

BURNTWOOD ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

15 MAY 2008



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Following the 2007 elections and the change in the political profile of the Town Council, it is a pleasure to say as Chairman of the Council that all elected Members have worked constructively together for the good of the town. Debates at Council meetings have been robust at times but always good-natured when different opinions have been taken into account and consensus reached. I have enjoyed chairing and being part of the meetings of Burntwood Town Council over the last year.

Our Council meetings and internal organisation have benefited from having a full time Town Clerk. The move to our new Council Offices in Lambourne House was completed on time and without too many problems. A Council presence on the high street rather than being out of sight behind the library has been beneficial to residents and we are visibly there to deal with any enquiries. We are in the process of establishing a Burntwood Town Council web site which will also widen access to the Council and improve information flow.

The Council has recently completed and forwarded an application to be awarded Quality Parish Council status. We are fairly confident that the Council now meets the necessary criteria and we look forward to receiving accreditation later this year.

The 2007 Burntwood Wakes was a great success. For the first year since the Wakes restarted, the weather was good and this helped to make the event so very enjoyable and possibly the best yet. Thanks are due to all the elected Members, officers and community groups who worked together to make it happen. Sincere thanks are also due to those who sponsored the Wakes. Their contributions really had a big effect on the overall size and success of the event.

Preparations are well in hand for this year's Burntwood Wakes and again we are all hoping for good weather. The Town Council has decided that this year's Burntwood Wakes will still be a free event. However, the costs of the Wakes are very large for a Council of our size and implementation of a small charge for the Saturday evening event may well be considered for next year.

The Town Council has decided to re-launch the Burntwood in Bloom competition and we hope that as many residents as possible will enter. There are categories for all, ranging from complete gardens to single containers and hanging baskets. Entries need to be in by next month and winners will be announced at a special event in September.

As Chairman of the Town Council I hosted the two traditional annual civic events, the Town Council's Carol Service and its Civic Service. I thank Reverend David Weaver and the Christ Church community for welcoming us to Christ Church and for providing two such joyous occasions. These services presented the town of Burntwood in a very good light and it was pleasing to see so many local organisations represented at the services as well as neighbouring parish councils and district and county members. There was also a special civic event this year, when in partnership with Lichfield District Council, the Town Council hosted a reception for Chasetown Football Club to commemorate their historic 2007/2008 FA Cup run. Mementos were presented to the players and club management.

During the year, Mary and I have had the privilege of representing Burntwood on over fifty occasions. Our thanks go to the Vice-Chairman, Councillor John Walker MBE, who agreed to attend when we were unable to do so. Thanks to John's help no civic invitation was turned down. I would also like to record my thanks to John for saying prayers at Council meetings as substitute for my not appointing a chaplain for this year.

My charities for the year have been St Giles' Hospice and the local branch of the Alzheimer's Society. Thanks to the generosity of prize givers, donors and ticket buyers about £1,250 has been raised to be shared between the two charities.

It may be an old fashioned thing to say, but it really has been an honour and a privilege to be Chairman of Burntwood Town Council over the last year. I thank everyone who has helped to make my Chairman's year so enjoyable and I wish my successor an equally happy year.

COUNCILLOR DR W. F. HASSELL
CHAIRMAN 2007/08
BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL