



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2017

No. 95

THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

What is the democratic process?

The Parish Council is the democratic representative body for the parish and, as such, may be able to influence decisions made by outside bodies. But first and foremost, as the first tier of local government, Colwich Parish Council, in common with all other Parish Councils, can help to provide local solutions to local problems, thus building social cohesion – we are all in it together and facing the same challenges! A Parish Council can repair people's disconnection from politics and a feeling of remoteness from decision-making and can contribute to delivering services locally during a time of continued austerity.

Your local council is a democratic, accountable and transparent grassroots body – this is where democracy starts and it provides a structure for taking action: real people power at grassroots level.

Colwich Parish Council meets once a month as the full council and regularly as topic Committees (e.g. Finance, Environment & Leisure) and has many powers to act and spend money for the benefit of the parish. We discuss anything that affects all or part of the community as, no doubt, you will read in the rest of this Newsletter.

How is a Councillor elected?

The usual avenue to become a Councillor is through election at the Ordinary election, on the first Thursday in May every four years, coinciding with the elections for Stafford Borough Council. The next Colwich Parish Council Ordinary election will be 2nd May 2019. To stand for election you must meet certain criteria and be nominated and seconded by two eligible electors from the relevant Ward (Great Haywood HHA or Little Haywood/Colwich HHB). The chairman and vice-chairman positions are elected annually by the members of the Council.

Alternatively, if a Councillor resigns mid-term there would be what is known as a "casual vacancy" Local Government



Act 1972 s. 84-90 refer. Initially a Notice of Vacancy is posted to allow eligible electors to call for a poll provided that there was a period of at least six months left until the next Ordinary Election of the Parish Council. An election will be triggered if 10 electors, from the Ward, write, requesting one, to the Returning Officer at Stafford Borough Council within 14 working days of the publication of the Notice, the Representation of the People Act 1983 s. 36 refers. If no poll is requested the Parish Council will then take steps to advertise the vacancy so as to co-opt someone under the Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006. Details of recent co-opted members can be seen on the front page of this Newsletter.

What do candidates have to do in order to meet the required criteria?

To become a Parish Councillor, you must work or own/rent land in the parish or live in or within 3 miles of the parish, be a member of the European Union or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, be 18 or over and be eligible to vote. It is important that sufficient candidates come forward to hold a poll and that electors then exercise their rights to vote. If fewer candidates come forward than there are seats then they will be elected unopposed and you will lose your

ability to decide the members of the Council. Remember, Parish Councillors are the people who are the closest to you and will be able to represent your interests.

What do Councillors do?

Parish Councillors represent the people living in their area and they help to keep it a great place to live and work. Your Parish Councillor is your closest link to any form of government. When decisions are being made, they are there to put your views across.

If you are passionate about something that will benefit the local community then why don't you become a Councillor and have your say? If you don't want to do that, then perhaps there is someone in your community that could do that for you.

How can I, as a Councillor, promote the work of Colwich Parish Council?

To promote the work of your Council is easy because Colwich Parish Council remains a strong and constant force, delivering for local people and making a difference in our community against a background of national politics which appears to be in a fluid and uncertain state. Local government has its problems and crises too but here in Colwich, we seem to have survived because, and following on from the success of our Neighbourhood Plan, Colwich Parish Council continues to invest in the economic, environmental and social prosperity of our area. I say "economic" because we try to encourage local business to thrive, liaising with planners and developers to increase our local infrastructure making it easier, for example, to work from home. I say "environmental" because we are actively protecting and enhancing the rich diversity around and within, Colwich Parish. I say "social" because we try to identify social need and bring people together to help each other – this is probably going to be a large part of the Council's work during 2018/2019.

Councillor Sylvia Gibson

RIMBACH TWINNING VISIT

The Partnerschaftsverein, Rimbach, Germany visited the Haywoods from 12th to 17th October, 2017. The Party of thirty-three included ten teenagers and two members of the Rimbach Lions Club.

On the 13th October they visited the Marston Salt Works where they had a Guided tour of the former Salt Works, now a museum depicting the process of recovering the salt from the underground deposits that prevail in the Cheshire Plain.

On the Saturday the adults spent the day in Chester. The younger member of the group, meanwhile, were joined by counterparts from the parish for a trip to Birmingham where they visited the Birmingham City Library and Art Galleries. Following some free time in the afternoon they returned to Stafford where they joined up with members of the 1st Colwich Senior Guides and members of the Colwich Youth Council for an evening meal at Pizza Hut.

The Sunday saw the juniors from both Rimbach and the Haywoods meet at Milford Common for a hike across Cannock Chase incorporating a "military style" challenge led by the Colwich Senior Guides together with a picnic lunch. They were met by cars at Milford to be taken to Stone for a session at "Flip Out" before returning to their host families. A more leisurely time was enjoyed by the adults who were entertained by their hosts with visits to local places of interest such as Shugborough and Trentham and even a trip along the Trent and Mersey in a narrow boat.

