

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2011

As in previous years I looked back at what was in last year's report and I have to say that regrettably very many shortcomings are yet to be resolved. The condition of the roads in the parish continues to be a source of concern and irritation; the very occasional filling of a pothole here and there does little to resolve their continuing deterioration. There is an indication that with the help of extra Government money allocated for road repairs we may have some major work done on the road from Robins End Cottages T-junction to just above the Highwood turn off. The cynic in me will only believe it when it happens.

Last winter's snow and ice made most of the roads in the Parish virtually unusable for a while but the gritting done by the County Council showed some improvement and it is hoped this trend will continue. We have made strong representations for grit bins with only very limited success. We failed to get what we considered an essential bin where the Highwood residents gain access to the Highwood road but we have arranged with the County Council to drop off one or two large one tonne bags of salt/grit with Ian Vaughan of Eastham Villa Nursery. The Parish Council is arranging to purchase a bin to be placed on the Highwood access junction and either Mr Vaughan or our Lengthsman will keep it filled

The ancient bridges over the river Teme seem to be finding it difficult to stand up to the pounding by heavy modern vehicles. Eastham Bridge became unusable for a while last year this was followed by the Ludford Bridge at Ludlow where, as with the Eastham Bridge, there had also been a partial loss of stone work. Both of these closures were very disruptive but they will be mild compared with the disruption that will be caused by the coming closure for repairs and reinforcement of the Teme Bridge at Tenbury later on this year.

Our new Lengthsman (Ian Mapp) that we share with Knighton-on-Teme has proved to be very satisfactory. As I pointed out last year, the cost of the Lengthsman is met by a grant from Worcestershire County Council; this grant is still of course a part, if only a very small part of our council tax bills and we consider it to be good value for money.

The Parish Council took on responsibility to get the railings around the Memorial Hall painted. Following a lot of hard work by our Clerk we were able to gain access to labour provided by people serving Community Service Orders. The Parish Council purchased the special paint and some brushes etc but the work was done free of charge making a very substantial saving of precept money.

The Council dealt with several planning applications but did not see fit to raise any objections to any of them, in fact gave support where we felt it necessary. While on the subject of planning I would like to thank Geoff Brookes who has, for some years, taken the lead in considering planning applications and he has now decided to resign from the Council; his input will be greatly missed. Two other councillors have not offered themselves for reelection, firstly Mike Dowling who brought a great deal of experience to the office and will be missed. The final resignation is Cyril Norman MBE who has served the council for 50-years as Clerk. Following his resignation from this post he became a Councillor. Cyril's depth of knowledge and dedication to the Parish will be impossible to replace. We have one new Councillor Mr Paul Arnold and with two unfilled vacancies expect to make co-options.

I would like to thank County Councillor Dr Ken Pollock and District Councilor Gill Farmer for continuing to give quick responses to any requests for assistance. I am grateful to my fellow Councillors for their hard work and support over the past year. Finally I would like to thank Sue Burrows our Parish Clerk for her hard work on our behalf during the past year

John Inge - Chairman of Eastham Parish Council