



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13**

### **Introduction**

Whitwick Parish Council was established by the District of North West Leicestershire (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2010. This specified that there should be eleven councillors elected in May 2011 and every four years thereafter.

### **Councillors**

There were no changes to membership of the Council (see page 4 for details).

### **Meetings**

The Parish Council held 8 ordinary meetings in 2012/13, all open to the press and public and commencing with a public question and answer session. The Council currently meets at St John the Baptist C of E School, Parsonwood Hill, Whitwick – Whitwick residents are always welcome to attend.

### **Finance**

The Council decided to freeze the precept at the same level for 2012/13. The Council banks with HSBC. The opening balance at 1 April 2012 was £15,144. During the year, income totalled £31,665 with expenditure of £19,148 giving a closing balance at 31 March 2013 of £27,661. This includes amounts reserved for contingencies and legal fees. A more detailed balance sheet is available to view on the Financial Information page of the website.

### **Community Grants**

With effect from 1 April 2012, the Parish Council introduced a scheme for making small community grants and set aside £1500 for the purpose. Grants of £250 were made to Party in the Park, Close-knit magazine, NWL Homeless Project, PRIDE Victim Support, Whitwick Football Club and Whitwick Historical Society. Our Small Grants Policy and application form are available on the website. The Council received a grant of £300 from Leics. CC for community planning training.

### **Policies and Procedures**

The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for Members, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment, Asset Register, Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, Media Policy, Disability Discrimination Policy, Complaints Procedure, Community Grants Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Protocol for Conduct of Chairman and Staff Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures (reviewed annually).

## **Memberships**

The Council is a member of the National and Leicestershire and Rutland Associations of Local Councils, the Rural Community Council (Leicestershire & Rutland) and the Leicestershire & Rutland Playing Fields Association. The Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

## **Community Policing**

Our local Safer Neighbourhoods Team are invited to attend each meeting to have a dialogue with the Parish Council on community policing issues.

## **Planning**

The Council considers all planning applications submitted in the parish as a consultee though the final decisions are taken by NWLDC. We have also commented on NWLDC's emerging Core Strategy.

The year has again been overshadowed by plans for significant new housing development at 'Stephenson Green' on the existing Green Wedge between Whitwick and Coalville which would more than double the population of the Parish and drastically affect the character of the area. This application was heard at a Public Inquiry which opened on 7 February 2012. The Council strongly opposed these plans and was delighted that the Secretary of State accepted the Inspector's recommendation that the application be refused. We would again like to thank Whitwick Action Group and all local residents for ensuring that the Inspector was left in no doubt as to the scale of local opposition to this proposal. However, the developers have subsequently mounted a legal challenge to this refusal which is expected to be heard later this year.

## **Website**

The Parish Council has its own website which is regularly updated including news, agenda and minutes and future meetings. There is also an email link to the Clerk. The site has been rated 'comprehensive' by the County Council.

## **Staff**

The Council engaged the services of Phil and Lorraine Ellis who both have excellent qualifications, extensive public sector experience and have each previously clerked parish councils. Their fixed term contracts run until 31 March 2014. In 2012, Lorraine was awarded the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).

## **Audit**

The Council has appointed Richard Willcocks of Redwood Pryor Ltd as its Internal Auditor. Grant Thornton have been designated as the Council's external auditors.

The Council's accounts are made available for public inspection as part of the audit process.

### **Representations to Other Authorities**

We have represented residents' concerns to the County and District Councils on various issues, including speeding traffic on Loughborough Road, Talbot Street and Hermitage Road; introduction of part-night street lighting; proposed Market Place pedestrian crossing; winter gritting, street cleanliness and dog fouling. We have met NHS representatives regarding introduction of 'intensive community support' and its implications for Ward 3 (Whitwick Ward) at Coalville Community Hospital. We have also made representations on boundary proposals for both the parliamentary constituency and the district council.

### **Future Work**

The Council has an aspiration to qualify for '**Quality Parish Council**' status. A new scheme is to be launched later in 2013 when we will review its relevance and achievability.

