

## **The Chairman's report to the Annual Antrobus Parish Council (PC) Meeting**

1. 2018/19 has been a year of novel events in particular the tremendous work of the village to keep the shop alive and introduce the new facility of a 'tea room'. Whilst that was a community led initiative with fantastic support of the Antrobus Village Hall, the Parish Council has played a part in helping to lobby CW&C Ward Councillors and gain the support and understanding of CW&C to exercise its discretion in certain of its statutory functions. Whilst the Post Office was lost we hope that it can be re-established in the future.
2. The PC received its first Freedom of Information request that by its nature was tricky to handle as the request was not straightforward. We are better prepared for similar requests in future.
3. The First World War armistice of November 1918 was commemorated in November 2018 and again a community led event with the Parish Council making its contribution on Remembrance Sunday. The PC has decided to pay for the refurbishment of the memorial choir stalls in St Marks, which is a public monument although in Church premises. As a project it is progressing through the necessary ecclesiastical approvals process that we hope will be received before July 2019 being the 100th anniversary of the signing of the First World War peace treaty.
4. The playground remains an important service of the PC to the village that has continued to be actively used. The ground lease from the Antrobus Village Hall was renewed during the year.
5. A community project established a few years ago to have a community garden was supported by the Parish Council under the 'Greener Antrobus' initiative. It has now developed into viable entity in its own right and the PC committee oversight was formerly dissolved earlier in the year.

## **Highways**

6. The PC's initiative in providing signage to denote entry to Antrobus has grown into a larger project of traffic speed zones encompassing in part School Lane, Knutsford Road, and the first section of Barbers Lane. This is with CW&C. Approvals awaited. . Cllr Paul Harrison, Jackie Gratey and Carol Bunn are leading this.
7. The unsatisfactory state of pavements on Knutsford Road remains a high priority to fix. Each year CW&C keep putting the work down the priority list and then the budget runs out before any work is done. This is a common

problem for works in rural areas because of the lower levels of use. That is not a good reason for those who do use the pavements. To partly redress the balance a new programme of 'surface treatment' has been introduced by CW&C to provide for surface treatment as against whole reconstruction. Antrobus is on the list for approval for 2019/20.

8. The PC encourages everyone in the village to report potholes and defects (with photographs if possible) in the edges of the road surface that are very dangerous to all road users. These can be uploaded via the CW&C website.
9. The Clerk met several villagers at Gibbs Hill Junction and Officers of CW&C who had attended at the request of the PC about highway safety along this stretch of the Northwich Road. Some of the suggestions made at the meeting have been implemented with the erection of new signage advising of the approaching junction. The PC continues to seek improved road surfacing at this point, that was promised but has not yet occurred.

### **Town and Country Planning**

10. Town and Country planning matters do take up quite a lot of time for the Parish Council. As a Statutory Consultee we have the right to be consulted for applications in CW&C and that right should not be lost. In order not to lose it the PC must be responsive to consultations to exert any influence on applications that will affect us all in the village. There is much discussion about loss of greenbelt and development in the greenbelt. The PC is alert to this.
11. The 15 houses proposed for Knutsford Road at the CW&C Planning Committee in February 2018 required a S106 Agreement to be signed. The PC is informed by CW&C that has not been signed and no planning consent has been issued. We have no information on what is intended by the landowners and developers.
12. A former agricultural gateway on New Road to a field has been widened either side of the Antrobus boundary sign which now stands in the jaws of the widened opening. The matter was referred to Warrington District Council with agreement of CW&C as the two planning authorities bounding the site and Warrington have now served an enforcement notice to have the opening restored to that of agricultural use and to its original size. The work has not been done and we are monitoring the situation.
13. The planning working group is myself and Cllr Jackie Graty and Cllr Carol Bailey and the Clerk.

## **Manchester Airport**

14. Connected to planning and of particular significance is the airspace reserve over Antrobus to Manchester Airport. Air traffic using this is expected to continue to grow. This will have implications for Antrobus and so close consultation with Manchester airport will be important. Cllr Carol Bunn is our representative with Manchester Airport.
15. We have working groups for other matters such as land drainage and mapping led by Cllr Chris Wright and Cllr Helen Metcalfe.

