



**PRESALL TOWN COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020**

Mayor's Report

Well, what a year! We entered 2019 as the Best Kept Large Village in Lancashire and a Gold Medal holder in the NW in Bloom competition. Sadly, we very quickly had to say goodbye to Gordon McCann, a dear friend and fellow councillor of long standing. It was local election time in May and the 'old guard' stood down - Jean Mutch after 43 years of service, Rosina Lawson after 34 years and Rodney Black with 15 years under his belt; Tom Reilly after 4½ years also did not stand for re-election. We planted trees in Jean and Rosina's honour in the Jubilee Garden. A new set of six councillors joined us and training was the order of the day. I am heartened by the enthusiasm and proactivity of all the new members.

Back in 2008 I started councillor surgeries in the library and I am pleased to say that the new team of councillors has embraced the idea and can be found in the library every week on a rota system to ensure face-to-face contact is maintained with the public. In addition, our clerk also hosts a session once a month as well as maintaining our website and monthly contributions to the 'green book'.

During the year, the council signed up to the tree charter and joined authorities all over the country in declaring a climate emergency, meaning any chance to plant trees will be explored and all issues will be debated with regard to the environmental impact of any decisions.

The firming-up of a committee system and adoption of a new accountancy system are starting to pay dividends in certain areas of our work, as they are conducted with better scrutiny and professionalism, also freeing up time at full council meetings.

I would like to have listed here some of the projects completed throughout the year but owing to staff sickness, a lack of local tradesmen willing to commit to work and the very slow turnaround of other authorities when requests are made for permission to do things, I cannot. But I can say a backlog of little and not so little projects is now set to be tackled over the coming weeks.

This year yet again saw an excellent gala and a brilliant community turnout for the Christmas lights switch-on, along with magnificent attendances on Remembrance Day and for the Commonwealth raising the flag ceremony. On behalf of us all I wish to thank the volunteers who work year-round to ensure these events occur and in fact volunteers of all kinds who enable club societies, topic groups and the like to flourish and enrich the lives of all our residents.

I will say no more than Brexit was the hot topic of conversation for much of the year.

The civic year should have ended with our VE Day 75 Picnic in the Park event featuring free entertainment by local musicians and artists, but sadly this had to be cancelled because of the dreaded Covid-19. Here I say the biggest of thank-yous on behalf of all those who have in whatever way received help during the lockdown to the band of helpers/carers and volunteers who have gone the extra mile to look out for their neighbours, but then your actions are no more than I would have expected from our wonderful community. We all send our thoughts to anyone who has suffered a loss during this period; thankfully, so far the numbers are extremely small, but that does not diminish the impact those losses will have had on the affected families. A big thank-you also to all our NHS workers, care workers and frontline workers who have carried on throughout under trying conditions, and to local tradespeople and our local shopkeepers, who have all risen to the

challenge of trying to make our existence as normal as can be in such trying times. Let us not forget these businesses when things get back to normal.

Full council meetings have been suspended for the time being, but the finance committee has continued to operate on Zoom. Finally, many thanks to our clerk, who has continued to work right through despite personal and family health issues.

Stay safe folks.

Cllr Phil Orme

Finance

The Town Council is responsible for proper accounting records, safeguarding the assets and taking steps to prevent fraud and other irregularities and a prudent level of reserves. There are accounting policies and procedures in place to mitigate exposure to major risk, which are reviewed annually. Councillors believe they make reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates. The accounts are a matter of public information and can be viewed at any time.

Receipts and Payments Account for Preesall Town Council

| Receipts | 2019/20 | | Payments |
|--|---------|--------|------------------------|
| Balances brought forward (including reserves) | £95353 | £48757 | Staff costs |
| Precept | £97560 | £608 | Mayor/Civic |
| Grants/donations | £3982 | £21360 | Community Expenditure |
| VAT Refund | £2629 | £500 | Training |
| Recharges | £24 | £2328 | Parish maintenance |
| Other | £155 | £2227 | Office costs |
| In Bloom | £1425 | £3005 | Governance |
| Civic | £693 | £6395 | In Bloom |
| Interest | £65 | £3916 | Sundry (inc £3564 VAT) |
| | 201886 | £89096 | |

Balance to carry forward as at 31st March 2020 - £112790

The Town Council accounts were audited in April 2020.

The Parish Precept

The Parish Precept is the amount of money which the Town Council receives from Wyre Council to pay for the services it provides. This amount is raised by Wyre Council as that part of your Council Tax relating directly to the Town Council area. In other words, Wyre Council collects this on our behalf.

The way we calculate the precept is as follows:

Each year, just before Christmas, the Town Council produces an estimate of its likely **expenditure** for the forthcoming year (eg. staff costs, parish maintenance, community projects). This will also include an amount to cover the costs of any urgent projects that may be required in the area.

We also estimate our likely **income** for the same period (eg the VAT refund, Festive Lighting Grant). The difference between the two figures forms the basis of our precept calculation, which we submit to Wyre Council. In 2019/20 our precept was £97560.

Alison May, Responsible Financial Officer

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