

Chairman's Annual Report May 2007 to April 2008
Presented to Annual Parish Meeting May 20th 2008

Standon Parish Council has seen many changes this year. We started last May with only four councillors elected, so immediately had to co-opt other members to form a full council. I chaired the first meeting, in the absence of a chairman, Although Phil Smith then took over the reigns as chairman, until his resignation. Under his chairmanship the Council started to build on previous councils legacy.

During this time Councillor Edwin Davis fell ill and sadly passed away after his illness and our thoughts are with his family again tonight. He was a loss to the council and had served for many years during which time he did much good work in the Standon ward.

Around the same time several other members also decided to resign, again we must thank them for the work they put in over many years in their respective wards. This left the parish council however with some big challenges, namely six vacancies at a time we had just started to gel together and was working for the good of the community. As I had previously been inaugurated as temporary Vice Chairman I now took on the role of acting chairman until March when this appointment was confirmed and Councillor Graham Cowell was appointed as Vice Chairman. It is a great honour and I am very proud to be chair in a Parish that I have grown up in. I have always supported village events and firmly believe that there is a strong community spirit within the villages of Standon Parish.

Getting back to the vacancies following a request from ten electors in puckeridge an election was held and three of these places were filled from that, the other three in Standon were filled by co-option. This is only the third meeting of the new council but I am please to say that we are working together and moving forward. Recently we have started up the planning committee to give a better and more consistent service to the electorate. We have also initiated Saturday surgeries for a six-month trial period. This ends next month and although this was initially supported well the last few have attracted no visitors at all. So next month after the trial we will have to seriously consider its future. Maybe we need to move it around the three halls within the Parish, if you have any thoughts on this please let me know. Other initiatives agreed by the Council are the setting up of a website, which I hope to be launching within the next few weeks.

Throughout all this though we have continued all of our regular meetings with the highways department, police, footpath association, standon charities, the village hall and community centre to name but a few.

With regard to Highways we are still experiencing problems with Hertfordshire Highways and the service they give to the Parish, but though the highway meetings I hope we will eventually overcome this. You can all help though by reporting faults you spot, to the customer service centre via phone or web, I have cards here tonight if anyone would like to take them with them . If however you then find the service falls beyond what you expect please let us know and we will take it up on your behalf. It is

not all-negative news on highways though, we have with the help of the travel forum successfully managed to implement parking restrictions on Puckeridge High Street and the new village gateways are imminently being installed. Traffic calming along Station Road, outside the two schools will also be happening this year.

During the year we also supported the initiative by Herts Police to set up a cold calling zone in Park Lane/Fishers Mead, Round Haye and North Fields and I hope this is proving to be effective.

This year we also reduced the precept, it is a small gesture but hopefully will ease the tax burden on you all with ever increasing costs we are all facing these days.

Hopefully tonight you will see that we have achieved a lot in the passed year, despite all the challenges we have met. Finally to sum up, remember the parish Council represents you, but we do have limited powers. We will help the community and will do our best as unpaid volunteers, but we are only effective if you help us by letting us know your concerns and issues relating to the parish, thank you.