

ANNUAL REPORT
Ercall Magna Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting – April 2025

I will begin with my usual thanks to everyone in the Ward, for their continued support through the year.

Being elected to represent, is both an honour and a privilege, however it is not something that can be done with the support of the Parish Council and residents.

Therefore, my thanks also go to my family, the Clerk, and the Parish Councillors.

They are a body of local residents, who give their time voluntarily, often without thanks for the services they provide and time (often out of normal working hours) and without remuneration on behalf of the residents, sometimes without their knowledge to ensure the community is not ignored, neglected or deprived.

As for my activities on behalf of you all, these are similar to previous years – the issues remain around planning & enforcement, potholes and speed, fly tipping and litter, road maintenance, policing and public transport.

On the point of policing, it was reported recently about the restructuring of our area and the possible changes to the role of the PCSOs and Rural Support Team – what this could mean for our rural areas will be a loss of a regular presence and no visible patrols after 8pm. This I find disappointing, and whilst I have had the conversation with the Police & Crime Commissioner, these decisions are taken at an operation command level.

I wish to record my thanks, and on behalf of the residents in the Ercall Magna Ward, to PCSO Ivan Collumbell, for his services to our community in recent years. He is dedicated to the role and the area and we are able to rely on him for his honesty, commitment and understanding. His attendance around the area and at many events, including our schools, has been much appreciated and recognised as an important part of the role.

2025 brings the 80th Anniversary of the end of WWII, whilst this is a period of celebration, for a time regarded by many as the darkest in our history, I believe it is important we also reflect on what many served and died for, our freedom and democracy, our right to vote to elect, how we can speak openly without fear of repercussions and how we have the right to be involved in how we shape our own destiny.

Currently, there are two ongoing reviews and consultations

1. The Community Governance Review - The proposed changes to parish & town council boundaries and the number of elected representatives. The closing date has now passed, but there will be a further consultation on the draft proposals later in the year. The changes, when agreed, will be implemented from the 2027 elections.

2. The TW Local Plan – this will shape how, and where development will happen between now and 2040. Currently it is proposed that the majority of new residential housing will be in the northern rural part of the Borough with large scale development having a significant effect on highways, transport, services, facilities and most importantly drainage – all this drastically affecting the landscape.

This will also put greater pressure on the current (inadequate) infrastructure – our rural roads, including the A442 and B5062 / 3 are already unable to cope with the current traffic numbers and size. This consultation ends on 5th May, it is important to have your say – don't leave it to someone else. The Plan will be sent to the Inspector – they want to know the local views.

I am pleased to have been able to assist many local residents with individual matters and provide some funding for local projects and initiatives.

I look forward to working with you all, again, through 2025 and 2026.

Councillor Stephen Bentley