

Chairman's Report 2005/6

It hardly seems like twelve months since I became Chairman of Audlem Parish Council. Many thanks for the hard work my predecessor Mike Hill put in – what an act to follow!

One of my first duties was to welcome a new councillor onto the Parish Council, Pam Seddon.

Planning

During the year we had two very controversial planning applications, Moorsfield House and Canalside (Moseley's Yard). The Parish Council worked hard to obtain a reduction in the housing density on each site. A public meeting was held to discuss the Canalside development at which attendance was more than a hundred, showing how much concern there was about the development in the centre of the village.

At the beginning of the year we were pleased to welcome PC Ken Maple as our new rural beat officer. He has policed the village conscientiously and also organised the Community Action Meetings on alternate months and I would urge you to attend these meetings to voice any concerns you may have. The Parish Council have provided a mobile CCTV camera to aid his policing.

VE/VJ weekend

Audlem celebrated in style with beautiful weather too. A typical example of 'building community life': The shop displays were wonderful and the tableaux, in the Scout and Guide Hall depicting life at the end of World War II, along with our own Land Army girl Nora Bate, were exceptional and created considerable interest. This together with a Jitterbug Ball set the scene for much reminiscing. A special Proms in the Park and the wonderful play by 5 A's with its serious moment reminding us of those villagers who never returned from the war, and finally an outdoor ecumenical act of worship.

Calor Village of the Year

What an exciting year for me as chairman and all involved in this competition. We were delighted to win the award for the Cheshire Village of the Year and then be successful in the Northern region competition which culminated in Mike Hill and I travelling to London on 7 December for the National Presentation luncheon. As you all know we were presented with The North of England Village of the Year award, Building Community Life and the National Building Community Life award. I am very grateful to the committee for their work in presenting Audlem to the judges and also to the many organisations which set up displays in the Public Hall and those who provided refreshments. Special thanks to Syd Seabridge for providing stylish transport for the judges. The total prize money we won for the village was £4,500 which at the moment is ring-fenced while we try to add to it in the Best of the Best competition this year.

Parish Plan

The Parish Plan was completed in October. Bob Cartwright and the Steering committee have done a fantastic job and this has been reflected in the number of invitations Bob, and Mike Hill, have received to talk to other councils about the process. As a result of The Plan the Village News has been successfully re-launched and is now published by the Editorial Group.

The village website www.audlemvillage.org, was launched in August and I wish to congratulate the webteam on their success. The Forum certainly creates much interesting discussion! And the site is a mine of information.

Quality status

The Parish Council became a Quality Parish Council last December thanks mainly to our clerk, Jean White, who also makes my job so much easier thanks to her efficiency.

On 20 January we held a social occasion in the Public Hall to celebrate Audlem's success during the year. 150 people attended including the Mayor of Crewe and Nantwich, our MP and many other civic dignitaries.

On 17 February Parish Councillors were delighted to represent Audlem at the Mayors Oscars and even more thrilled when we were actually presented with an Oscar for the achievements of the village during 2005. At this ceremony our own Bill Consterdine received a further three Oscars including Citizen of the Year. Well Done Bill.

Amenities

During the year bike stands were installed outside the Church, picnic tables provided, teen shelter erected at the edge of the playing field, and new seats, kindly donated by Mr and Mrs D Hodgkins, placed on the perimeter of the playing field.

The Public Hall has been greatly improved thanks to the chairman, Geoff Stretch for his leadership of the committee, and the commitment of Geoff and his wife Olive. Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council have made a grant of £30,000 to the Hall which is greatly appreciated and has enabled the replacement of windows and re-decoration.<p> Tom Neville retired as Internal Auditor and on behalf of the Parish Council I would like to thank him for his work over the years, and also welcome Kevin Mellor as his successor. I would also like to welcome John Kemble, our new Responsible Financial Officer.

Finally, Audlem Parish Council says farewell to Paul Huntbach who has retired after 23 years service. Enjoy your retirement Paul and thank you for your commitment to the parish council and the village.