus service and several planning issues. She has also secured some CIL funding which has been non-existent until now.

Along with the rest of the country, the current economic crisis both nationally and internationally affects our budget and that of Shropshire Council. Shropshire Council levied an unprecedented Council tax along with the possibility that we as a Parish Council would face the task of completing jobs that were previously under their remit – so challenging times ahead. Over the next year we as a Council will be considering which services we might wish to adopt.

The Council approved the development of a new website, being progressed both to support the introduction of gov.uk email requirements and to improve accessibility and ease of navigation for residents. The previous website served the Council well for many years and we recognise the work that went into the development and maintenance by the previous web designer. The new website will hopefully provide a modern and user-friendly platform for the

future as stipulated by Government requirements. The provision of new noticeboards across the parish continues where residents and councillors can post information.

Over the year we have tackled issues that exercise our residents – planning being a particularly challenging area. We have had several enforcement situations and the involvement of Dawn over the year has been invaluable. Whilst we have no sway over the planning decision of the inspectors at Guildhall – we can represent local views and give the local authority an idea of community reaction.

We have supported the local community groups such as Ackleton Village Hall, Stanmore Country Park, the local PTA for Worfield School and remain here for continued support. We replaced the bus shelter at Hilton after being damaged by a falling tree; refurbished the bus shelter at Wyken and cleared the path between Worfield Village Hall and Wyken. We continue to effect these repairs; we have an ongoing repair to street lighting in Russell Close which is awaiting EON availability. We also supported repairs to the Pound in Rudge – a historic monument in our parish – details can be seen on our website.

The SID's are installed and working and we await the first sets of data to inform us of their efficacy; we have a contract in place for moving them around the parish and so this concludes the long process to get to this stage. The defibrillator for the Hobbins was concluded on 1st May so that is another defib for our residents.

We Don't buy Crime is an ongoing project for us in tandem with the police and hopefully we will progress this further over the coming year to help our residents feel protected in our community.

Our partnership with the Channel 5 filming of Richard Coles' novels continues and we will see the film company based in Worfield this year for the next instalment. This collaboration works well for our parish, we have had many visitors to the area lured by the beautiful settings used for the programme.

All of this is made possible through the time and commitment of a small number of councillors and volunteers, whose contribution I would now like to formally recognise and thank.

Thank you for your patience, good humour, energy and support. It has been a privilege to be your Chair over the last year.