On Monday there was a coach trip to Cosford to the Royal Air Force Museum during the day. The evening included a farewell dinner at the Great Haywood Memorial Hall for 84 people. After dinner there were speeches by Cllr. Andy Cooper, Chairman of Colwich Parish Council, and Rolf Lempp, Deputy Bürgermeister of Rimbach, Annette Bloor, Colwich Twinning Association, and Markus Altendorf, Chairman of the Partnerschaftsverein, Rimbach.

The original members of the twinning movements are now well into retirement and indeed some have sadly passed away. The future of twinning in both communities is, therefore, with the younger members. Many of the Rimbach youngsters were hosted by the families of the Haywoods youngsters, and this has sparked an interest in the intermediate generation. The Colwich & Haywoods Association and youngsters are all invited back to Rimbach next year and there is now a real feeling that the future of twinning between our two communities is now seen as more positive than in recent years.

An initial meeting between the Parish Council and the Association was held on 30th November to begin the process of developing a plan for the future of the Association and how we can work together to ensure its survival and growth.

Membership of the Association is open to all who share the Twinning ethos. All members pay their own way for visits. Fund raising events are held throughout the year to raise monies, for instance, to cover the cost of the days detailed above. Anyone interested or seeking further information, should contact Annette Bloor (Chairman) on 881749 or Christine Hill (Secretary) on 808194.



VILLAGER OF THE YEAR

Last year it was the Council's honour to present Dave Robbie with our new "Villager of the Year" award. Each year we are looking for you as residents to nominate someone who has and is making a significant difference, often 'behind the scenes' and out of sight to our communities. Do you know an unsung star who deserves recognition for their effort? Then why not let us know? Suggestions must be in writing (letter or email) and sent to the clerk, giving as much detail as you can as to why your nomination deserves to be recognised this way

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE YEAR

Last year we had a very successful and inspirational batch of entries for our inaugural Photograph of the Year. **Remember – it must have been taken by you and feature our Parish; its residents and/or locality.** Entries will be featured on our website. Again entries should be sent to the clerk.

The Council will consider the entries, at its Annual Meeting, for both categories and decide a winner - to be announced at the Annual Parishioners meeting in May 2018. *The small print – Councillors, officials and their immediate families will be excluded from entering!*

It is that time of year again when the Parish Council reviews the costs involved in its operation and projects – new and ongoing. As we are in the middle of the process, I can't confirm details of future proposals or cost assessments at this stage – as they haven't been discussed and agreed in Full Council, but we have reviewed existing work and can feedback some of our considerations as follows:

- Investigations to link the Great Haywood Memorial Hall with a footpath to the surgery carpark are ongoing.
- The Council is continuing in cooperation with CURB to look at resolving the shortage of burial ground options in the Parish. A subject expert presented to the Council in December.
- We are working with Staffordshire County Council and Cllr John Francis to look at making Mill Lane safer for pedestrians. We hope to have some positive news in the near future.
- The Council is considering new ways to engage with the community. We are considering taking a stall at forthcoming craft fayres in Great Haywood Memorial Hall. If this proves successful, we will roll out the idea out to similar opportunities around the Parish. If you see us at one of these events, please come and have a chat – we are always keen to meet residents and get feedback.
- Our local Speedwatch volunteer team is continuing to operate in the Parish at various times and locations with success. The team needs more volunteers – if you are interested in helping out on this please let us know and you will of course receive appropriate training.

Undoubtedly one of the Council's best initiatives is the appointment of lengthsman, for which we have received a lot of positive feedback. We are all benefiting from their ongoing work around our parish. Some of their recent activities that you may or may not be aware of include:

- Managing the hedges at Abbeyfields and Oldfields Crescent.
- Maintaining the Jubilee Playing Field.
- Assisting with the planting of thousands of bulbs for the River of Flowers project.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Andy Cooper

- Weeding areas around the parish that haven't been treated for many years e.g. footbridge behind Colwich School, Coley Lane, Meadow Lane and Mill Lane (opposite Canalside).

- Attended and passed a course for the safe handling and use of pesticides.

I have been working closely with the Twinning Association which has been buoyed up by the recent very successful visit by our counterparts from Germany (see full report on the next page). I am delighted that several new members have joined or are considering joining the Association, and there is now a very strong youth link between the two associations. I would encourage anyone who is interested or just simply wanting to know more about the Association's activities to contact the current association chair Annette Bloor (Tel: 881749). The Parish Council is also setting up a page with links on its own website for the Association.

One interesting comment that has surfaced on Face-Book recently is the suggestion for Christmas lights in our Parish – something already done in other surrounding villages including our neighbours Hixon. I'd be interested to hear your thoughts. We have to bear in mind we are one Parish but several villages – would a shared central location like the JPF frontage be a good idea?

