

Handforth Town Council Chairman's Report for Annual Town Meeting 03rd May 2022.

Handforth Parish Council becomes Handforth Town Council on 01st August 2021

According to government documents the distinction between a village and a town is not based on the population size or the number of homes, but the density. A document entitled 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for Small Area Geographies explores when a village becomes a town.

It states: "The distinction between a 'village' and a 'town' is based on settlement form rather than population size.

"Where property forms part of a village, there need only be another 35 dwellings within 800 metres to be termed a village."

"Where a dwelling forms part of a town there must be at least 500 other dwellings within 800 metres."

Handforth meets that criterion.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

At the last Town meeting of 1st June 2021, we advised about the recommendations of the CEC Governance Committee. This suggested that the Handforth Parish Council amalgamate with Wilmslow and Chorley councils. At the HPC meeting of 16th March 2021 council voted against the merger. A period of consultation by CEC commenced online. Handforth councillors also canvassed residents via a form delivered to Handforth households requesting support in voting against this proposal. Councillors also spent Saturday mornings for 6 weeks in the Paddock requesting the support of residents.

In November 2021, part of The Honford Star which, according to CEC Ward Cllr Burkhill, was produced by him and ex Cllrs Tolver and Brewerton explaining how Handforth would be much better off being controlled from Wilmslow and having decisions of how to spend Handforth funds being made by Wilmslow Cllrs.

Handforth residents saw through this.

There were 1128 responses from Handforth residents. 510 direct to CEC online and 617 via the HTC leaflet. To ensure propriety, signatures and postcodes were recorded on the leaflet. Of the 510 online, 437 or 86% were against the merger. Of the 617 leaflets, 591 or 96% were against the merger.

It should be noted that of the 4800 total responses received by CEC, the 1128 submitted by Handforth residents represent 23.5% of the total. This shows how strongly residents felt about remaining independent. A significant message to Cllr Burkhill and his associates.

On Wednesday 27th April at a special meeting of the full council, Cheshire East Cllrs took a final vote on the matter. The independence of Handforth was part of a vote to accept the recommendations of the Sub Committee to allow Handforth to maintain independence. Of our 2 CEC Ward Cllrs, Cllr Julie Smith voted for the recommendations for Handforth to remain independent,

Cllr Burkhill voted against Handforth remaining independent, even though the numbers in the consultation were published weeks ago showing the strength of Handforth views against amalgamation. Evidently totally out of touch with Handforth residents. The magnitude of the response to the CEC consultation by Handforth residents made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for CEC to ignore.

Handforth Youth Centre to become Handforth Community Centre

Discussions were held with officers from CEC in 2016/7 regarding the transfer of control of HYC to HPC. Various delays were experienced but the transfer is once again being discussed seriously with CEC legal officers. HTC has authorised discussions to take place with CEC

Handforth currently does not have a community centre and it is hoped that by bringing HYC under HTC control, the facilities can be enhanced and secure a Community Centre for all residents to benefit from. When any concrete information is available, that will be presented to full council

Once again, the Honford Star of November 2021 issued by Cllr Burkhill, Mr Tolver and Mr Brewerton has made certain incorrect assertions regarding this issue. The main item being the statement that the annual running costs of the building would be £75,000. This is a fabricated number. For comparison purposes, if it was £75,000 that would still be £10,000 less than Cllr Burkhill, Mr Tolver and Mr Brewerton have caused CEC to pay in external legal fees.

The running costs have been identified as in the region of £50,000. I agree that this is a considerable amount. What the Honford Star writers have failed to understand is that there is currently revenue of £35 – 40,000 per annum.

This means that Handforth gains a Community Centre for an annual cost of £15,000. Cost per household less than £5 per year.

AVENSURE

Regular attendees at HTC meetings will be familiar with this item. Cllr Burkhill, and the then Cllrs Tolver and Brewerton agreed an unauthorised contract with a company to investigate the Clerk. They then found that the contract agreed did not perform as required. They then sought to pass this contract and the costs onto the council.

The company has been threatening legal action against HTC for £8000. HTC has responded via legal advisors.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

- **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

As of 2021, Cheshire Police no longer perform traffic management on Remembrance Sunday to facilitate a safe parade. HTC has now taken responsibility for the costs via a traffic management contractor.

- **MEMORIAL MANAGEMENT**

HTC will be taking overall responsibility for maintenance etc of the War Memorial.

XMAS EVENTS

- **PANTOMIME**

2 performances of a pantomime took place last December. A very popular event for the children.

- **XMAS FAIR & LIGHTS SWITCH ON**

Yet again hundreds of Handforth residents attended the Fair and Xmas Lights switch on in The Paddock Shopping Centre. The switch on was performed by Handforth school children competition winners ably assisted by Jackie Weaver.

LITTER PICKS

- **INCREASING NUMBERS & EQUIPMENT**

Litter picks have been organised by HTC. The numbers of residents attending, has increased each time a litter pick is organised. The numbers of adults and extremely keen children have continued to increase each time. From the first which attracted around 15 - 20 people to more than 70 at the most recent which collected 50 black bags of litter. HTC has continued to fund the purchase of litter pickers and hi-vis jackets.

- **SKIP DAYS**

Rubbish Skips have been funded by HTC and Onward Housing. These have proved very popular and have been placed in different areas of Handforth. No suitable available space was identified for the South Ward so the skip was located on the Youth Centre car park. Given that each skip is usually full, this is clearly a useful exercise for Handforth residents

- **NEW BINS AND NOTICE BOARDS**

Residents will notice some new Notice Boards around Handforth, and some new bins. Should residents identify a location for a new bin, please advise Ashley the Town Clerk.

- **STREET SIGNS IMPROVEMENTS**

Street signs do become damaged and have been replaced. Again, please identify any problem signs to Ashley.

- **BREAKFAST CLUB**

HTC is making a contribution to the Handforth Grange Breakfast Club.

- **GRANTS**

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| Bare Necessities | Toiletries for the homeless or in need |
| Cycle Wilmslow | Cycle map incorporating Handforth |
| 1 st Handforth Scouts | New tents |
| Handforth Library | Summer Reading Challenge |
| Handforth Model Engineering Society | Contribution towards new sheds |
| St Benedict's Primary School | Bug hotels |
| Handforth Grange Primary School | SEN Safe Play Area |
| Oakenclough Children's Centre | Contribution to Café set up costs |

- **QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE AWARDS**

Handforth Junior/Senior/SEN Youth Club and Friends of Stanley Hall Park – Joint event.

Friends of Handforth Station

St. Benedict's Primary School

1st Handforth Scouts

Mobility Access Group

Residents of Pickmere Rd

Gwyneth Morley Court Residents

Handforth Grange Primary School

Richmond Avenue Jubilee Team

Deanview Residents Association

Ferndale Residents

Hurlbote Close Residents

We are fortunate to have a very reliable and responsive HTC Handyman.

We are also fortunate to have PCSO Harding as Handforth's police presence.

Please keep up to date with events and meetings of HTC via the notice boards, the Handforth Town Council website, and Facebook Pages

Cllr John Smith

Chairman

Handforth Town Council