

Colwich Parish Council



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2017 – 2018



The Parish Centre, St Marys Road, Little Haywood, Stafford, ST18 0TX

Tel: 01889 882665 Email: clerk@colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk

Introduction

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 with no meeting held in January. A number of special Full Council meetings were called during the year to progress the on-going legal case in relation to the Jubilee Playing Field. Meetings are open to the public who may raise questions and concerns on any item on the Agenda. The following committees also met during the year: Environment & Leisure; Policy; Finance; Employment and Communications. The Council also held Planning Committee meetings to discuss major planning applications. The Youth Council, populated by young people in the parish with school years 6 - 13, met on a number of occasions. Each Youth Councillor has been provided with a Council email address to be used for Youth Council matters.

At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 4th May 2017, Cllr Andy Cooper was re-elected Chairman and Cllr Andy Dunn was elected Vice Chairman.

The Parish Centre was open between 10 am and 3pm, Monday to Friday. As well as information leaflets, the office also has a store of free dog poop bags, provided by Stafford Borough Council.

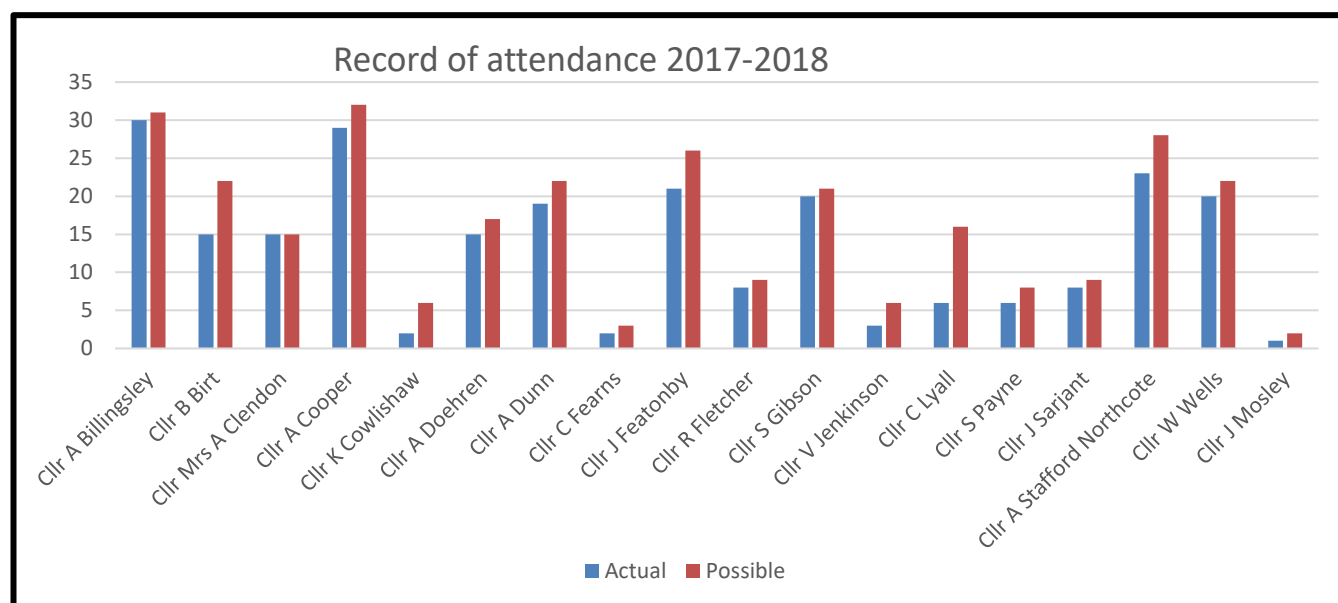
Casual Vacancies on the Council.

During the year, the council had a total of 5 vacancies caused by the resignations of Steve Payne; Alan Doehren; Kellie Cowlshaw and Victoria Jenkinson which were filled through co-option of Councillor Robert Fletcher on 5th October and Councillors Jim Sarjant and Chris Fearn on 2nd November. Cllr Fearn resigned from the Council in December 2017 and this vacancy was filled through the Election of Councillor Mosley in February 2018. The remaining casual vacancy was unfilled at the end of the reporting year.

