

# Chair's Annual Report 2018

## Silverdale Parish Council

### 1 Changes in Membership

During the year Gareth and Sophia Snell were both unable to continue, and along with Casey Scarlett, stepped down from the Parish Council. In addition, Susan Durber announced that she would not seek re-election in May 2018. We would like to thank all those councillors for their hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm for the work done by the Parish Council.

Three new members, Ant Sutcliffe, Krishnadas Sukumaran, and Jake Wu, were co-opted in December. Our new members have together widened the representation on the Council and have already made their mark, putting forward initiatives and representing their neighbours to improve the Parish.

### 2 External Contacts

Our new County Councillor, Dave Jones, has been a regular attendee and therefore we have been able to progress several matters involving Highways in particular. We thank him for his contribution to our work.

As Chair I was nominated to the Staffordshire Parish Council Association Executive Committee and now able to access officers and members on a variety of issues at County level.

Amelia Rout and I represent residents of the Parish on the Locality Action Partnership, meeting each quarter with Aspire, Police, Streetscene and other council staff.

### 3 Silverdale Parish Council Budget

Despite NULBC withdrawing their financial support for Parish & Town Councils, with a phased reduction over four years, Silverdale PC has not had to increase the precept this year, thanks to our long-term planning last year.

It is a considerable relief to know that our future funding is secure in view of the need to help complete several large local projects, and provide a range of local services to our community.

### 4 Parish Council Community Grants

To support the work that is done in Silverdale by local community groups, the Parish Council keeps a £2,000 fund to make small grants. In the last year, some of the grants awarded were:

Aspire Grant Xmas Tree and lights	£350.00	
St Lukes PTFA Grant books	£500.00	
Silverdale Meth Church chairs	£500.00	
Total Larger Awards/Grants		£1,350

## **5 LARGE PROJECTS**

### **5.1 Relocation of Silverdale Miner's Wheel**

Work was completed to re-erect the 3.3 metre cast steel pit-wheel which weighs over 5 tonnes. Silverdale Miner's Wheel stands proudly again to mark the place where mining was undertaken for over 200 years, at the entrance to the Country Park and is the first thing you will see when walking the history trail up to High Lane. We plan an inauguration event in May with local miners groups, schools and other interested parties to celebrate our great industrial heritage. At a later date, we aim to include an information board setting out the origins of the wheel, following contacts with Silverdale History Society, and possibly outdoor seating to enable it to be used by local schools as an outdoor classroom.

### **5.2 Miner's Tribute Monument**

Correcting some long-term maintenance issues will ensure the Tribute will continue to capture Silverdale's spirit. The Parish Council is continuing to work with the Borough Council on a project to secure Heritage Lottery funding which must include community engagement to balance the asset investment. Last year's report for a Silverdale Festival in 2018 to bring music and drama to the village was supported with a grant application from Ibstocks for the extensive preparatory work to produce what we all hope will be a successful bid.

### **5.3 Ilkley Place Play Area**

The mix of grants for this Locality Action Partnership project managed by Robin Wiles required a phased development. Play Area extension scheme phase 1 was completed and Phase 2 is due to start in June 2018. An opening event is pencilled in for the half term October 2018. This is a real demonstration of partnership working, with everyone from residents and their children to Council officers working together to make it happen.

## **6 CAMPAIGNS**

One of our important roles is to make representations when vital services are threatened and public safety is at risk because of administrative changes or budget cuts. We speak for the Parish, to strengthen your individual voices, and to make sure our village is not ignored.

### **6.1 Brighton House, Sneyd Terrace**

An essential part of the fabric of specialist nursing and social care provided for people in Silverdale and Newcastle, Brighton House specialised in re-ablement. The care home was closed in 2017 because of lack of adequate funding with the loss of 25 beds and 50 full and part-time staff. At the same time, Community beds were being closed at Bradwell Hospital, leaving our residents with no local provision.

We campaigned to maintain the service and we are pleased that the building was acquired by Aspire and now fully functions with 25 beds for elderly hospital patients to stay for a relatively short period of time (approx. 30 days), until they are well enough to be discharged home. Care at Brighton House is provided by a mixture of registered nursing staff, health care support workers and therapy staff. I feel this use emerged as a direct result of our campaign,

alongside many like-minded organisations, and our pledge to oppose planning applications requesting a change of use.

### **6.2 Heritage Park Play Areas**

Silverdale Parish Council opposed the planning application by David Wilson Homes which would have reduced the amount of play space and equipment to below what the original application had agreed in 2007, and the issue is on-going with the Planning Department.

### **6.3 Design of Mini Roundabout Pepper Street & Scott Hay Road**

Traffic measures undertaken at Heritage Park housing development need strengthening. The mini roundabouts are the only vehicular entrances and exits to the estate of over 250 houses. We referred evidence of near-misses, accidents and dangerous driving to the County Council Highways department and with David Jones' help requested a survey to identify improvements for the County Highways Department.

### **6.4 St Luke's Pepper Street School Patrol**

Following extensive evidence gathering and campaigning, a Crossing Guard has been appointed to serve St. Luke's Primary but there are still outstanding issues for the Parish to take forward to ensure safety around the school.

