

# Colwich Parish Council



LOCAL COUNCIL  
AWARD SCHEME  
FOUNDATION

## ANNUAL REPORT 2022 – 2023



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## Introduction

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Colwich Parish Council covers the villages of Colwich, Little Haywood, Great Haywood, Wolseley Bridge and Bishton. The Council has 14 members, elected every four years, who are split between the two wards of Little Haywood/Colwich and Great Haywood. The council employs four members of staff: the Parish Clerk, Deputy Parish Clerk and two part-time Lengthsmen.

The Full Council usually meets at 7:30pm on the first Thursday of every month. The December meeting was moved to the end of the month so as to be the final meeting of the calendar year. An Extraordinary Full Council meeting was called in April to consider the sickness policy. A number of meetings were cancelled during the year either through Covid restrictions or for being inquorate due to too few Councillors being able to attend. Formal meetings are open to the public who may raise questions and concerns on any item on the agenda. Due to Covid restrictions, in place since 2020, and the decreasing number of Councillors in the early part of the year, the Council continued to suspend its usual Committee structure. Instead of Committees, the Council undertook themed Full Council meetings to cover the areas previously delegated to the Committees. The Council also introduced additional Full Council meetings focussing on its major projects e.g., the JPF and Rights of Way. In December, following a successful campaign to encourage new Councillors, the Council began the process of re-establishing the Committee structure when it held a Leisure Committee meeting to progress the JPF carpark project. In January it re-established the Events Committee to progress the Christmas Lights programme and the Council's proposed commemoration for the Coronation of King Charles III. The Youth Council, populated by young people in the parish within school years 6 - 13, remains suspended at present. The Council hopes to re-establish the Youth Council in 2023/24.

At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022, Cllr Wendy Plant was elected Chairman and Cllr Annette Bloor was elected Vice Chairman. These Councillors will remain in post until the annual meeting of the Council on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023, following the Ordinary Election of the Council.

The Parish Centre, from February, was opened up, as part of the Winter Warmth programme, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, with tea, coffee and biscuits available. The Council anticipates that in future it will open for Winter Warmth between November and March.

