

Brockworth Parish Council Annual Report 2020 to 2022

The past two years since the last annual parish meeting was held have been incredibly busy and seen significant changes and improvements made to both Brockworth Parish Council and the services and facilities it provides to local people.

As a Council we try and be as open and transparent as possible, members of the public are welcome to attend ALL council meetings and there is a dedicated agenda item for the public to raise any questions, local issues or matters of concern.

Full Council meets on the first Weds of the month, followed by Green Spaces & Environment on the 2nd Weds, Planning & Highways on the 3rd Weds and Community Services on the 4th Weds of the month. Human Resources and Policy & Finance meet less frequently as and when required. Our meeting calendar is available on noticeboards and our website.

Green Spaces and Environment

Our Green Spaces and Environment committee is responsible for the safe management of all council's outdoor spaces, our Climate change plans and any local environmental matters.

At Mill Lane Park a range of improvements have been introduced to improve site security including drop bollards at the entrance, enabling us to lock the carpark overnight reducing the impact of anti-social behaviour. We have also installed a new perimeter path around the entire site funded through s106. In March 2021 CCTV and new lighting was installed. The wooden play fort was removed due to the wooden timbers rotting and concerns about anti-social behaviour. The slide from the fort was recycled and fitted to the mound in the play area and new toddler swing seats have been installed along with a replacement springer in the toddler play area. Works have also been undertaken to better maintain our site boundaries and to plant wildflower seeds. Council has also consulted on improvements to play equipment, providing an outdoor gym and increasing bins, benches and shade on the site.

At Pound Farm Park a new fence has been installed along Green Way to make the site safer for children and a new junior mini FA standard football pitch created also using s106 funding. We have consulted on plans to install floodlights to the MUGA and to install CCTV to the site, along with improvements to play equipment and increasing bins and benches.

Council has renewed a seven year lease until 2029 for the Godfrey Browning Nature Reserve with a new management plan for the site and volunteers have undertaken work parties at both the nature reserve and Crosshands Meadow.

Council has undertaken its bi-annual tree safety survey which resulted in works being undertaken this winter to over 30 trees that required attention across all of our sites.

Several new benches have been installed in the Parish including two commemorative benches at the war memorial, one celebrating the work of the NHS and carers by the surgery at Abbotswood and a damaged bench was replaced at the corner of Green St and Green Way.

The Environment Working Group has been set up and it has been working hard to develop a local climate change action plan, hold volunteer work parties, undertaking community litter picks, introducing terra-cycling recycling point at the Community Centre, organising energy efficiency talks for local residents, developing a local repair cafe as well as organising wildflower, bulb and tree planting sessions.

Brockworth Cemetery continues to be a well used cemetery with 21 burials and 41 interments of ashes over the past 2 years. Council has drawn up a specification for cemetery improvements and has appointed a specialist architect to take us through the improvement project. We will be consulting on cemetery improvement plans shortly.

We will also be taking on new allotments as part of the Perrybrook development, this will be a significant project to design and build them into usable allotment provision for local people.

Planning & Highways

The Planning & Highways Committee have considered and commented upon 61 planning applications in 2020 and 76 in 2021, the majority of which were small household extensions. Council submitted detailed responses to several major applications including the new SEMH School at Mill Lane and strongly objected to the provision of 47 homes at the corner of the A46/A417 Perrybrook which was refused by Tewksbury Borough Council and is now subject to appeal.

We are currently considering the detailed application for phases 4 and 6 at Perrybrook which you have received further information about this evening. Council will discuss and respond to this application in more detail at the Committee to be held on 20th April.

We continue to liaise with developers to try and minimise the impact of development on the local community, responding to complaints (particularly about lorry movements), monitor how planning applications are built out and report breaches to Planning Enforcement at Tewkesbury Borough Council to investigate.

The Transport Working Group has been established and is working on the development of a Local Sustainable Transport Plan for Brockworth. The group have undertaken a residents survey, undertaken traffic counts and speed surveys, identified problem parking areas, undertaken an asset mapping exercise of our walking and cycling routes and gathered information on public transport usage and issues. All of this information is being used to look at what improvements we can do locally to travel and transport and can be used to evidence and push for change with developers, county council highways and other bodies responsible for our transport system.

