



Chairman's Annual Report 2009

It is the time when we must look back and see if we have made the lives of individuals in Ketley better by our actions and to see if the targets that were set have been achieved.

This time last year it was hoped that the playing field would be completed in time for local people to use it for football matches but as feared the work actually has taken way longer than was anticipated. It was also hoped that we as a Parish would have some certainty over ownership of the Community Centre and therefore be in a position to put together funding to convert two unused buildings on the premises for changing rooms. However after sixteen months of very frustrating 'discussions' we have less being offered than at the start of the process. I can honestly say that the attitude of Telford & Wrekin Council, in the guise of Mr. Steve Wellings, has bemused me. Ketley Parish Council has worked tirelessly within the last year to get the situation sorted to no avail. The same is true for the Youth Centre. On the positive side both Centres are now flourishing with a steadily increasing usage. Within this last year we have managed to cut the subsidy which we have historically put into our Community Centre. At the same time we are delivering a huge variety of different activities which our local residents can, and do, take part in. Some 600 people regularly use the Community Centre and some 120 people make use of the Youth Centre each week. In all we are now getting towards 1000 different people using the facilities. This provides links within our community which were not there before and can only be good for the long term health of our Parish.

The Garden of Rest has taken up much deliberation this year and will hopefully lead to a system in place which will guarantee the long term viability of this valuable asset. It is maintained beautifully and receives much praise and appreciation.

The footpaths, lights and other services we as a Parish try and maintain have all been kept from deteriorating too much and discussions have taken place throughout the year on ways to improve these too. Yet again Waterloo Road South has been sadly maltreated and unsatisfactory.

The playing field is at last being finished and is very well used and is looking really good. Discussions have been ongoing towards the Parish taking a more hands on involvement with the open spaces within Ketley but as ever it seems to take an eternity. Paddock Mound is well used and the new picnic bench popular. The paddocks have been raised by T&W as a building site but the Parish has made it very clear that this will be strongly opposed. The application was going to be submitted in February or March but it has not appeared yet.

It is not good for Ketley to have so much of our Parish covered by proposed building sites. The Millennium site, the old petrol station site, the KN site, the old S&N structures site and others are all on hold. This amounts to about 30% of all open space left in Ketley. This has a destabilising effect and starts to make the area look run down. You only have to look at the Hartshill Nursery and Walker Tech sites to know how bad this can get. We do not need another building site.

It has been another frustrating year in respect of gaining proper play facilities for our young people but towards the latter part of this year we have at last seen real movement. The Multi-use games area has at last been started and realization that the south side of our Parish is desperate for provision has been gained with a site being readied for consultation. Not only that but perhaps a little movement in upgrading facilities in Sandbrook.

The role of young people in our community and how to allow them more access into decision making processes has developed. The various youth clubs make a huge difference but the biggest difference has been made by a youth club member becoming a councilor. This has shown that there is point taking part and several other young people are now involved in meetings and courses which will lead to further involvement.

The Millennium Village has effectively been put on hold and one great disappointment has been the attitude of Taylor Wimpey towards the Trust which has, in reality, ceased its activity and not undertaken its statutory responsibilities.

The newsletter has reached our residents regularly and provides an important means of communicating. The website has been less well maintained but since we have had a full compliment of workforce this is now improving.

PACT meetings are not well attended and are not yet serving a need within the community.

It has been a good year for gaining closer contacts with other agencies supporting people in Ketley and the joint meetings between the churches, school and ourselves have been productive. Closer ties with different T&W agencies are also now bearing fruit. The ongoing ties with WEA and TCAT are also good for all parties doing far more than merely creating and delivering courses and long may they continue. The efforts of those who run the ever increasing number of private courses or activities have also added greatly to the quality of this centre and they too are really appreciated.

The Parish Clerk and Centre Manager have worked their socks off and without whom this parish would be much the poorer and the centres not function.

The Parish Council meetings have been very well attended, conducted in a spirit of cooperation and good will and have resulted in positive outcomes from every meeting and I thank every councilor for their support and efforts. It is true to say that all councilors, workforce, volunteers, WEA, TCAT and residents have all played a part in making this a good year for Ketley and without any one of them the achievements would have been far less.

So all in all it has been a successful year but with lots to do for next year. The people of Ketley probably do not realise what value they are getting nor how slowly but surely their quality of life is being improved. If we keep improving the quality for different individuals gradually the quality improves for all. I feel that this coming year will see huge steps forward for this parish. Hopefully steps forward without the battling that has taken place for the last two years. The battling does drain energy that could otherwise be put towards other positive outcomes for Ketley and its residents.

Martin Young, Chairman, Ketley Parish Council, 7th May 2009