## Casual Vacancies on the Council.

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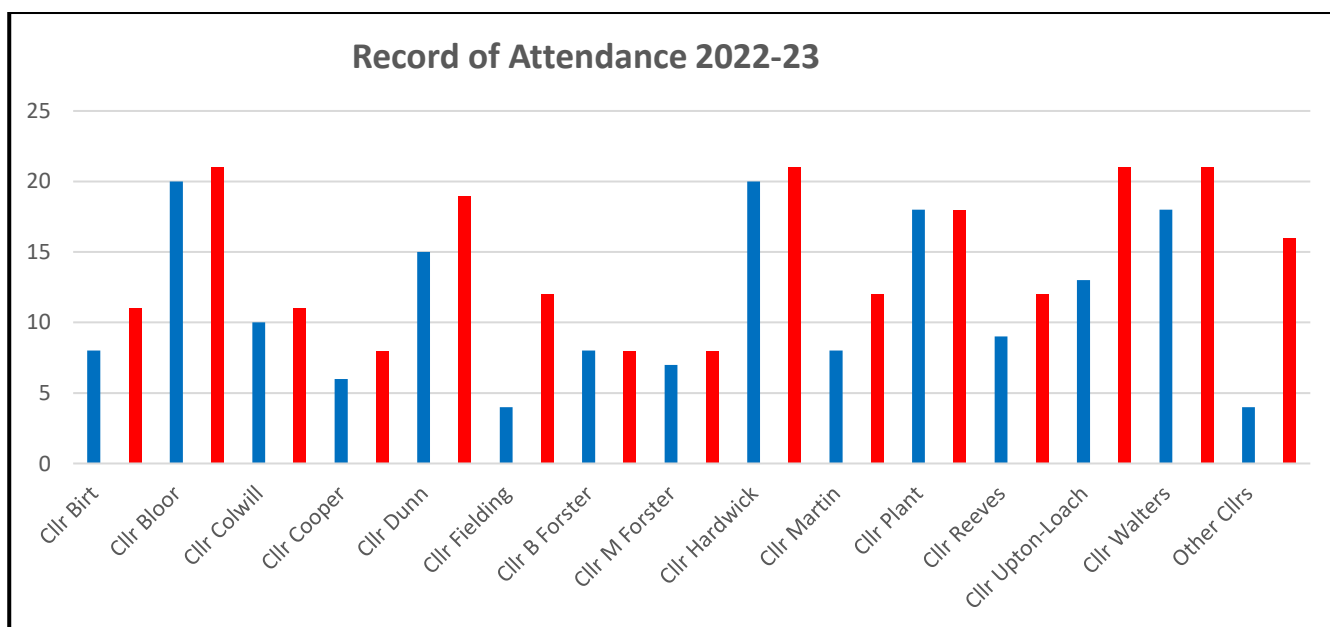
During the current Council 2019-2023, there have been numerous vacancies following resignations and/or failure to attend for over 6-months. In 2022/23 the Council co-opted 8 Councillors. At its meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022, it co-opted Cllr Laura Fielding; Cllr Stuart Martin and Cllr Pam Reeves. At its meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the Council co-opted Cllr Cath Birt; Cllr Lynne Colwill; Cllr Beverly Forster and Cllr Mark Forster. At its meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022, it co-opted Cllr Andy Cooper. These joined Cllr Wendy Plant; Cllr Annette Bloor and Cllr Andy Dunn, who were elected unopposed in May 2019, along with Cllr Ben Walters, who was co-opted on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019; Cllr Ellie Upton-Loach who was co-opted on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and Cllr Steve Hardwick who was co-opted on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

## Councillors\*

Councillor	Ward	Address	Tel
Cath Birt	Great Haywood	2, The Weald, Mill Lane, Great Haywood ST18 0RJ	882626
Andrew Cooper	Great Haywood	7 Hunters Close, Great Haywood ST18 0EF	881895
Lynne Colwill	Great Haywood	2 Forest Close, Little Haywood ST18 0NE	07812 047083
Andy Dunn	Great Haywood	19 Essex Drive, Great Haywood ST18 0RL	808154
Laura Fielding	Great Haywood	6 Emery Drive, Great Haywood ST18 0WG	07950 765210
Pam Reeves	Great Haywood	54 Oldfields Crescent, Great Haywood ST18 0RW	07984 961223
Ben Walters	Great Haywood	23 Yelland Walk, Great Haywood St18 0WJ	07791 267783
Annette Bloor Vice Chairman)	Little Haywood	12 Manor Farm Road, Little Haywood ST18 0NW	881749
Beverly Forster	Little Haywood	The Coach House, Mill Lane, Great Haywood ST18 0RJ	07530 921061
Mark Forster	Little Haywood	The Coach House, Mill Lane, Great Haywood ST18 0RJ	07875 534596
Steve Hardwick	Little Haywood	26 Kingfisher Drive, Colwich ST18 0FH	07786 881852
Stuart Martin	Little Haywood	1 Black & White Cottage, Main Road, Little Haywood ST18 0TX	358774
Wendy Plant (Chairman)	Little Haywood	Brampton, Main Road, Little Haywood. ST18 0TR	881626
Ellie Upton-Loach	Little Haywood	4 Northcote Close, Little Haywood ST18 0US	07495 145175

