

Chairman's Report Aug/Sep 2025

Hopefully you all will have enjoyed some sort of summer break during the last few weeks and have fully recharged your batteries ready for what I anticipate to be a challenging twelve months or so for Bayston Hill Parish Council.

Although we don't usually meet during August, the news that Shropshire Council Planning Committee were sitting to consider the Lyth Hill Development on the 19th, prompted an extra ordinary meeting to be called to approve an appropriate response to be given at the planning meeting. My thanks go to those councillors who were able to attend at such short notice and also those who were away but indicated their support for our planned response.

Julie, Cllr Underwood and myself attended the site visit at Lyth Hill and the planning meeting at the Guildhall. Our three minute statement opposing this development was read out by myself followed by a statement from Teri Trickett – Shropshire Councillors get five minutes! There were also quite a number of village residents present.

One item in our statement was our concern over the high density of the proposed development – 36% greater than the village overall. This was also a concern for most of the Planning Committee and a majority of them spoke out about the proposal being very much out of character with the rest of the village. As this debate went on, the three of us were feeling increasingly optimistic that the committee were going to reject the application. Indeed, a proposal for rejection was made and then duly seconded. It was at this point that the Development Manager for SC interceded to stop the vote going ahead. She cited that an appeal from Redrow, if this development was refused, would incur a high cost to the Council and it would be better if the vote was changed for deferment rather than rejection. A number of committee members queried this breach of procedure and asked why there was any need of a planning committee if they weren't allowed to decide matters? More arguments ensued which resulted in the majority of the committee being 'persuaded' to defer the decision. Throughout this, the three of us were totally shocked by the fact that the Development Manager had prevented a democratic procedure from taking place. You will have seen what actions we have taken over this matter and are awaiting a response from the Monitoring Officer. The full video of the planning meeting is available on You Tube under Shropshire Council Northern Planning Committee if you wish to see for yourself.

Another plan from Shropshire Council is the proposed devolvment of certain responsibilities and possible transfer of assets from SC to town and Parish Councils. This could even include maintenance of roads and hedge cutting etc, but one certainty is that our Library will cease to be funded by SC.

Cllr Underwood is pressing ahead as much as possible on the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan and will update full council. The next meeting of the Steering Group scheduled for the 15th Sep.

Unfortunately, the village has been plagued for a number of years by small groups of teenagers causing damage to facilities. This year seems to show that this behaviour

has changed from relatively minor occurrences of vandalism and littering to incidents of criminal activity. A number of fires have been started in Parrs Wood – one of which involved fire appliances from Shrewsbury and Oswestry to extinguish the blaze. It was lucky the wind wasn't the usual westerly on this occasion as the dry timber and undergrowth could have caused a large conflagration. That this setting of fires is almost certainly deliberate seems to be proved by a resident catching two teenage girls in the act of lighting a fire by the side of Parrs Pool. They ran off when challenged. Just this last weekend a younger boy was attacked outside the skate park by a handful of older youths and beaten quite badly. His phone was also stolen. Both matters are in the hands of the Police who, hopefully, will use some of their valuable resources to stamp out this criminal behaviour before someone gets seriously hurt.

On a more positive note, Julie will outline the number of parish events coming up to which I hope councillors will provide volunteer help and support as much as you are able.

Rob Ruscoe