Councillors

Councillor	Ward	Address	Tel
Adam Billingsley	Great Haywood	12 Essex Drive, Great Haywood, ST18 0RL	881666
Barrie Birt	Great Haywood	2 Mill Lane, Great Haywood, ST18 0RJ	882626
vacancy	Great Haywood		
Anne Clendon	Great Haywood	5 Cliff Road, Great Haywood, ST18 0SZ	808214
Andrew Cooper (<i>Chairman</i>)	Great Haywood	7 Hunters Close, Great Haywood, ST18 0EF	881895
John Mosley	Great Haywood	17 Nursery Way, Great Haywood ST18 0FY	883440
Jim Sarjant	Great Haywood	6 Green Close, Great Haywood, ST18 0WF	881721
Andrew Dunn	Little Haywood	19 Essex Drive, Great Haywood, ST18 0RL	808154
Jane Featonby	Little Haywood	7 Anson Row, Little Haywood, ST18 0UN	882073
Robert Fletcher	Little Haywood	Brough House, Main Road, Little Haywood ST18 0TR	881370
Sylvia Gibson	Little Haywood	Flat 4, High Chase House, High Chase Rise, ST18 0TZ	882329
Catherine Lyall	Little Haywood	2, Chase View, Main Road, Little Haywood, ST18 0TU	881568
Amyas Stafford Northcote	Little Haywood	Bishton Hall, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford, ST17 0XN	883985
Wendy Wells	Little Haywood	Brampton, Main Road, Little Haywood. ST18 0TR	881626

Councillor attendance at meetings



	TOTALS		% attendance
	Actual	Possible*	
Clr Billingsley	30	31	97
Clr Birt**	15	22	68
Clr Clendon	15	15	100
Clr Cooper	29	32	91
Clr Cowlshaw	2	6	33
Clr Doehren	15	17	88
Clr Dunn	19	22	86
Clr Fearn	2	3	67
Clr Featonby	21	26	81
Clr Fletcher	8	9	89
Clr Gibson	20	21	95
Clr Jenkinson	3	6	50
Clr Lyall**	6	16	38
Clr Mosley	1	2	50
Clr Payne	6	8	75
Clr Sarjant	8	9	89
Clr Stafford Northcote	23	28	82
Clr Wells	20	22	91
Total			
<i>*Possible meetings are Full Council plus other Committee meetings Cllrs agreed to attend and where they have substituted for another Councillor.</i>			
<i>** A dispensation was agreed for all/part of the year.</i>			



Jubilee Playing Fields

The Parish Council owns and maintains the sports field, toilet block and play area. The Council let a contract to Trent Grounds Maintenance for the cutting of the main field. However, this year it took the maintenance of the site and the grass cutting within the children's play area back in-house through the Lengthsmen. Maintenance of the toilet block is also undertaken by the Lengthsmen rather than through a contract as previously. The Lengthsmen also ensure that the site is kept clear of litter and hazards.



During the year, the Council's network of CCTV cameras at the JPF were able to identify a number of fly-tippers. The images, downloaded remotely by the Lengthsmen, were passed to the Clerk for onward transmission to Stafford Borough Council who issued Fixed Penalty Notices to the offenders. The CCTV network also recorded images of people causing criminal damage and other anti-social behaviour which were passed to Staffordshire Police.

Allotments

The Parish Council owns 3.7 acres of allotments, on Coley Lane, which it leases "en masse" to the 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

The Parish Council is responsible for various grass areas in the Parish under agreement with the County Council. These grass verges are now maintained by the Council's Lengthsmen as noted in last year's Annual Report. The Lengthsmen also maintain the grass outside the Parish Office and undertake regular litter picks across the parish. The Lengthsmen have cut back a number of hedges which were overgrowing the pavement not least along Coley Lane and Meadow Lane. The Council contracted with a local company to cut back the hedges along Mill Lane/Abbeyfields; Main Road/Abbeyfields and Coley Lane to a manageable height so that they may, in future, be maintained by the Lengthsmen. The Lengthsmen also maintain the Council's benches and Noticeboards. New Noticeboards are planned for 2018/19.