\*As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

## Councillor attendance at meetings



Actual Possible

	TOTALS		
	Actual	Possible*	% attendance
Cllr Cath Birt	8	11	73
Cllr Annette Bloor	20	21	95
Cllr Lyn Colwill	10	11	91
Cllr Andy Cooper	6	8	75
Cllr Andy Dunn	15	19	79
Cllr Laura Fielding	4	12	33
Cllr Beverly Forster	8	8	100
Cllr Mark Forster	7	8	88
Cllr Steve Hardwick	20	21	95
Cllr Stuart Martin	8	12	67
Cllr Wendy Plant	18	18	100
Cllr Pam Reeves	9	12	75
Cllr Ellie Upton-Loach	13	21	62
Cllr Ben Walters	18	21	86
Others	4	15	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>77</b>
*Possible meetings are Full Council plus other Committee meetings Cllrs agreed to attend and where they have substituted for another Councillor.			
** A dispensation was agreed for all/part of the year.			

## Jubilee Playing Field

The Parish Council owns and maintains the sports field, toilet block and play area. The Council maintains the site and the grass cutting within the children's play area and BMX track through the Lengthsmen. Who also look after the toilet block. The Lengthsmen ensure that the site is kept clear of litter and hazards. The main field was cut, under contract, by local grounds team Blades.



During the year, the Council arranged for a temporary drainage solution to be installed, on the northern edge of the parking area, to try and relieve the flooding experienced during and after heavy rainfall. The central reservation was also removed to help facilitate the free flow of surface water towards the drainage area. The Council is in the process of engaging a contractor to install a permanent drainage solution and to create a car park with designated parking bays for disabled drivers.

## Allotments

The Parish Council owns 3.7 acres of allotments, on Coley Lane, which it leases "en-masse" to the Colwich Allotment Association who manage and operate the site. The Council continues to investigate other possible sites for allotments within the Parish. Ideally within the Great Haywood ward.

## Parish Maintenance

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The Parish Council is responsible for cutting various grass areas in the Parish under contract from County Highways. These grass verges are maintained by the Council's Lengthsmen who are able to undertake far more cuts than would be the case if the areas remained with the County Council's maintenance teams. The Lengthsmen also maintain the grass outside the Parish Office and undertake regular litter picks across the parish. The Lengthsmen maintained a number of hedges across the parish which would otherwise have been in danger of overgrowing the pavement. These included, amongst others, Coley Lane; Meadow Lane; Abbeyfields; Rockhouse and Oldfields Crescent. The Council took possession of the hedge bordering Emery Drive and Main Road and have planted a new hedge line with the intention of removing the old hedge in time. The current hedge is mainly ivy, which has strangled the existing hedge, and self-seeded trees. The Lengthsmen also maintain the Council's benches and noticeboards. A number of new picnic benches were installed at the JPF as part of the late Queen Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee celebrations. Two commemorative benches were purchased which will be installed at the JPF and the Memorial Garden being developed off Coley Lane.

## Footpaths

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The Parish Council works with local walking groups and in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council to investigate and resolve issues regarding rights of way. The Council is working with Sustainability in Colwich and the Haywoods (SinCH), and the local landowner/tenant, to investigate a grant application to install new kissing gates across The Butts.

## Highways

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The Lengthsmen undertake various minor highways works including sweeping the gutters and gullies and cleaning the drain grids to facilitate easier flow of surface water; keeping pavements clear of overgrowing grass/weeds and cleaning road signs. In early 2022, the Council contracted the Burntwood Group to empty all of the gullies along Main Road, Mill Lane, Coley Lane and Meadow Lane.

## Great Haywood Memorial Hall

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The Council continues to work with local residents, the Memorial Hall Committee and the Surgery to investigate the creation of a footpath linking the Memorial Hall car park to the Surgery car park.

## Newsletter

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Four Newsletters were published by the Council and distributed by the Lengthsmen.

## Planning

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The Parish Council is a consultee for planning applications. The Planning Committee meets when a major planning application is received. The Parish Council does not have the power to make a decision on planning applications but can raise objections or concerns for consideration. These are returned to Stafford Borough Council along with any noticeable infringements on planning regulations.

