

## **Chairman of the Parish Council 2013 Annual Report**

Another year passes and Feckenham Council continues to promote the interests of the Parish.

This year we saw changes on the Council with the retirement of our tireless supporter Antonia Pulsford who has served the Parish well and who even in retirement continues to offer encouragement and support to the Council. On behalf of the Council I would like to congratulate her for all of her hard work and to welcome her continued support in the future.

We have promoted improvement works to the highways in and around the village with reworking of the kerbing and landscaping to the paths and in particular at the corner of Swansbrook and Astwood lane.

Plans have been formulated for maintaining a clear flow of the Plack Brook which seems to be working well with land owners being encouraged to keep brooks and ditches well maintained.

Planning applications being considered by Redditch BC include a large development outside the Parish border within Webheath district. Whilst not directly relevant to the Parish, it is causing major concerns to the Council and residents over the possible increased flows of surface water through Plack and Swansbrook, and the ability of Priest Bridge Sewage works to cope with additional discharge. The Council has been monitoring the progress of the Application and has written to RBC to voice these concerns and urge them to ensure adequate measures are put in place to cope with discharges running through the Parish.

A major project this year was the support given and membership to the Redditch ARC consortium formed of this and 4 neighbouring Parish Councils, to bring high speed broad band to the Parish and after countless meetings with Worcestershire CC, legal difficulties and usual red tape, the roll out programme commenced in March and the Parish is now connected to the Air Band network and many households are already subscribing to and benefitting from a much improved service.

Another project has been the provision engineered by the Parish but erected by the County Council of Estate Gates at the entrances to the Village on the roads from Redditch, Cookhill and Droitwich. These have been constructed in a sad fashion by the WCC Highways team and are presently a disappointment but we have been working closely with Highways to effect improvements and these are booked into the WCC's highways programme for the summer. I offer this Council's thanks to WCC Phil Gretton who supported funding of the Gates at no costs to the Parish.

Following central Government initiative a Development Planning Committee was formed to consider putting in place a local development plan to self regulate planning and development in the Parish. Unfortunately the size of the task and the cost of employing professional consultants were considered too great for the Committee who decided to defer any proposals for the time being.

Traffic through the village continues to be monitored and a recent initiative by the Council has been the distribution of 30 mph speed restriction signs to be attached to the sides of refuse wheelie bins, reminding motorists of the speed limits.

Once again the Council has continued the tradition of supporting local groups with grant aid and those benefitting have included WAKE FM; Conservation Garden Society, Feckenham Shop, St John's Church.

On a final note, having achieved full strength on the Council after Antonia's decision to retire, we lost a member during the course of the year and a vacancy presently exists if anybody would like to volunteer their services.

The Clerk provided internally audited 2012/13 **Statement of Accounts**. The Clerk reports that the precept received was £8300 and the total income was £13,502 which includes VAT recovery. The balance of funds carried forward to 2013/14 is £20,747. A significant percentage of these funds are ring fenced in Reserve Accounts.

The accounts were internally audited by Mr R Fletcher. An external audit will take place after a four week period ending on 16 May in which the public have the right to inspect the accounts.