Our Planning & Highways Committee also has responsibility for considering public rights of way matters and for our local heritage. The Committee have been exploring registering our local heritage assets as part of the Local Heritage Listing at Tewkesbury Borough Council.

Community Services

Our Community Services committee is responsible for Brockworth Community Centre, events, community engagement, youth services and all things community related.

Due to COVID the Community Centre has had a mixed few years, we stayed open throughout to act as a base for covid and community support activities, but many of our usual groups, hirers and activities were unable to meet due to lockdown restrictions. We are pleased to report however that usage and hire income have now returned and exceed pre-pandemic levels. Unfortunately we had to make the decision to close the café in Oct 2020 as it was no longer financially viable. We have replaced all of the lighting in the building to new energy efficient LEDs and switched our energy supplier to 100% renewable.

During the first year of COVID we provided free meals to the vulnerable and have continued to make welfare checks and coordinate volunteers who have been able to support residents with shopping, prescription collection and transport to medical appointments.

As a parish council we are very proud to fund our Youth Services, which are provided by B-Epic and Brockworth Link and operate from our dedicated youth centre. From the 1st April we are extending youth services into Coopers Edge and providing more staff and detached sessions to support more young people in Brockworth.

Each year the Parish Council makes funding available to support all the groups and organisations that work in Brockworth and providing an essential service. In 2020 we awarded 10 grants totalling just over £7000 and in 2021 9 groups received of £5000 of funding. Each year we also make contributions to the Citizens Advice Bureau to enable advice sessions for Brockworth residents and to Brockworth Library to support their running costs.

Despite COVID we have been able to organise several community events including a free outdoor cinema screening of Peter Rabbit 2 in September, several community open days and the Christmas Extravaganza. We have also funded and been awarded grant funding to provide Christmas lighting and extend this to the Court Road shops.

This year the Council has been working closely with the Food Larder to establish a food bank in Brockworth to meet the growing need in the area. It has been operating since January supporting local families and receiving donations from local people and local shops. We have successfully applied for funding to provide a storage container for the stock which will be based at the Community Centre.

Policy & Finance

Our Policy & Finance Committee is responsible for ensuring that council runs smoothly, that our finances are well managed and that we have all the necessary systems, procedures and policies in place.

Over the past 2 years we have been busy reviewing, updating and introducing policies and procedures to cover all aspects of the Council's work to ensure that we remain legally compliant and follow best practice.

Our CCTV system was installed in March 2021 at both the Community Centre and Mill Lane Park and we also have plans to extend the system to the cemetery and to Pound Farm Park. We have written a CCTV policy which sets out how the system is operated in accordance with strict data protection regulations. In the year it has been operating it has been checked 50 times following reported incidents and been used as evidence by the police 8 times and has captured 3 incidents of fly tipping, one of which led to a fixed penalty notice.

Letting people know what the parish council is doing and getting the views of local people on projects and key issues is very important to us, which is why we continue to produce regular newsletters delivered to every household and regularly post information on our website and social media accounts. We are currently working on a project to review, rewrite and update our website to make it more useful and user friendly and have replaced our finance and room booking systems to help us manage these areas better.

As a Council we have also been reviewing all the contracts we have in place for goods, services and maintenance to ensure that they provide the best possible value for money.

Each year the Council sets out its budget, which covers what we plan to spend on delivering services and facilities and how this will be funded. For 2021/22 financial year our budget is summarised below:

BUDGET 2021/22

Community Centre	£109,350
Open Spaces, Parks and Play	£277,300
Community Services	£25,250
Planning, Highways & Environment	£9,700
Council administration and staffing	£98,400
TOTAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET	£520,000

Funded from:

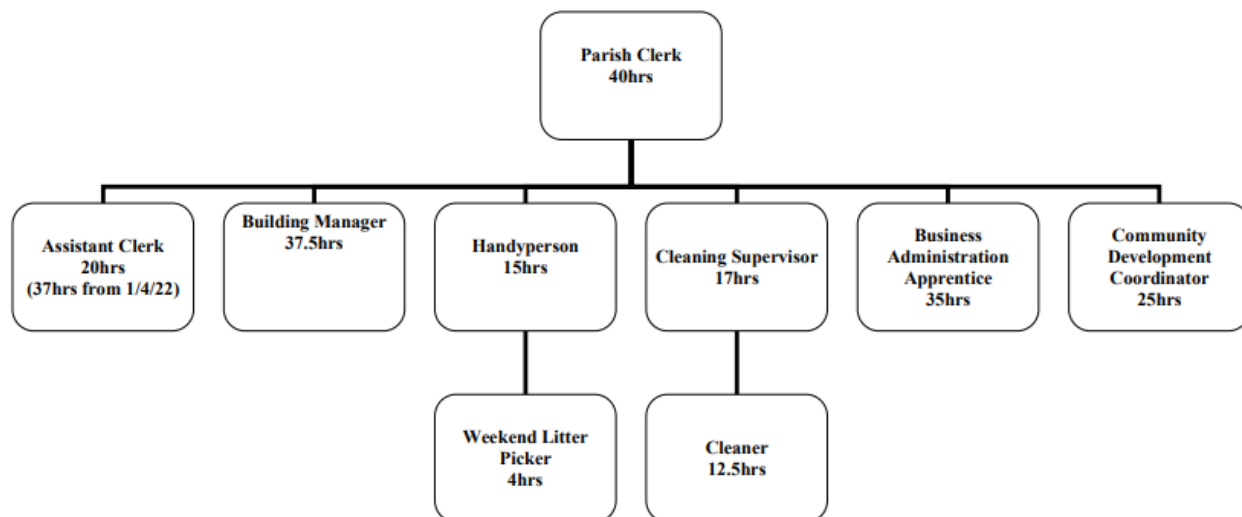
Use of Reserves	£25,800
Use of income	£58,450
Use of Grants/s106/CIL	£184,000
Council Tax	£251,740

We work hard to keep the amount of council tax that people pay as low as we can by using other sources of funding including income from fees and charges, external grant funding and money from developers (called s106 & CIL). The table below sets out how much council tax local people pay for the services provided by Brockworth Parish Council and how this has changed over the past few years.

	2019/20 Yr	2020/21 Yr	2021/22 Yr	2022/23 Yr
Precept (Council Tax)	£ 216,787.00	£ 216,787.00	£251,736.00	£264,500.00
Tax base (Number of households)	2639	2742	2898	2958
Band D per year	£82.13	£79.04	£86.87	£89.42
% change	3.08%	-3.76%	9.90%	3%
Amount change	£2.46	-£3.09	£7.83	£2.55

Human Resources

Our Human Resources Committee is responsible for all staffing matters and training for both staff and Councillors. Brockworth Parish Council employs nine staff to support the delivery of Council Services



Over the past 2 years we have worked hard to solidify and develop the staff team. At the beginning of March our new Community Development Coordinator started to help take forward lots of projects that will benefit the community. This post is being funded by the health authority and Tewkesbury Borough Council. We will also be welcoming a new Clerk shortly as our current Clerk Clare is leaving us in May.

We have also seen various changes to Councillors since the last annual parish meeting and we would like to thank the following Councillors who have served on Brockworth Parish Council during this time and have since stood down: Phil Crooks, Sara Stevens, Louise Gerrard, Mike Joynes, Summer Stevens, Wayne Stevens, Chris Evans, Chantal Ash, Nadia John, Ruth Hatton, Carol Neal and Susan Neal.

We currently have five vacancies to serve as Councillors on Brockworth Parish Council, so please do speak to us if you are interested in serving your community as a Councillor.

As Chairman I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Councillors that have served during this term of office and our dedicated staff team for all their hard work and contributions which have made all of this progress possible. Brockworth is a very strong community, made possible by the work of many volunteers who give up their time for the benefit of Brockworth and its many local community organisations and I would like to say a very special thank you to them all on behalf of Brockworth Parish Council for all your efforts.