### **6.5 Joint Local Plan and former Municipal Keele Golf Course Site**

The largest single housing development in Newcastle and Stoke over the next 20 years 'overlooked' the Parish Council and residents in terms of local consultation.

We opposed the JLP proposal for 1,800 houses in a mixed development as representing a considerable threat to the identity of the parish by coalescing Silverdale with Keele parishes and Thistleberry ward. The subsequent loss of 80 hectares of greenbelt, outdoor leisure activity in the driving range, open space, amenity space, woodland and natural habitat is implied by the proposal. There are huge infrastructure implications from school catchment to land drainage and road construction and parking.

We doubted the housing need calculation, which is the justification for the proposed exception to the policy of retaining the greenbelt, and so welcomed the Government's forecast of 361 homes annually (using the new method) as opposed to the 682 originally estimated by NuLBC earlier in 2017.

This campaign will persist as more emerges following publication of the recent round of consultation, and the draft Joint Local Plan is published during 2018. We maintained contacts with other interested groups including Thistleberry Ward and Keele Parish representatives. Potential alternatives to housing? Geo-thermal energy in Silverdale is possible according to local geologist Bernard Besly. Community forest - plant ecologist Peter Thomas will advise and inform us about the habitats found in that site.

## **6.6 Underground Fire Hollywood Lane in Keele Parish**

There has been concern for residents in Parkside about the potential danger of the underground fire over many years, and evidence that children are accessing the area through gaps in fencing and poor signage. Keele Homes had bought the site and inherited the site of the underground fire. A new developer has subsequently bought the land and adjoining residents have spoken about their concerns whilst campaigning against the planned development.

Police apprehended and prosecuted criminals in the act of fly-tipping noxious waste. NuLC issued enforcement action over unauthorised change of use of the land from industrial to residential use including the siting of a caravan.

NuLC have promised to ensure the new owners properly fence the potentially dangerous area to keep the area clear, and we publicise the matter and work with Keele Parish to ensure public safety.

## **6.7 Walley's Quarry**

In December 2016 the Environment Agency with SCC issued Red Industries with a 10 year licence to dispose of non-hazardous waste, and stable hazardous waste. We highlighted on our Facebook page how to go about reporting offensive smells and other environmental problems, such as bird nuisance and rodents. SPC and residents from Thistleberry Ward (which includes the Walley's landfill area) are represented on a panel that meets regularly and reviews the licence conditions. Some of our local projects, such as the Wheel and the interpretation board, are part-funded through the Red Industries Landfill Communities Fund.

## **6.8 Watercourse and Culvert Rear of Sneyd Avenue & Kinsey Street**

The County Lengthsman scheme once funded flood alleviation works. Budgets were reduced by £800 each year over the last 2 years until funding ceased, and this low level work was delegated to the parish with no funding.

An estimate of £1,173 to cover a Water Engineer survey of the 100m watercourse (and establish whether culverting was viable) was submitted in November to SCC Flood Alleviation Fund but not approved. We continue to clear debris from the watercourse on a regular basis, and will work with the County to reduce the effect of poor design and condition of the watercourse, to avoid flooding of properties on Kinsey Street and Sneyd Terrace.

# **7 SERVICES**

## **7.1 Acre and Park Road Allotments**

Our allotment associations have demonstrated continued excellence and won many horticultural awards. The Parish Council funded a mirror for the entrance/exit from the Park Road Allotments but unfortunately it has since been stolen by person(s) unknown.

## **7.2 Silverdale Library**

As an educationalist, I find it staggering that the UK is the only developed country in the world where the state is diminishing the public library services.

In 2016 Staffordshire County Council ceased direct funding for staff and many of our library services, including at Silverdale Library.

The Parish Council were concerned about the impact that this would have on the village as well as the capacity that the village has to provide sufficient volunteers. Business Enterprise Services were given a five year lease from Jan 2017 and found and trained sufficient volunteers to continue with the same level of service. Jan Siery is our nominated member to their steering committee.

## **8 PETITIONS** (Community Governance Review for Ilkley Place Play Area and SPC )

Ilkley Place play area is located in Keele Parish but is accessible from Silverdale, and was built for the residents of Parksite estate. To change the boundary and include the play area in Silverdale, NULBC advised that at least 10 per cent of electors would have to sign a petition - 450 people from Silverdale and 250 Keele people. Keele Parish Council approved our proposal on 21st June. To date 70 signatures in Silverdale have been received but we will continue to amass the numbers required with the help of the Co-op in the Parade. Once the petition is complete, the boundary should be redrawn and this will make future funding for play area improvements much easier.

At the same time as the play area petition, we were also collecting signatures for a second Community Governance Review with a view to re-balancing the Parish Councillors.

At present, Knutton Ward elects 3 Councillors, Silverdale Ward elects 5 but Parksite Ward only elects 2 – following the completion of Heritage Park estate it is our view that the Parish Council should be as follows: Knutton Ward 3; Silverdale Ward 4; Parksite Ward 3. Work will continue on this process as time allows.

Henryk Adamczuk (Chair)