



Clerk's Update – October (for November Meeting)

The Parish Office is now officially registered as a “**Safe Place**” under the Shropshire-wide scheme. This initiative allows vulnerable individuals to attend during office hours, where they can feel secure, access basic facilities, or request assistance in contacting a carer or family member.

Preparations for the **Christmas Light Switch-On** event are well underway. The event has been created and promoted on social media in collaboration with Jack Noakes. With revised timings and a refreshed programme, we anticipate this will be our most successful year to date. The lighting team is engaged, the winning light has been manufactured in Blackpool, and the switch-on will be carried out by competition winner Thomas Gould. Installation of the lights has commenced throughout the village, the Christmas tree has been ordered, and both raffle ticket sales and promotional activities are progressing.

Regarding **CiLCA**, I have submitted my final two assignments to my new tutor and received feedback. I am currently making final adjustments ahead of submitting the full portfolio to SLCC next week.

In relation to the **Clock Tower**, I am pleased to report that the surveyor has signed off the structure as safe. We have located the clock hands and are now working to trace the mechanism, with assistance from Councillor Marshall. I remain committed to securing best value in our efforts to restore the tower to full working order.

The **Best Kept Village Award** was a significant achievement for the community. Plans for next year's entry are already underway. The £500 prize fund will be used initially to produce a banner celebrating the award, followed by a post-Christmas banner featuring all contributing groups and organisations. The fund will also cover the entry fee for next year and contribute towards prizes for the Highley in Bloom and Hanging Basket competitions, which was postponed from 2025.

The recent **allotment inspection** was attended by Tracy, Louise and Chris, whose time and support will be formally recognised. We have successfully negotiated tenancy adjustments, and for the first time, the allotments are generating an income for the Parish Council.

On **financial matters**, the Q2 VAT return and internal audit have been completed. I would like to thank Councillor Quinn for calculating the compounded interest on the Shropshire Council annual payments, and Pete and John for their continued scrutiny of the bank reconciliations.

Following the relaunch of the **Community Drop-In** last month, the event now has a regular presence on social media and is supported by electronic invitations and centralised service advertising. A case study file has been created to document the more complex resident support cases, and this is attached separately for review.

The **Remembrance Parade** has been organised in partnership with the PCC and other local groups, with the aim of fostering shared responsibility and community cohesion. Poppies have been installed throughout the

village and are looking excellent. However, replacement soldier statues are needed, and suggested designs are included in the supporting documents. Councillor Hancox has kindly offered to carry the standard on behalf of the Parish Council, and the wreath has been ordered for Chair Quinn to lay.

Work continues on the **bus shelter consultation**, with the steering group preparing for the public consultation scheduled to begin at the end of November. The consultation will be open to all residents, with particular emphasis on the 125 regular public transport users.

Finally, **actions** from the previous meeting have been progressed, including the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by Chair Quinn and the implementation of updated requests for the Drop-In.

May I also take this opportunity to thank those Councillors who offer considerable time and commitment to dedicate to attending working groups, external meetings, and community engagements outside of the monthly Full Council meeting. These contributions are essential to the progress and delivery of council initiatives, and without them, very little would be achieved.

Time is a valuable resource, and the willingness of members to give so generously of theirs is both recognised and deeply appreciated. It is important that this dedication is formally acknowledged. AP