



### Parish Clerk's Report – 26 January 2021

- **Budgeting and Finance**

Councillors should be aware of the significant pressure placed upon our new Responsible Finance Officer, Caroline Higgins, since her appointment. Working with unfamiliar finance systems, receiving no face-to-face handover, getting to grips with the intricacies of the Council's operation, the loss of the Council's appointed Internal Auditor and needing to catch-up on many outstanding invoices and similar, Caroline has managed to get us to where we are now with great skill and good grace, a point that should be noted.

- **Allotments**

It is usual that the allotment holders would have received their annual invoices at this time of year. However, with the pressures of organising the budgets etc, it is not considered a priority at this time.

- **Laptops for schools etc**

There has been no update on this item from Telford and Wrekin. The Clerk will give a verbal update, should anything come to light between the date of this paper and the meeting.

- **Service Level Agreements**

Having raised the relationships that the Parish Council has with Brookside Big Local and Brookside Central, at the last meeting, progress is being made to clarify matters relating to both organisations. While work on this is ongoing, it is intended that a paper will result from this activity which will be presented at a future Council meeting for consideration.

In parallel with this work, the Deputy Clerk and I have been providing support to staff in both organisations to help work through current pressures.

- **COVID-19**

Councillors will remember that I emailed out my plans for dealing with the current COVID-19 lockdown in terms of staff working schedules etc. These seem to be working well.

- **Office space**

Quotes have been sought for the creation of an office within the main office at the Sambrook Centre, as discussed at the last meeting. No figures have come back to me yet. Should figures be submitted between the writing of this paper and the meeting, I will report them accordingly. Provision for this has been included in the 2021/22 budget.

- **Contract review**

Further to the discussion at the last meeting, the costs of the contract review that was agreed have been incorporated into the 2021/22 budget.

- **Community Action Team**

A verbal report will be given on this in the meeting

- **Winter Coats Scheme**

A verbal report will be given on this in the meeting

**Michael Turner**

*Parish Clerk*

20 January 2021