



# Cradley & Storridge Reporter

The Official Newsletter  
of Cradley & Storridge  
Parish Council

26

Autumn 2015



## Chairman's Comments

No sooner have you finished reading the last issue of Cradley Parish Council's Reporter than another one comes along. I won't say the PC is always so impressively efficient, but we try, we do try... Touching base with our parishioners is immensely important to us -- high praise as well as brickbats.

And the fact is that, although we certainly get brickbats, they are thankfully few and far between. So we must be working reasonably well, and we aim to continue that way.

You will notice our Neighbourhood Development Plan Questionnaire (two copies per household) included with this issue of the Reporter. **DO TAKE A MOMENT TO FILL IT IN AND RETURN IT BY ANY ONE OF THE METHODS LISTED.**

You will also see that the Questionnaire is not as lengthy as you may have thought it was going to be. The NDP Steering Group, backed by a Parish Council vote at our August meeting, decided that as originally set out it might appear that the PC was promoting, certainly advertising, commercial developments. At one time, three of the four projects which have been presented in one way or another to the community over the past six months or so, were more or less dependent upon the backing of commercial finance. But, lawfully, Parish Councils must not promote such schemes, for obvious reasons -- especially today when how Parish Councils deal with their finances is under a far closer scrutiny than ever before.

Thus our collective thinking is that outside projects, however excellent they may be -- which are not linked to the Parish Council -- should, and can, promote their own schemes, and endeavour to persuade parishioners themselves that theirs is the best project. Ultimately, of course, the final 'court of decision' is Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy, and if projects do not conform to planning law they won't succeed anyway.

So we have simplified the Questionnaire, and believe that your answers, or tick-choices, will give the NDP a tremendously useful picture of what you, our

# **Neighbourhood Development Plan Update**

## **Questionnaire**



Included in with the Reporter is a questionnaire, (two per household) which the answers to will assist the Parish Council in reflecting the views, wants and needs of the community in forming the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The plan is a very important document which will guide the future of our community until 2031.

What we put in the plan will be recognised by local government and will form the foundation for future planning and development.

It is only four straightforward questions so please, take a few minutes to fill it in and get it back to us by 22nd September. We can then progress the plan as soon as possible.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL LEAFLETS/QUESTIONNAIRES CIRCULATING AROUND THE COMMUNITY AT THE MOMENT WHICH APPEAR TO BE CAUSING SOME CONFUSION**

**THESE ARE PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED BY INDEPENDENT GROUPS AND ARE NOTHING TO DO WITH OR CONNECTED IN ANY WAY WITH THE NDP QUESTIONNAIRE**

**THE ONE INCLUDED HERE IS THE ONLY QUESTIONNAIRE THAT WILL INFLUENCE THE NDP**



## **New Councillors View**

I stood as a councillor for my neighbourhood because I felt that my friends and neighbours needed someone who was on their wavelength and would make the council work for them. I am also a bit nosy, and being a councillor gives you licence to meet all sorts of interesting people. I was aware that the role would be hard and at times challenging but would be incredibly rewarding.

I had never been to a parish council meeting before, so I was not quite sure what to expect and you may forgive me for thinking that parish councillors are a group of people who meet now and then in a draughty village hall. This couldn't have been further from the truth and I was about to embark on a steep challenging learning curve..

At the first meeting of the Council after election (or co-option), I was requested to sign, in the presence of the Clerk, a Declaration that I would undertake my duties in accordance with the law. I also completed forms relating to the Code of Conduct which requires declaration of employment details, business interests, land ownership, beneficial interest in any land within the Parish, membership of trade unions, charitable organisations, professional associations and any organisation with a main purpose including influencing public opinion or policy. When completed and countersigned these documents are open for inspection by any member of the general public and must be available at every meeting of the Parish Council

I learnt that parish councils make all kinds of decisions on issues that affect the local community. Probably the most common topics that parish councils get involved with are planning matters (they are statutory consultees), crime prevention, managing open spaces and campaigning for and delivering better services and facilities.

Another revelation was that every Parish Council Meeting will have an item entitled 'Declaration of Interest'. If any Councillor finds that they have a personal or prejudicial interest, this must be declared. A personal interest is a matter that affects the well-being or financial position of a Councillor, relatives, or friends more than others in the Parish. A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public could think is so significant that the

**Councillor's judgement could be affected.**

**I found that my "duties" included:**

**Attend meetings when summoned to do so; the notice to attend a council meeting is, in law, a summons, because you have a duty to attend**

**Consider, in advance of the meeting, the agenda and any related documents which were sent to you with the summons**

**Take part in meetings and consider all the relevant facts and issues on matters which require a decision including the views of others expressed at the meeting**

**Take part in voting and respect decisions made by the majority of those present and voting.**

**Ensure, with other councillors, that the council is properly managed.**

**Represent the whole electorate, and not just those who voted for you.**

**Derek Scully**

**Does Derek's experiences intrigue you or challenge your views of the Parish Council?**

**Now is your chance to join us. We have two vacancies available to co-op people onto the Council to serve until the next election,**

**Interested? then give the Chair a call on 01886 880282 for a chat or email the Clerk to the Council Mary to find out how to apply to be considered.**

## **Lengthsman's first days**

**Our Lengthsman and our co-ordinator have had a busy first three months on duty. Mainly taking up jobs which were left undone by Herefordshire Council and getting all of the necessary equipment together to get the job done. Geoff and Rob have made great inroads to bringing the area up to a standard from which to start serving the community as they would wish.**

**The two main areas are referred to P3 and General in the full reports of work completed posted every month on the PC web site by Geoff. Please take time to read them and report any works you feel need doing on the Lengthsman page of the website. If Geoff doesn't know**



about them he can't work with our Lengthsman to get them fixed.