Footpaths

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 County Council has made a number of improvement during the year following an approach by the Council.

Highways

The Community Highways Gang from the County Council has been disbanded. The Council is considering ways for the Lengthsmen to take up more of these tasks. Current works include 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.

Great Haywood Memorial Hall

The Council gave a further grant to the Memorial Hall to complete the car park and to make this available for residents, especially when visiting Hazeldene House surgery as well as parking for Anson School parents. The Council continues to work with local residents, the Memorial Hall Committee and the Surgery to create a footpath linking the Memorial Hall car park to the Surgery car park.

Newsletter

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

Planning

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

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.

Quality Council

The Council continues to hold "Foundation Status" in the National Association of Local Councils award scheme. Work is ongoing towards Quality Council Status and eventually Gold Standard Status. However, this work has stalled as, due to the number of resignations in the year, the Council does not meet the qualifying criteria of having 2/3rds of its number elected.

Internal Audit

In his report on the 2017/18 accounts the independent Internal Auditor wrote:
"Your council is to be commended on the excellent quality of the financial and governance records and associated record keeping"



Policies and Regulations

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

Policy & Procedures

Policy Manual
 Standing Orders
 Committees (List and Terms of Reference)
 Code Of Conduct
 Small Grants Policy
 Publication Scheme (Freedom Of Information)
 Financial Regulations
 Annual Risk Assessment
 Complaints Procedure
 Media Policy
 Business Statement
 Investment Policy
 Training Policy



Staff Handbook

Adoption Leave
 Annual Leave
 Bereavement
 Time off for Dependants
 Drugs and Alcohol
 Equal Opportunities
 Equal pay
 Flexible Working
 Gifts, Hospitality, Anti-Bribery
 Employment Legislation Guide
 Parental Leave
 Paternity Leave
 Maternity Leave
 Adoption Leave
 Protocol between Councillors and Officers
 Whistleblowing
 Disciplinary Policy
 Bullying & Harrassment
 Grievance
 Sickness Absence
 Display Screen Equipment

These policies are reviewed annually in either April or November by the Policy, Employment or Finance Committees. Updated versions will be added to the website as and when they are approved by the Full Council.

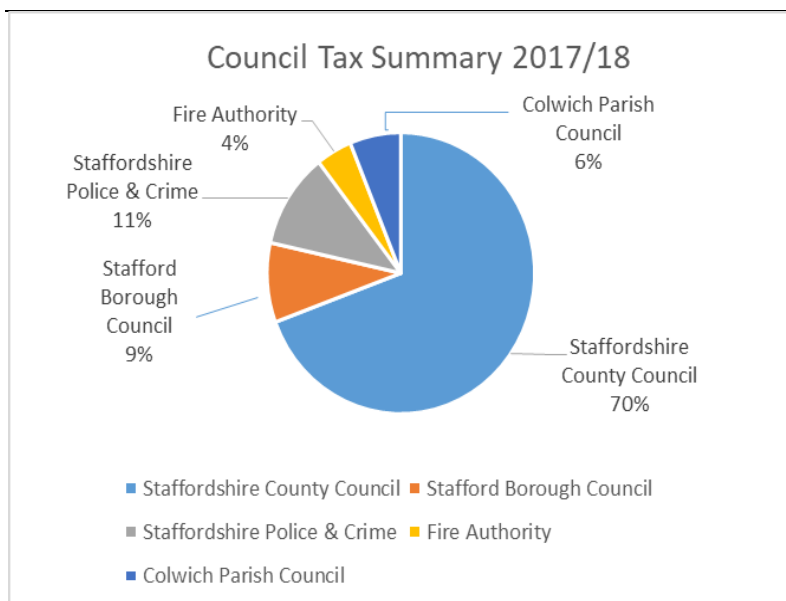
Grants

Grants and funding assistance applications are considered by the Full Council, who had a budget of £22,000* for the financial year 2017-18. Payments made during the year are as follows:

