

Chairman's Annual Report for 2024 - 2025

From Councillor Peter Richardson the Chairman for May 2024 to May 2025:

I would like to start by thanking all of the Parish Councillors who stood for re-election on the 1st May 2025. Oswestry Rural Parish Council was formed in 1894 following the Local Government Act and has a total of 15 Councillors -- 5 Councillors for Morda with Sweeney Ward, 4 for Trefonen with Treflach, 3 for Maesbury with Aston, 2 for Rhydycroesau with Lanforda and 1 in Sychtyn. For the first time in the 131 years the Council has been operating we had our first contested election in Morda with Sweeney with 6 candidates standing for the 5 available seats. The sitting Parish Councillor who lost their seat, Cllr William Jones was co-opted at the annual general meeting of the council which had to take place within 14 days of the election and took place on the 15th May in Trefonen. All Councillors signed their acceptance of office and the new Chairman and Vice Chairman were elected for the forthcoming year. All Councillors also had to submit any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests to the monitoring officer at Shropshire Council and these can be seen on their website.

Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers who give up their time to give something back to the wards they represent. We said goodbye to Councillors Chris Woods who resigned, and Steve Watts and Paul Milner who did not stand in the election. We said hello to Councillor Andy Davis who was successful in the Morda election and was also elected as a Shropshire Councillor for the St Oswald Division that covers the ORPC area. There are currently 4 vacancies for Councillors, 3 in Trefonen with Treflach and 1 in Rhydycroesau and Lanforda and those who have come forward to be co-opted will be considered at the next full meeting of the council, which is on Thursday 26th June. The majority of parish councillors are independent and there is no place for party politics at parish level.

Parish Council meetings are held in public and we would encourage members of the public to attend and raise any concerns they have relating to items on the agenda. Sadly, attendance at meetings is very low unless there is a contentious planning application and then attendance is good but then drops off again. Scrutinising planning applications is one of the main functions of the council and whatever the council decides is to best represent the wishes of the residents in the area.

We have been successful in having a speed limit introduced in Coed y Go at 40mph that was fully funded by the Parish Council at significant cost and the vehicle activated speed signs in Trefonen and Maesbury are working well to encourage drivers to obey the speed limits when driving through the villages, also funded by the parish council. We also maintain all of the defibrillators scattered around the parish and all of the Parish assets including notice boards, green spaces, bus shelters and benches. The old water pump at Aston Square is also a parish asset very much in need of renovation but trying to find a suitable restorer is proving very difficult.

The Parish Council is acutely aware that we are funded by the precept paid by households in the Parish along with some grant funding and Community Infrastructure Levy paid by housing developers. We account for every penny spent and are audited each year to make sure we are spending your money in an effective way to benefit the communities we represent. All

decisions involving parish funds is discussed by the full council and voted on by the full council. We are also fortunate that our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer is also a qualified accountant. Any suggestions for community projects should be passed to your local ward Councillors or the Clerk for consideration by the full council

The council has personnel and finance committees and working groups covering road safety, the environment and Trefarclawdd Cemetery. The road safety group saw the 40mph speed limit introduced in Coed y Go and is monitoring other areas within the parish. The environment group has been testing the quality of the waterways in the parish, which are all very toxic, the monthly results are published on our website, they also monitor the industrial dairy unit at Trefarclawdd Farm owned by Yareal Estates that is trying to double in size to 1000 dairy cows that never go outside. They also cover environmental issues in other parts of the parish. The cemetery working group has updated the layout at the cemetery and plans for a new car park funded by the Parish Council are progressing well. The Clerk is also thanked for ensuring all of the legal requirements relating to internments at the cemetery are fully covered and documented. Councillors volunteer for these groups and committees and give their time and expertise freely and I would like to thank them for their commitment.

Parish grant awards for worthy causes within the parish are available each year and these have been issued for the 2024-25 year. The Community Service Award has been renamed as the Tonys' award in recognition of the 2 Parish Councillors who have died whilst being in service to the council, these are Tony Cheetham and Tony Milner. Members of the public are encouraged to nominate members of their community to receive this award, which is presented each year to a worthy recipient.

Finally, I would like to thank all Councillors for their support to me over the last year and especially the Clerk, Kathryn is an excellent clerk and a valuable asset to the Parish Council. I wish the new Chairman and Vice Chairman every success with my support for the coming year.

Thank you.



Cllr Peter Richardson
May 2025