

Annual Report Acton Bridge Parish Council

The initial priority of the new year for the Parish Council was the need to appoint a new Clerk following the resignation of Carole Robinson. I want to thank Carole for all her work for Acton Bridge Parish Council over the last few years as well as the support she provided in the recruitment process and in the induction of the new Clerk. Advertising through CHALC brought four applications and, following two rounds of interviews, the council appointed Tracey Whitlow as the new Clerk commencing on 1st August 2024. I would like to extend my thanks to Cllrs Wakefield, Brocklebank and Broughton for their support through this procedure.

Following the appointment of the Clerk, the process of improving the way the Council works, begun under the Chairmanship of Trevor Brocklebank has continued. The Parish Council has a number of new policies, a new noticeboard and a new website to facilitate better communication with the Acton Bridge community and is now able to operate on line banking payments. These changes may appear small but have required the hard work and perseverance of the new clerk to make them happen. We thank our Borough councillors for their financial support for the new noticeboard and website and the work they continue to do to represent the interests of the village.

I welcome the decision of Weaverham Parish Council to support the speed reduction on the A49 around the Sandy Lane junction and more especially to share the financial cost. It was therefore very disappointing to find that CW&C Highways would be unable to carry out the work “until the summer of 2025” since markings for the new road signs appeared on the pavement in late spring 2024! We are still waiting for this change to be enacted.

During the Autumn of 2024 a number of flood warnings were issued by the Environment Agency regarding the River Weaver with Acton Bridge being specified in the warning. These were of both yellow and amber level. On two occasions the resilience plan core team were on standby in response to amber warnings, local residents were alerted but the river level remained significantly below that seen in Autumn 2022. Going forward we will need to consider how we respond appropriately to EA warnings.

A very successful Acton Bridge Spring Clean Day, well morning to be more accurate, was held in conjunction with ABCA on Saturday 29th March. Over 40 local residents turned out to collect litter, clear gutters and pavements of accumulated debris and vegetation. 47 bags of rubbish were collected in a 3 hour period and the morning ended with refreshments provided by ABCA.

The Parish Council has continued to seek to represent the interests of the village in the public arena. These include planning applications, the proposed Cadent Hydrogen pipeline, which will bisect sections of the village and may cause significant disruption accessing the village; the Mersey Tidal Barrage which may have an impact on river levels and with London North Western Trains regarding car parking around the station. Having met with LNWT and Network Rail, it is clear that there will not be a cheap or speedy solution to this issue.

The Parish Council has been mindful of the close relationship needed with ABCA regarding the maintenance of the Parish Rooms. We have shared the cost of the memorial bench, installed outside the Parish Rooms ahead of the VE Day celebrations. My thanks go to Cllrs Fifield and Wakefield for their negotiations with ABCA regarding a new lease and we welcome the improvements to the fabric and operation of the Parish Rooms introduced by ABCA over the last year. The resolution of the issues around the roof remains of concern to both the Parish Council and ABCA.

Finally, I wish to express my thanks to my fellow councillors. We have welcomed Cllrs Van Laer and Golding to the Council during the year which means that for the first time, since the last election, we currently have a full complement of councillors. Councillors are all volunteers and give freely of their time without pay. Thank you. Cllr Hall has indicated that he will be leaving the council after this evening's meeting. I wish to thank Cllr Hall for his many years of service and the wisdom and experience that he has brought to meetings of the Parish Council. It does mean that shortly we will have a vacancy!

David Charlton

14th May 2025