GHMH car park	£3,040	St Michael's Community Lunches	£120
St Michael's Clock	£100	Friends of Katherine House	£250
Under 5's Playgroup	£288	Gt Haywood Under 5's	£1,000
Haywoods Made with Love	£300	Haywood Community Choir	£427.53
Friends of Donna Louise	£128	Haywood Flower & Veg Show	£120
		TOTAL	£5,774

**The Council allocated a grant of £15,000 to contribute towards traffic calming along Mill Lane. County Highways are still drawing up plans for this works so the funds have been carried forward to 2018/19 in a reserve.*

FINANCE



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. cleaning public toilets. In addition to the Precept, Stafford Borough Council has passed on the Government's Local Council Tax Support Grant amount of £5,220. These amounts are expected to be similar in 2018/2019.

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 2018 are as follows:

Reserve		Notes
General Reserves	£49,087	Funds available to pay bills.
Road Safety Reserve	£1,000	To support actions that will come out of work being undertaken by the Community Speed Watch.
Biodiversity Enhancement Reserve	£5,000	Work is in progress to develop the biodiversity policy based on reports received from Staffs Wildlife Trust.
Footpath Capital Reserve	£6,000	To repair Rights of Way footpaths.
Changing Room Block Reserve	£20,000	For furnishment of changing rooms.
Toilet Block Reserve	£10,000	To contribute towards new toilets at the JPF.
Notice Boards Reserve	£5,000	To replace and add to the parish notice boards.
Surgery Path Reserve	£5,000	To install a path between the Great Haywood Memorial Hall car park and the surgery.
War Memorial Reserve	£4,750	To install a new joint war memorial for the parish.
Mill Lane Bridge Restr. Reserve	£5,000	To install a traffic management system along Mill Lane.
Mill Lane Hedge/Pavement Reserve	£15,000	To install a pavement on Mill Lane linked to the proposed traffic management system.
Burial Ground Reserve	£10,000	To create a burial ground / garden of remembrance.
Parish Office Reserve	£7,500	A building and electrical survey has been undertaken during the year and a plan of action is being drawn up.
Memorial Garden (EM)	£381	These funds are held for repairs to the Memorial Garden and do not belong to the Parish Council.
Allotments (EM)	£800	These funds are held for the Allotments Association.
Play Equip Repair/Replace	£44,263	To repair and replace equipment at the Jubilee Playing Fields. The council is also looking to take on a new open space from the District Council and provide new play equipment.
Election Fund	£3,800	To pay for elections to the Parish Council
TOTAL	£196,081	

(EM = ear marked)

Net expenditure

Description	2016/2017 (audited)	2017/2018 (unaudited)	2018/2019 (budget)
Staffing	£45,816	£83,033	£86,860
Community Engagement	£0	£0	£500
Parish Maintenance	£4,834	£5,603	£22,500
Footpaths	£0	£0	£0
Green Infrastructure	£0	£0	5,000
Mill Lane Improvements	£0	£0	£2,500
Parish Centre	£2,658	2,188	£3,555
Jubilee Playing Fields	£71,519	2,141	£4,904
Allotments	£1,200	1,391	£800
Grants (S137 payments)	£3,212	2,634	£3,500
Other grants	£20,000	3,140	£0
Ear Marked Reserves	£0	2,691	£0
Other administration	£25,566	16344	£60,510
TOTAL	£174,805	£119,165	£190,629

Net Income

Description	2016/2017 (audited)	2017/2018 (unaudited)	2018/2019 (budget)
Precept	£164,492	£171,656	£185,349
Concurrent Function	£3,298	£3,298	£3,298
Local Council Tax Support Govt. Grant	£5,280	£5,280	£5,280
Other Income	£4,181	£3,347	£0
TOTAL	£177,251	£183,581	£193,927

	2016/2017 (audited)	2017/2018 (unaudited)	2018/2019 (budget)
Net Savings	£2,446	£64,416	£4,498