P3 generally refers to works required or carried out to the miles of footpaths we have in the Parish and they have already carried out replacement of signposts, building of access steps and repair work to pathways.

General refers to other works under the Lengthsmans remit which covers amongst others, clearing drains and ditches, strimming and controlling roadside bushes and trees(not owned by a landowner), keeping road signage clean and visible and grass cutting to some roadside areas. The Lengthsman's remit is rather varied and he can take on whatever work the community deems fit.

Most people will be happy to hear that he is allowed to make minor repairs to the small roads in the Parish (patching potholes) whilst the A & B class roads are still the responsibility of Herefordshire Council's contractors.

Over time we are sure that the presence of our Lengthsman will become apparent and the environment will improve as we move away from waiting for the County Council to get work done/ and do it ourselves.

One long overdue project that has been started by our team is the restoration of Sandy Lane (from St Katherines to the Bosbury Road) which through neglect has become ever increasingly overgrown and narrower to pedestrians by the day. It will soon be restored to its former glory



You will all remember the thunder storms we experienced at the end of August when we had howling winds and torrential rain.

You may not know, because our Lengthsman and PC co-ordinator Geoff Fielding and a couple of residents quickly sprang into action to clear a fallen tree on the path from Brookside to Pound bridge. No waiting for Hereford Council to react.

**One of the big advantages of having our own Lengthman on call.**

Don't forget that you can report work that needs doing via the web site [www.cradleyparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cradleyparishcouncil.org.uk)

## Recreation Areas

The football pitch at Chapel Lane is finished and the grass seed is coming on a treat. We are just awaiting the grass contractor's ok to give it its first cut and to let it be used without it being damaged. We have goal posts. complete with nets, ready and awaiting delivery.

The land drains under the pitch are working well(too well in dry weather) and should pay their way during the winter months keeping the pitch free from water logging.



The "mountain" at Chapel Lane has come in for some criticism for being untidy and overgrown. There seems to be a misunderstanding here.

**It is supposed to be untidy and overgrown, that is how it was designed to be.**

A place for the kids to run around amongs the overgrown areas and explore, climb rocks and logs (and yes sometimes fall off!) and discover that thistles and nettles are recognised and best avoided and that wild flowers and plants (and weeds) all have a place.

Much better than playing on a bowling green flat piece of grass where imagination has no stimulation, don't you think?

# Handy Contacts

## Your County Councillor

Patricia  
Morgan

Tel: 01531 640302

Mob: 07792 880547

Email:

[pmorgan@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pmorgan@herefordshire.gov.uk)

Don't forget that this is YOUR council here to work for YOU the people of Cradley and Storridge. We cannot work in isolation and need input from the people of the Parish to know what they want from their Parish Council.

All of the normal Council meetings are open to the public and anyone can attend. A section of time at the meeting is always set aside for representations from the public. Come along and have your say. **IT'S YOUR COUNCIL-- USE IT!**

## Your Footpaths Officers

Jeff White....880000

Anne Scarsbrook...880555

## Your Lengthsman

Rob Lambert....880741

## Your Tree Warden

Jill Upton....880574

## Your Parish Councillors

Chris Lowder.....880282

Fred Beard .....880371

Alan Eldridge.....880381

Tanya Lloyd-Jones..881035

Cheryl Lambert.....880741

Ken Nason.....880952

Wynne Harries.....880976

Geoff Fielding.....881019

Simon Davies.....880074

Anne Carver.....880536

David Pye.....832566

Kevin Welford.....880664

Geoff Thomas.....880686

Derek Scully.....833236

Lengthsman Co-ordinator:  
Geoff Fielding

## Clerk to the Council

Mary Barnett ..01531 635103

Email:

[marym.abarnett@btinternet.com](mailto:marym.abarnett@btinternet.com)

or contact via the website:  
[cradeyparishcouncil.org.uk](http://cradeyparishcouncil.org.uk)

for all the up to date information on your Parish Council visit

[cradeyparishcouncil.org.uk](http://cradeyparishcouncil.org.uk)

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parishioners, in the main see as crucial to our village over the next decade and a half.

So -- DO FILL IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND RETURN IT. And if you have any queries, you can reach me on 880282, and deputy Chair Ken Nason on 880952, and we'll do our best to answer them.

This issue of the Reporter is not (you'll be glad to hear!) wholly centred around the NDP, and new Councillor Derek Scully (from Storridge) and our new Lengthsman Rob Lambert have each written a piece on hot-seat experiences on the very bottom rung (though, as I always say, actually the most fascinating) of local government.

Chris Lowder

## The Future ?

As we plunge headlong into an ever speeding digital information age keeping up with what is going on in and around our community becomes ever increasingly confusing and difficult for some.

Encouraged, nay instructed, by central and local government under the banner of keeping everyone informed all of the time (and we all know what the proverb says about that desire!) we are moving towards using the Parish Council web site ([www.cradleyparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cradleyparishcouncil.org.uk)) as our main information supply point.

We have, for some time now put a lot of information about the council's workings and decision making on the web site along with agendas and minutes of meetings etc. and communicated through this publication and the CMS newsletter.

The web presence will increase in the near future to include nearly all of the Parish Council business. The inclusion on the website of the ability to test community opinion on matters and receiving direct opinions will no doubt become the norm.

One of the problems with such a government wish list is that in a community such as ours a high proportion of the population may be excluded from participation as the old systems of communication pass by the way. The birth of the new dawn envisaged by our political masters may well involve a rather protracted period of labour (not Labour)

Ken Nason