Negotiations with NWLDC to secure the **transfer of all parks, recreation grounds and open spaces** into parish council ownership have been protracted. However, progress is being made and we hope that the transfer will be completed in 2013/14. This would mean that from April 2014 maintenance costs will be met by the Parish Council from its precept rather than by NWLDC as a special expense.

The Council has decided not to seek the transfer of Whitwick Cemetery at the present time but has established liaison arrangements with NWLDC.

In March 2013, we launched a **community questionnaire** to ask Whitwick Parish residents what their priorities are for future spending. Additional questions asked about volunteering opportunities, setting up a Youth Council and an open question about what people think the Parish Council can do to make Whitwick a better place to live. A preliminary report on the responses will be considered in Spring 2013. Thanks to Leics. CC for approving a Big Society Grant to cover the costs of this exercise.

The Council also has an aspiration to establish its own **office**.

Midlands Co-op Society have kindly agreed to provide a site for a dedicated **notice board** on the frontage of their new food store in Market Place (subject to planning permission) to publicise parish council related matters.

**Ray Woodward**

Chairman of the Parish Council

## **Councillors and Staff**

**Councillor Anthony Barker**, 33 Crusader Close, Whitwick, Leics LE67 5BX

E.mail: [anthony.barker@gmail.com](mailto:anthony.barker@gmail.com)

**Councillor Sue Colledge**, 60 Leicester Road, Whitwick, Leics LE67 5GH

Tel: 07719 542948 E.mail: [sue.colledge@ntlworld.com](mailto:sue.colledge@ntlworld.com)

**Councillor Elaine J Easom**, 14 Coverdale, Whitwick, Leicestershire, LE67 5BP

Tel: 01530 831417 E.mail: [elaine.easom@btinternet.com](mailto:elaine.easom@btinternet.com)

**Councillor Dave Everitt**, 72 Glebe Road, Thringstone, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 8NW

Tel: 01530 223074 E.mail: [david.everitt@nwleicestershire.gov.uk](mailto:david.everitt@nwleicestershire.gov.uk)

**Councillor Tony Gillard**, 128 St Bernards Road, Whitwick, Leicestershire, LE67 5GW

Tel: 01530 452930 E.mail: [tony.gillard@nwleicestershire.gov.uk](mailto:tony.gillard@nwleicestershire.gov.uk)

**Councillor Derek Howe (Vice Chairman)**, 73 Silver Street, Whitwick, Coalville, Leics, LE67 5EX

Tel: 01530 834597 E.mail: [derek.howe@nwleicestershire.gov.uk](mailto:derek.howe@nwleicestershire.gov.uk)

**Councillor Nita Pearson**

Tel: 01530 223434 E.mail: [nita.pearson@ntlworld.com](mailto:nita.pearson@ntlworld.com)

**Councillor Leon Spence**, 65 Long Lane, Coalville, Leics LE67 4EJ

Tel: 07828 194768; E.mail: [cllrleonspence@gmail.com](mailto:cllrleonspence@gmail.com); Twitter@CllrLeonSpence

**Councillor Jo Straw**

Tel: 01530 814559 E.mail: [cllrjstraw@whitwickpc.org.uk](mailto:cllrjstraw@whitwickpc.org.uk)

**Councillor Lindsay Weaver**

Tel: 07760 176454 E.mail: [lindsay@lindsayweaver.co.uk](mailto:lindsay@lindsayweaver.co.uk)

**Councillor Ray Woodward (Chairman)**, 30 Mossdale, Whitwick, Coalville, Leics, LE67 5BL

Tel: 01530 831542 E.mail: [ray.woodward@nwleicestershire.gov.uk](mailto:ray.woodward@nwleicestershire.gov.uk)

Staff

**Parish Clerk: Phil Ellis    Assistant Clerk: Mrs Lorraine Ellis**

16A Foan Hill, Swannington, Coalville, Leics LE67 8RD

Tel: 07787 588760 E.mail@ [clerk@whitwickpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@whitwickpc.org.uk)