One idea that the Council is looking to develop is that of **"One Community"** and a lot of our efforts are already in this direction. We are aware that although one Civic Parish, we comprise several villages – but we should still see ourselves as one community. An example of that is the idea of the **River of Flowers** that will run from the A51 at Great Haywood, through Little Haywood and back to the A51 at Colwich connecting us all in an environmentally friendly way. Do you have any others you would like us to consider?

As ever, I can assure you that the Parish Council will continue to work towards making our neighbourhood a place to be proud of, but in the meantime from councillors and staff, we would all like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Cllr Andy Cooper

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

COUNCIL SURGERIES:

Memorial Hall

10th January 2018

& 7th March 2018

PARISH OFFICE:

7th February 2018

& 12th April 2018

Skip visits to JPF:

13 January 2018

& 10th March 2018

Christmas tree recycling:

2nd – 9th January 2018

NEW IDEAS FOR OLD SHOP

As you will be aware, the shop on Trent Close (next to the chemist) has been closed now for some time and the owners are hoping to have it reopened as soon as possible, though not as a grocery/convenient store. To this end the owners are asking local residents for their thoughts on what people would like to have in its place. Various ideas have been suggested ranging from a cyber café to a chip shop.

As part of the Local Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council are keen on promoting business within the parish and would like to see the premises occupied. If you have any ideas or preferences to what you would like, please get in touch, either with myself

Email: [adam.billingsley@](mailto:adam.billingsley@colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk)

[colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:adam.billingsley@colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Telephone: 07804503277

or the Parish Clerk. If you're passing, call in at the Parish Office or come and meet with your Councillors at one of the regular surgeries held at the Great Haywood Memorial Hall and at the Parish Centre, dates and times can be found on the Parish Council website or the Parish notice boards.

FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SHOW

The 2018 show will be held on Sunday 9th September at the Colwich and Little Haywood Village Hall.

The next meeting of the Flower and Vegetable Show Society will be at 7:30pm on Wednesday 24th January at the Parish Office, St Mary's Road. All welcome.



SMALL GRANTS

The Council was delighted to issue a number of small grants at its November Council meeting. Further applications are being considered and will be announced in due course. An application template will be made available on the website to aid applications to the 2018/19 programme.



IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD



As mentioned in the Autumn Newsletter: Great Haywood AND Colwich & Little Haywood are now **GOLDEN**.

Results of the "It's your Neighbourhood" Campaign, - part of the Royal Horticultural Society's work they are doing to Green Up Britain and get rid of the Grey.

The Awards were presented in The Welcome Centre, Coventry, and the first announcement came as a shock - as Ray Hemming (Friends of Shugborough Terrace) received The R.H.S. Special Gardening Excellent Award!

The Red Lion Pub received a **GOLD** Certificate.

The Friends of Mill Lane, and Friends of Shugborough Terrace received a Level 5 Award -Outstanding!

Crossheads Friends from Colwich and Marlborough Meadow Friends, Great Haywood received Level 4 - Thriving.

The new Orchard in Cliff Road was awarded Level 3 - Achieving.

The best Kept Village Committee has decided to change its name to: **COLWICH & HAYWOODS IN BLOOM**.

**Anne Clendon -
B.E.M. Hon Secretary.**

CLLR ROBERT FLETCHER

Born and raised in Aberdeen, I spent almost 30 years in the RAF, followed by 15 years in management positions in legal practice and schools. Married, with 2 adult children and 2 grandchildren, I have lived in Little Haywood for 24 years. I am interested in genealogy, painting and woodturning. I also volunteered as a listening Samaritan for more than 15 years.



CLLR JIM SARJANT

I moved to Great Haywood in December, 2016 after a lengthy professional career in the Health Service working in Cambridge, Kettering, Stoke and North Devon. Since arriving in Great Haywood I have rekindled my interest in coarse fishing, pottery and stained glass. I have also realised a lifelong ambition to own a boat, and now have a GRP cruiser on which to enjoy day trips exploring the local canals.



PRIVATE GARDEN COMPETITION 2017

The results of this year's competition are:

Garden of the Year: Pat & Barry Baggott

Runner up: Edith Turner

Edith Holland Trophy (Small Back Garden):
Jan Pugh

Nationwide Shield for Floral Display:
Shugborough Terrace

John Mayo Cup for Single Baskets:
43 Cliff Road

Jack Pulley Cup for Tubs:
10 Elm Close

Highly Commended:
19 Hazeldene; 17 High Chase Rise
& 1 St Marys Road

MJ Deavall Shield for Floral Display:
Red Lion

Churchyard Cup: St Michael's



Chairman: Cllr. Andy Cooper
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