

## Ercall Magna Annual Parish Meeting - 16 Apr 24

### Chairman's Report 2023 - 2024

1. This has been another busy year for your parish council, with some successes but also some frustration at the lack of progress with some projects. Residents are always welcome to attend meetings of the parish council, which are held monthly (less August) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Agendas and minutes of council meetings are published on the Parish Council's website. This evening, I will update on 4 topics of interest.

#### Governance and Electoral Changes

2. Following a boundary review carried out by T&WC in 2022, some boundaries were changed prior to last May's local elections. Ercall Magna Parish was divided into 2 wards, Roden Ward - comprising Roden, Poynton & Poynton Green and High Ercall Ward - comprising the remainder of the parish. The number of councillors in each ward is allocated pro rata, based on the number of electors, giving 2 for Roden Ward and 11 for High Ercall Ward. At the same time, the Roden Ward of EMP was moved into Wrockwardine Ward of T&WC. This means that residents of the Roden Ward are now served by the Wrockwardine Ward Member on T&WC, while High Ercall Ward residents continue to fall within the Ercall Magna Ward. The Wrockwardine Ward Member, Cllr Gareth Thomas, attends EMPC meetings whenever he can and raises issues affecting the Roden Ward with T&WC as necessary.

3. Further changes are possible, as T&WC is currently conducting a community governance review within the Borough. This is examining arrangements at parish level and may result in changes to current parish structures and boundaries. Although the results of the review should be published this autumn, any changes will be made at the May 2027 local elections, giving ample time for any transitional arrangements to be made.

#### Planning

4. I am pleased to report that the Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan was formally accepted by T&WC last October, following strong support at a public referendum in September last year. The NDP now effectively form part of the T&WC Local Plan and must be considered when determining planning applications within our parish. Our neighbourhood plan was put to good use shortly after being accepted in providing evidence that supported the planning authority's decision to refuse planning permission for houses on the site of Piddock's Paddock in High Ercall, which is designated as a Local Green Space for its historical and environmental merits.

5. While the parish council does not make planning decisions, we are consulted on planning applications and aims to provide coherent and well-reasoned comments policies on applications, ensuring that the best interests of the parish and its residents are strongly represented. One such example is the current application to build a poultry unit at Ellerdine Grange Farm. EMPC has engaged with the applicant and with residents opposed to the proposal, as well as with the planning officer, to try and ensure that all relevant details are exposed and considered before the application is determined. The parish council has requested that the application is put to the T&WC Planning Committee rather than being decided under delegated authority. We await a decision on this request.

6. The future of the Cleveland Arms continues to be a source of great frustration. Having had permission for change of use, from public house to residential, refused by the LPA, the pub's owners lodged an appeal with the Planning Inspectorate last year. A public hearing was held in Wellington in the summer, at which the Parish Council (and others) provided evidence in support of the LPA's decision. The Planning Inspector rejected the appeal, confirming that the building should retain its status as a community social facility. Since the end of 2023, EMPC has sought to help prospective buyers by having the building's condition and value reappraised. The owners have chosen not to grant access to the valuer appointed by EMPC, but have asked that potential purchasers contact the owners directly. We continue to liaise with interested parties in the hope that a sale may eventually be agreed.

### Highways

7. Overall, progress with improvements to roads within the parish remains painfully slow. Important highways projects, including safety improvements to the B5062 through Roden and resurfacing work to Shrewsbury Road in High Ercall, have not progressed, despite considerable pressure from the parish council and the Ward Members. The highways authority reports that Shrewsbury Road is included in the programme of works for this FY and that a revised scheme the Roden scheme is being revised to take account of local residents' inputs. Further public consultation on the latest version will be required. Assuming the revised proposals are accepted, this work should also be carried out in the current FY. EMPC will continue to monitor and will apply pressure if necessary

8. On a more positive note, SIDs are in use at several locations across the parish to monitor traffic speed. There are locations for a mobile indicator which rotates between Poynton, High Ercall, Ellerdine Heath, Cold Hatton and Cotwall as well as a permanent SID on Shrewsbury Road in High Ercall. As well as indicating to drivers whether they are driving at excessive speed, these devices record traffic data even when the display is inactive. This allows traffic speeds to be compared with and without the display in use. Early indications are that the display has a positive effect in reducing speed while the data gathered can be shared with the police and highways authority if required to support future speed calming measures.

### Emergency Planning and Community Resilience

9. Over the winter, members of EMPC attended a number of workshops held by T&WC dealing with emergency planning and response to incidents. Although EMPC has no formal responsibility or powers in relation to incidents, it is prudent to develop a framework to aid our response to any future events (natural or man-made). This work has recently started and will involve consultation with individuals and organisations across the parish as the project matures.

Cllr Kevin Connor OBE  
Chairman  
EMPC

16 April 2024