



This is my first annual report as Chairman of Lawley and Overdale Parish Council and I am so proud of the resilience, compassion, love, care and support our community have shown and given during a very difficult past year with the Coronavirus Pandemic, lockdown's and having to be socially distanced from our loved ones. It is clear to say during this period of uncertainty that hope has prevailed within us all, as well as within our communities and I would like to give my heartfelt condolences, thoughts and prayers to those who have lost their lives to the pandemic and to those recovering from the virus from within our own communities, across the country and in all Nations across the world.



I would like to take the opportunity to thank all Parish Council staff working during these hard and difficult times. Your hard-work, dedication and commitment in supporting the community and Parish Councillors has not gone un-noticed and is greatly appreciated, especially during a time of sudden change in virtual working and establishing remote meetings and virtual events to continue the work we do for our communities.

To all Parish Councillors, I give thanks for your kind words, encouragement and support in my role as Chairman and for attending virtual meetings to enable the community to continue to be supported in times of need.

We now have an opportunity to look forward to a brighter future and to bring our community closer together again and that is why my vision for the Parish is along with healing and continuing to support our community during the Pandemic, to build bridges and continue with our engagement in bringing our community together as one and for a community facility to be established for all parish residents to benefit from and enjoy in the long-term.

I would like to take the opportunity to highlight some key engagements, events and acts of kindness showcased within our parish during the past year to highlight that even during difficult times that the community spirit was filled with acts of kindness, hope, love, support and sincerity to enrich all our lives.

Community Garden

Lawley and Overdale Parish Council took ownership of the community garden in 2017, on land leased from Telford & Wrekin Council. The community garden has been transformed over this period by the Parish Environmental Team, who have restocked flower beds, created a community herb garden, built raised beds, and put up bird and insect boxes. Local community groups, such as the Stay Project, Rainbows, Lawley Cubs and Lawley Childminders currently use some of the raised beds to grow their own vegetables and fruits. With lockdown restrictions now gradually easing, the community garden is certainly a good place to visit for everyone's health and wellbeing.

Laptops for Learning

Many families found it very hard to support their child's learning and education during lockdown, particularly when trying to use online learning programmes.

Although the Department of Education provided funding to local authorities, some children in the parish were unable to obtain the required devices or internet access.

In response to this, Ward Councillors contributed part of their funding, which the Parish Council agreed to match-fund and a combined total of £4,916.66 was granted towards Telford & Wrekin Council's Laptop for Learning Scheme, enabling laptops to be purchased and provided to two schools within our parish.

Breakfast Provision

The Parish Council was pleased to donate £500 to All Nations Church to assist them with the breakfast provision initiative following the closure of schools due to the pandemic.

During the first week some 40 parcels were distributed and by the second week of operation the demand had doubled. The extra support meant that more families were able to receive the much needed parcels.

Kindle Kindness

In response to Telford & Wrekin Council's request for support for its Kindle Kindness campaign, the Parish Council agreed to donate £1,000 towards the purchase of the devices.

The initiative aimed to provide those residents who live in care homes across the borough, along with patients at the Shropshire Woman and Children's Centre at the Princess Royal Hospital, a way to feel less isolated during lockdown.

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The devices meant that they could keep in touch with their families, access the internet, download books and play games and puzzles.

Lockdown and Support for the NHS and Key Workers

Lockdown had brought a number of challenges to us all this year, however, despite all the restrictions that this placed upon our community, people remained strong, supported the vulnerable where possible and kept their spirits up.

This was certainly evidenced with some of the amazing creations from parish residents, from paintings in windows, to handmade gifts for residents to collect on their daily walk. These were just a couple of the amazing efforts bringing a smile to everyone's faces.

The parish community also came together on a regular basis to provide their support to the NHS and all the keyworkers, by joining in with the 'weekly clap'. It was absolutely fantastic and great to hear the noise that was generated at 8.00pm across all parts of the parish.

Best Garden Competition

During Lockdown people across the parish found their gardens to be a source of comfort, helping to keep themselves busy, and to many people gardening has become a newfound passion.

It was great to see so many lovely gardens being entered into our Best Garden Competition.

Summer Fest

It was sad that the 2020 Summer Fest event was unable to take place due to the pandemic, and due to ongoing Covid restrictions and the uncertainty of where we will be, the 2021 event has also had to be cancelled. However, the Parish Council have plans for its return being bigger and better than ever to hold Summer Fest 2022 on Saturday 2nd July 2022, make a note in your diary!

Lawley Virtual 5K Fun Run/Get Active for Sienna

It was with great sadness that the 2020 Lawley 5k Fun Run had to be cancelled, however, in partnership with BVT and the Lawley Running Club, we were still able to host not one, but two virtual events instead.

The first being a Virtual 5k Fun Run with all money received going to our chosen race charity The Christmas Smile Project.

The second event 'Get Active for Sienna' was to raise money to support a young girl who attends a school in Lawley and who has a rare condition called Landau-Kleffner Syndrome.

Both event activities took place between 5th - 12th September. A big thank you to everyone that helped to contribute and raise:

- The Christmas Smile Project - £573.00
- Get Active for Sienna - £600.00

Lenny the Snake

Hundreds of residents contributed to 'Lenny the Lawley Snake'. A local resident began the project and decided to create a snake of decorated stones that children could add to and watch grow.

It originally started with just 5 stones and has been something really positive for children and adults to focus on and enjoy during lockdown.

The project also attracted the support of a local business to sponsor and who pledged to donate 50p to the NHS for every stone with Lenny made up of more than 500 stones of all shapes, sizes and colour.

VE/VJ Day Celebrations

Unfortunately, as the pandemic continued to sweep across the country, social distancing measures and the nationwide lockdown caused many events to be cancelled, including some across the parish.

The Parish Council still wanted to do something to honour the veterans who fought for Britain in WW2 however, and so promoted socially distanced street parties, the 'Toast the Nation's Heroes Event', and encouraged the community to decorate their homes. Many residents decorated their homes for VE Day and the community spirit was prevalent to see with many acts of remembrance.

Remembrance Day

Sadly we were unable to hold a Remembrance Day last year at the War Memorial due to the coronavirus restrictions in place at the time.

Instead, the Parish Council produced a 'virtual' Act of Remembrance including the laying of wreaths which was streamed on social media platforms on Remembrance Day, Sunday 8 November and also on Armistice Day, Wednesday 11 November.

The War Memorial in Lawley is a wonderful, peaceful and key place in our community for us all to reflect and commemorate all those who served.

Lamppost Poppies

Like so many events and acts of remembrance, the Poppy Appeal had to adapt to the threat of coronavirus without the usual army of volunteers selling poppies, however we were still able to have our stunning display of lamppost poppies across the parish which was a sight that I'm sure lifted the hearts of many to see.

Raj

Councillor Raj Mehta

Chairman

