

The year commenced with our saying thanks and goodbye to our clerk Sue after her seven years hard work. We welcomed Simon Palmer as our Clerk. I am pleased to report that Simon has functioned well in the role, bringing new ideas and skills, and has been confirmed in post.

Early in the year we were also sorry to lose Councillor Kate O'Donnell. We thank Kate for her work. Chris Wright has now joined us as a Councillor. Councillor Wright and his family have been involved in Village and Council matters for many years, and as a young farmer he is well placed to represent that as well as other sectors.

An application to build an industrial/horticultural unit on greenbelt land was lodged last year and finally dealt with this year. It raised issues including the proper use of greenbelt land, flooding and road safety. It was opposed by nearly all residents and the Council. The application was refused to the relief of the Village. The efforts of the previous Chair, Councillors and Villagers should be noted.

The heavy rains of 2012, caused flooding across the whole of Antrobus. The Village centre and other areas were flooded on more than one occasion. This has threatened public safety, homes and businesses. The roads have at times been treacherous, some rarely free of water or water damage. Local people worked with emergency services to protect both health and property.

The Council worked closely with the statutory agencies, local farmers and land owners, and residents, to ensure that all was being done to reduce the risk of further flood damage. Considerable improvement has taken place, however, there is still work to be done and the Council will continue a dialogue and consultation with the Local Authority.

The poor condition of roads in Antrobus was exacerbated by the floods, water damage and extreme weather. Although at times it was impossible to distinguish a field flood from a water burst all matters were diligently reported. The apparent practice of the Authorities to fill-in pot holes rather than re-surface, was questioned and there was some success in prompting new long term repair. On the intervention of the Council a

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long stretch of Knutsford Road was resurfaced when previous work proved unsatisfactory.

The Council has engaged with residents and the Local Authority about the dangers caused by fast moving traffic on the A599 / Gibb Hill junction. Although we have not been able to convince the Local Authority to take action, our concerns about this junction remain and we will continue to monitor this and other similar areas. We will act to ensure the safety of our roads.

The Children's playground has been subject to regular statutory inspections during the year and has received a clean bill of health. Maintenance repairs have been made to equipment, the boundary fence has been re-sited and repaired, and the playground surface has been treated and re-marked. We have been fortunate to receive a grant from Cheshire West for further improvement, work will continue this year. The playground is popular with local families and is in good condition.

Last year was of course Her Majesty the Queen's Jubilee year and Councillors played a full part in the Village Celebration. Grants to mark the Jubilee were made to three local organisations and Councillors took part in the Village Parade and field and other events. It was a very enjoyable and fitting celebration to mark the occasion.

The Council has continued to support and worked closely with its own and other village organizations and individuals, to try to ensure a good quality life for Villagers. The Council organised the annual "Litter Pick" all routes were covered. The Village has been awarded the Community Pride award for best Village in the 600-1000 residents category 2012 and The Village Shop received the 'Little Gem 2012' award. Relevant plaques and notices have been published. It is pleasing to note that our community effort is recognized by others.

Super Fast Broadband is fast becoming an essential part of family and business life. The Council has taken the lead in trying to obtain it over the whole of the Village area. It is a difficult case to make because of the cost involved in a rural area such as Antrobus. However, the Council has now formed a partnership with Cheshire East and

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West Authority to apply for a grant from the Rural Community Broadband Fund to fund the extension of Super Fast Broadband to a larger area of Antrobus. This project is likely to continue for at least the next twelve months. We will ensure the Council is protected from financial risk in this venture.

There are of course some procedural matters to note:-

Where possible, the Council has moved to electric communication. We hope this will mean quicker and better communication with Councillors and with others. It should also prove less resource intensive.

With the agreement of the auditor, a move to electronic accounting gives all Councillors access to full account details. In addition some minor alterations have been made to the way Council figures are presented making them more representative as well as accessible. This change includes a move to the use of a spread sheet rather than the traditional hard back accounts book.

We have also made necessary revisions and replacement to Codes of Conduct and standards in line with legislative changes. These have included regulations concerning the precept, Councillors codes of conduct, asset management and PAYE

The finance Committee has met as required and has supported the changes. The precept has been set at the same equivalent level for year 2013 as for 2012.

Due to the dedication of Councillors and the Clerk, I am pleased to report that the Council has met all its legal obligations and has played a major and positive role in the life of Antrobus Village.

I offer and record my thanks to everyone involved.

J.P.Harrison, **Chairman**