

**The Gorge Parish Council
Annual Report of the Chair
2012-2013**

Another busy year has gone by for the Parish Council in which we have been working hard to improve services and put forward the interests of The Gorge community in the many issues that directly affect us. We inform you of all of these issues through our bi-monthly meetings, notices on the noticeboards, on our website and in the Gorge Gazette. There is a public forum at the start of every Parish Council meeting so please come along and put your views forward.

During the year we said our farewells and grateful thanks to Councillors Mike Mackenzie and Ben Whitehouse who have admirably reflected the views and concerns of the Lightmoor community on the Parish Council. We have recently welcomed new councillors Jake Bennett and Ian Bolingbroke as Lightmoor Ward representatives and full contact details for all Councillors are available on the website and on the Parish Council noticeboards.

One of the more pleasurable duties of the council is to be able to financially support local events and activities which range from the Annual Brass Band Concert to help with insurance costs for the Lodge Field volunteers. We also try and support each of our four Parish rooms with an annual grant and more specific help as with the new floor at the Coalport Rooms. We also make a grant to the local policing team for help with their beat vehicle. A highlight of the many events last year was the Diamond Jubilee and the council was able to give a grant to each community for their celebrations. A tree has been planted in each ward as a lasting memory of this historic occasion.

In response to concerns raised by residents regarding increasing problems with traffic in The Gorge, the Parish Council now holds regular meetings with the involved authorities in which issues can be discussed and resolved. We are a key partner in the proposal that the Borough Council take over responsibility for parking enforcement from the Police and the consultation process is well under way. As part of this a full review of parking restrictions has been undertaken and some new restrictions have been put in place on a trial basis, most noticeably on parts of Madeley Road. In order to help the flow of traffic around the school on Dale Rd, parents now have access to the 2 car parks nearest to the school for drop off and pick up.

As a council we have representatives on many of the organisations which are active in the Gorge. These include the Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust and World Heritage Site Steering Group. This is where we feel that we are acting as a link between the residents and the many official groups active in the Gorge. Perhaps not many residents know that we have a management committee for the allotments off Woodside as they are within the Parish boundary.

With many cuts by major authorities, Parish Councils are being looked upon more and more to provide services to local residents. A fairly new development for us has been the employment of our own Roadmen to help keep the Gorge such a beautiful place in which to live. The Roadmen will clear overgrown footpaths, leaf sweep minor roads, check the grit bins are regularly refilled, cut back trees, maintain signs and respond to local needs. So please do contact our clerk, Jayne Madeley, if you see an environmental issue where you think we can help.

Planning is always a contentious issue and this last year has been no exception. The latest planning applications are discussed at one of our meetings each month and we have asked for a full planning board review of several of the larger applications this year in response to local concerns.

This year we have all been encouraged to volunteer to help our local community. So I would like to finish by thanking some of the best volunteers – your local parish councillors - who devote much of their time and effort ensuring that the Gorge is such an outstanding place in which to live.

Finally I would like to thank Jayne, our Parish Clerk, for her continued skills, knowledge and expertise which contribute so much to the organisation of the council.

Dr Maureen Bragg
Chair, The Gorge Parish Council