## Administration

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The Parish is managed by a full-time Parish Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer and a part-time Deputy Clerk / Finance Officer. Both of the Clerks hold the Certificate in Local Council Administration and are Principals of their Professional Body, the Society of Local Council Clerks. The Clerk is the Staffordshire representative on the Society's National Forum.

## Defibrillators

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The Council has purchased and installed four defibrillators across the parish. These are located at the Parish Centre, Jubilee Playing Field, Colwich & Little Haywood Village Hall and the Great Haywood Sports and Social Club. All of the defibrillators are registered on the national The Network. continues to hold "Foundation Status" in the National Association of Local Councils award scheme. If you feel you might require the use of one of the defibrillators then you should call 999 and be guided by the operator.

## Small Grants

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The Council issued a number of small grants during the year, not least the grant of £300 to Anson school and £200 to Colwich Primary School to purchase parking buddies.



## Internal Examination

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In his report on the 2018/19 accounts the independent Internal Examiner wrote:

*“It is our opinion that the quality of governance and reporting demonstrated by your council is one of the leaders in the Staffordshire area and you are to be commended on your efforts.”*



## Policies and Regulations

The current list of policies used by the Council, copies of which are available on the website, are:

<b><u>Policy &amp; Procedures</u></b>	<b><u>Staff Handbook</u></b>
Policy Manual	Annual Leave
Standing Orders	Bereavement
Committees (Members and Terms of Reference)	Time off for Dependents
Risk Management Policy	Drugs and Alcohol
Financial Regulations	Equal Opportunities
Business Statement	Equal Pay
Investment Policy	Flexible Working
Code Of Conduct	Gifts, Hospitality, Anti-Bribery
Complaints Procedure	Employment Legislation Guide
Publication Scheme (Freedom Of Information)	Parental Leave
Media Policy	Paternity Leave
Small Grants Policy	Protocol between Councillors and Officers
Training Policy	Whistleblowing
GDPR	Adoption Leave
Electronic Communications	Maternity Leave
CCTV Policy	Bullying & Harassment
Safeguarding	Disciplinary Policy
High Consequence Infectious Diseases	Grievance Policy
Green Infrastructure	Sickness Absence
	Travel and Subsistence
	Menopause Policy
	Dignity and Respect
	Health & Safety Policy
	Display Screen Equipment
	Manual Handling
	Lone Working

These General Policy; Employment and Health and Safety Policies were reviewed in October. The Financial Regulations policy was reviewed in February. Updated versions have been added to the website. The Youth Council's Constitution and Standing Orders policy documents are also on the website.

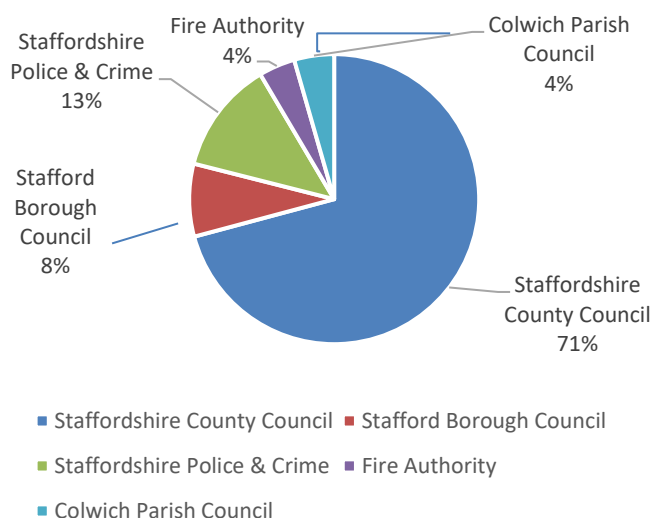
## Grants

Grants and funding assistance applications are considered by the Full Council, who had a budget of £5,500 for the financial year 2022-23. Payments made during the year were as follows:

Anson Primary: Parking Buddies	£300	Colwich Primary: Parking Buddies	£200
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£500</b>

## FINANCE

Council Tax Summary 2023/24



The main form of income for the Parish Council is the precept demand which is included in the council tax from Stafford Borough Council. Stafford Borough Council also makes a payment to the Parish Council (called a concurrent function) every year which is used towards tasks undertaken by the Parish which mirror those that the Borough undertake in Stafford e.g. maintaining the JPF toilets. Stafford Borough Council also passed on the Government's Local Council Tax Support Grant amount of £6,043.