## **Damage to Trees / signage and drainage ditches**

16. Storm damage will continue and the weather is predicted to become more severe or extreme. Trees bringing down overhead cables will impact on electricity supply and digital networks. Trees in the highway may also have grown to be too close to nearby houses. Anyone can report their concerns to individual utility undertakers and the highway authority has a duty to respond appropriately by trimming trees affected. Cllr Andy Dunkley has particular experience of trees and landscape matters. The PC does make representations, via the Clerk, to owners and authorities responsible. It will not stop trees falling over in times of storm but we can work to minimise the risk.
17. Storm damage is not our only concern. Increasingly there is Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) using roads/lanes that are totally unsuitable to traverse the Parish of Antrobus. These vehicles get stuck making turns at junctions quite unable to accommodate articulated lorries. They get stuck in land drainage ditches at the side of the road and trailer wheels run over name plates and damage the soft verges creating large undulations of packed earth affecting the drainage of the road. The height of these vehicles damages trees and overhead cables. The PC has managed to get additional signs erected saying unsuitable for heavy good vehicles but these are not preventing lorries using the lanes or incidents occurring.
18. The PC carried out a survey of signs and users and most of the traffic emanates from the Barely Castle Industrial Estate (in Warrington District Council area) as vehicles make their way to and from the motorway network at junction 9 and 10 on the M56. Junction 9 is also the M6 interchange. Signage is confused and weight restrictions on certain feeder roads lead to drivers trying to navigate through Antrobus.

19. There is a proposal to redevelop the Stobart facilitate to increase the size of both the driver training facility and the distribution depot. That is in for planning at present with Warrington Borough Council. In highway terms and planning terms there are three authorities involved, Warrington, CW&C and Cheshire East. Warrington have no authority over highways in the other two authorities and equally the other two authorities have no planning powers to decide if further development should go ahead. If developments of this kind are approved the highway impact on Antrobus and High Legh could be significant. Warrington Local Plan is proposing a further major development of land bounded by Grappenhall Road and the M56. The PC is trying to make sure CW&C and Cheshire East get involved in this process particularly with reference to highway impact on the residents and business in their area. This is not of importance to Warrington as the traffic is not heading towards Warrington but south or west to the M56/M6.
20. It would help to know of incidents people may observe and photographs would be particularly helpful.
21. Parish Councilors attend meetings with other groups in the village. In a small community everyone has to have more than one job and it is important to maintain good communication between everyone.

## **Finance**

22. Very important to us all as precept payers, is the role of the Finance working group. Their task is to make sure the PC is properly resourced to meet its statutory duties. In so doing it is intended to keep the precept as low as possible by careful management of those resources. Local Government finance is quite complex and an opportunity for every Chancellor to rearrange. At a Parish Council level of Local Government we have to be able to maintain the case for a fair distribution to rural communities. Myself, Vice Chairman Cllr Simon Batey, Cllr Paul Harrison have that responsibility. As reported in the annual accounts, the PC's financial position is satisfactory with appropriate reserves for projects in the future.

The CW&C Ward Councilors mentioned at the beginning of this report have individually attended our PC meetings providing an excellent informal link between the Parish Council and CW&C. Cllr Don Hammond has not stood for re-election in the recent elections but Cllr Norman Wright and Cllr Lynn Gibbon have. In spite of national politics I am pleased to say they have been re-elected. I think that is likely to have occurred because their hard work for the Marbury Ward was recognised by the electorate. We look forward to meeting the newly elected

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Councilor Phil Marshall replacing Cllr Hammond. May I take this opportunity to thank Don Hammond for his representation of Antrobus and wish him all the best for the future.

The year ahead is likely to be a mixture again of unforeseen events and the quiet unseen administration of the affairs of the Parish Council. We can only react to unforeseen events when they occur and to be able to react every Councilor has to respond to the call. I am pleased to say in the past year that has been the case. I never knew so many Councilors were so good with a paint brush until the caravan arrived!

Finally our thanks to the Parish Clerk, Simon Palmer, who is engaged with all aspects of the Parish Council's work and working groups. He marshals the information needed for the Council to function. It is a part time paid function that requires a high level of efficiency in order for the work to be done satisfactorily. All external communications go through him and he receives all communications, so that is a lot of information to process and circulate. In this regard the PC has to comply with Data Protection regulations and a systems review was carried and successfully addressed in the summer.

On a personal note may I take this opportunity to thank all those who so generously supported the Chairman's Ball. This is not an official event of the Parish Council but an event to raise funds for charitable causes of the Chairman's choosing. It is a well-established function in Antrobus during the term of office of the Chairman. From the response of those who were able to attend on the night it is judged to have been a memorable event. At this point of course I have to say thank you in particular to all those who organised the event, those who cooked the food and those who entertained and served us so well; from myself and on behalf of the Charities of the Christie and Joshua Tree (Northwich) - Thank you.

Stephen Barker  
Chairman  
Antrobus Parish Council

May 2019