

CRONTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

Since the last report was written and following the Covid pandemic, which meant us meeting remotely in many instances, we have been able to return to normality and once again meet face to face.

We were also able to re-start the annual Remembrance and Christmas Carol Services in 2022 as the pandemic had eased, and these events were welcomed back by many residents. We were able to display a lit-up Christmas Tree with the help of Cronton Garden Centre and we purchased some large poppies to place on lamp-posts to give additional recognition to the period of Remembrance.

There have been several changes on the Parish Council in the last year - we have lost the services of our long-standing Clerk - Vitti Osborne - who worked with the Parish Council for 25 years, and Chairs and Councillors Shaun Cooper and more recently Dave Rostance who was on the Parish Council for 30 years. We would like to thank them for their service to the residents of Cronton.

At the same time, we have gained a new Councillor - Rachel Fielding; who was co-opted onto the council, and we also replaced Vitti with Karen Newton as our new Clerk, who has got stuck into her role and has been a good addition since September. We are currently looking to co-opt another Parish Councillor to bring us back to full capacity.

One of the main themes to be discussed at our meetings has been a re-vamp of our Pasture, which the Pasture Working Group Committee have worked together with Knowsley Council on over the last year, to put together a programme of updating works - with the main new feature to be a perimeter path, with the aim of making usage of the Pasture much easier during the wet/winter months. This need to have an accessible all year round walking area within the village was highlighted as a result of Covid 19. Funding from Viridor of £50,000 was agreed last July and the Parish Council made a 'matched funding' contribution of £5,000 which was paid in August. We are hoping that once spring comes these works will commence. We are also awaiting further news of funding to improve the children's play area.

On a less positive note, Taylor Wimpey announced a housing development to be built off Chapel Lane, which has caused a lot of upset amongst residents. The Parish Council has held meetings with various parties to understand the intentions of this development and to show our opposition, due to the belief that the village will become much busier with traffic and the development will be very close to our village border. This development is of ongoing concern and whilst we have had no updates for some months, we will keep this under observation.

The Multi-use path which is to pass through Cronton has now been approved by Knowsley Council, however, it is understood that commencement of any works may be some time off. There have been some concerns raised surrounding safety amongst other concerns and we should continue to take an interest in any progress to ensure that any necessary safety issues such as road signage and pot holes are considered by Knowsley Council.

Whilst Knowsley Council have done a good job of cutting back bushes and weeds around the village recently, we are still concerned about the number of pot holes currently which are slow to be dealt with. There have also been a few small incidences of fly tipping again recently.

The village is suffering quite a lot of litter which hopefully can be cleared up with a spring clean volunteer group in the near future.

Councillors met with the Merseyside Police Crime Commissioner and Police Officers in July 2022 to attempt to request communication takes place between Merseyside and Cheshire Police, particularly in terms of anti-social behaviour in the village. However, to date we have had no further positive indication to allow us to believe that this will happen. We will continue in our endeavours to move this forward into the spring and summer when there is often a rise in ASB in the village.

Councillors met recently to discuss the budget and precept for the 2023/24 financial year, and it was agreed that rather than increase the precept by a large percentage, some adjustments would be made so that the increase to residents could be kept to a minimum. It was also agreed that in future years some further increases will be necessary to keep pace with rising costs.

The Cronton Neighbourhood Watch Scheme committee have held various meetings, however, at present only have a very small number of members. More members/volunteers are needed to get this off the ground and it has so far stalled somewhat. They will continue to attempt to progress this scheme.

The Parish Council website and Facebook sites continue to be used successfully and are helping to provide information to our residents about current issues and Parish Council business. Several members of the Parish Council are currently receiving training on use of the website.

Finally, Knowsley borough was awarded Borough of Culture for 2022, which saw various events taking place, including in Cronton - namely the Sun, Moon and Stars event on the Pasture in October, which proved very successful. We also had Owl and Pussycat sculptures in situ for residents to enjoy as part of a borough wide trail, and the annual Cronton Gala also took place in September, which again was very well supported.

I would like to thank all Councillors, the Clerk, and Ward Councillors for their continued efforts and look forward to working with everyone through the next year.

Rosanne Hayes
Vice-Chair
Cronton Parish Council

March 2023