Although it is the Borough Council that charges the council tax, it includes payments for the Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Staffordshire County Council and the Parish Council as well as for the Borough itself.

## RESERVES

Reserves held at 31 March 2023 are as follows:

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Road Safety Reserve Speedwatch programme	1,000	<i>To support actions that have come out of the Community</i>
Biodiversity Enhancement Reserve	3,400	<i>Work in progress to develop the biodiversity policy based on reports from Staffs Wildlife Trust</i>
Footpath Capital Reserve	6,000	<i>to repair rights of way footpaths</i>
Surgery Path Reserve	13,300	<i>To assist the installation of a footpath between the Memorial Hall carpark and the doctors' surgery</i>
War Memorial Reserve	750	<i>To provide a central War Memorial between the villages</i>
Land conveyance reserve	4,000	<i>To purchase green space from developer</i>
Roads, pavements & Gullies Reserve	10,000	<i>To pay for cleaning and maintenance of the local roads and gullies</i>
Benches Reserve	500	<i>To go towards the repair of benches in the parish</i>
Defibrillator Reserve	3,000	<i>To purchase and deploy an extra defibrillator in the parish</i>
Parish Office Reserve	4,900	<i>To improve the Parish Centre building</i>
Earmarked Reserve – Memorial Garden Fund	381	<i>Funds held on behalf of the Memorial Fund</i>
Earmarked Reserve – Allotment	800	<i>Contingency/reserve for allotments</i>
Play Equipment Repair/Replace	34,953	<i>To repair and replace play equipment at the Playing Field</i>
Sustainability Reserve – Reserve	6,000	<i>To be added to year on year to support moving to green technology e.g., electric grass mowers etc.</i>
Election Fund	10,800	<i>To pay for elections to the Parish Council</i>
Leisure Reserve	100,000	<i>To cover the potential cost of creating a car park and permanent drainage solution etc. at the Jubilee Playing Fields</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>199,784</b>	

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2022/2023 / BUDGET SUMMARY 2023/2024

### Net expenditure

Description	2021/2022 (audited)	2022/2023 (unaudited)	2023/2024 (budget)
Staffing	£101,184	£114,760	£121,200
Community Engagement	£2,667	£3,332	£4,500
Events	6,830	7,411	15,000
Parish Maintenance	£6,078	£19,012	£6,926
Footpaths	£0	£1,531	£0
Green Infrastructure	£2,025	£4,048	£2,000
Parish Centre	£10,021	£5,019	£5,440
Jubilee Playing Fields	£3,412	£39,867	£3,720
Allotments	£1,686	£1,713	£1,775
Grants (S137 payments)	£5,000	£500	£6,000
Other administration	£13,766	£10,093	£20,170
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£152,669</b>	<b>£207,286</b>	<b>£186,731</b>

### Net Income

Description	2021/2022 (audited)	2022/2023 (unaudited)	2023/2024 (budget)
Precept	£156,992	£165,587	£176,226
Concurrent Function	£3,298	£3,298	£3,298
Local Council Tax Support Govt. Grant	£5,843	£6,043	£6,043
Other Income	£5,478	£12,747	£4,462
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£171,611</b>	<b>£187,675</b>	<b>£190,029</b>

	2017/2018 (audited)	2018/2019 (unaudited)	2019/2020 (budget)
<b>Net Savings/ (Net deficit)</b>	£18,942	(£19,611)	£3,298