



Colwich Parish Council

INCORPORATING WOLSELEY BRIDGE, COLWICH, GREAT HAYWOOD & LITTLE HAYWOOD

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2020 No. 104

HELPHAYWOODS

Helphaywoods volunteer support group was set up on the first day of lockdown, 23rd March 2020 (a date that will not be forgotten for a long time). The group was set up to support vulnerable locals during the lockdown and the Covid-19 pandemic. Support covered shopping, prescriptions, post, friendly chats etc. Links were established with foodbanks, support Stafford, Borough Council and the Hixon support group.

50 volunteers supporting over 60 vulnerable people. To help support the group, the Parish Council offered to pay travel expenses. The volunteers asked that these expenses were donated to the Rugeley Foodbank. In total including volunteer expenses

and donations from those being supported the foodbank Has received donations of over £300. People receiving food parcels from the government have also donated these to the Foodbank.

As lockdown eases and more people are getting out, demand for support has dropped significantly, however the Helphaywoods group will continue to support the vulnerable during this period of uncertainty. In the longer term we would look at integrating the service provided into existing volunteer groups within the community.

Big thanks to all volunteers and best wishes to those that we support. We have learnt a lot about each other.



VE DAY 75th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

At the Parish Council Events Committee meeting on 12th March, the final touches were being made for our weekend of celebrations to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day as detailed in the last Newsletter.

The 8th May dawned fine and sunny with the prospect of wonderful weather ahead. Alas, no public celebrations! Covid 19 had put an end to that, no picnic at the Jubilee Playing Fields, no dancing to the band, the bar and food vans had all been cancelled. However, Covid 19 had not reckoned with the resolve of the villagers of Colwich and the Haywoods. Tables were out in front gardens, teapots, coffee and cake were out and bottles of wine were chilling to continue the celebrations well into the evening. At 12 noon many had radios on or popped in to watch the telly as Winston Churchill's speech to the Nation 75 years ago was replayed. Recordings of 'We'll Meet Again' and 'There'll be Bluebirds Over the White Cliffs of Dover' rang out and the villages were in party mode. It was a day to remember and much needed light relief from the increasing depression of lock-down. Despite the vast majority behaving responsibly and remaining socially distanced, neighbours were able to walk around the streets and converse with their neighbours from afar, some even paraded in very impressive 1940s outfits. Well done to everyone who 'did their bit' and made the day happy and memorable.



FOODBANK

Villagers demonstrated their generosity again this month, contributing to a huge stash of non-perishable food and toiletries for Rugeley Food Bank. Food banks have been experiencing a surge in demand since Covid 19. Like many people we've been avoiding supermarkets, so haven't given to the usual donation points. We decided to host a collection at Marlborough Close in June. We flyer'd the street, and posted on Facebook, and the response was terrific. So many people were enthusiastic about a regular collection we decided make it a first-Sunday-of-the-month ritual.

July's collection was even more popular, with a great response to the Food Bank's request for toiletries, nappies and meat-based-meals-in-a-can, such as hot dogs. Those dropping off food often stop for a quick chat. Our shared frustration that some people in Britain are forced to rely on

food banks to feed themselves, frequently comes up. While it's understandable to become disillusioned with the state of the world, we also share our appreciation of being able to help.

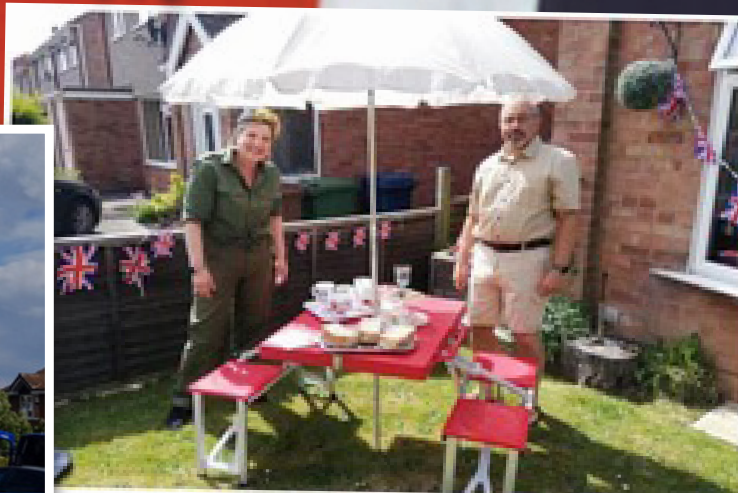
The Parish Council has offered to transport the monthly donations to the food bank. This is much appreciated as the generosity of the villages has now exceeded the space in our car boot.



W&E Day - 12



th March 2020



FOOTPATH PROJECT

not digress from them. In the meantime, please continue to walk the paths, visit the Parish Council website for information and please report back any comments that you have.



cycling together. As part of the allowed daily exercise, people looked for places to walk and discovered paths that they never knew existed.

The idea of reviewing the condition of our Parish footpaths had already been sown but with the increasing interest in them it became apparent that the Parish Council must take this project up sooner rather than later. With Parish Council meetings being put on hold it was necessary to communicate with interested parties by e-mail & Facebook and over the past 4 months the project has grown to a stage whereby the paths have been identified and maps made available on the Parish website which will enable villagers to be able to access the information that they need to make use of the wonderful opportunities for walking that our villages offer. A feedback sheet has also been added to the information on the website so that walkers can comment on the state of stiles, gates and the accessibility of the paths. As these comments come in the information is added to that available on the site.



Way back in autumn 2019, BEFORE COVID, there was an article in the Parish Newsletter about Public Rights of Way within Colwich parish. A villager responded to this and offered to help in producing a database on which to record where maintenance was needed to keep our footpaths in good order. It was decided that we would take this up after the winter and the item would be on the Agenda for the March meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee.

Winter came and so did the rain & the floods. Footpaths were far from everyone's minds as the fields were waterlogged & many of the lanes required a canoe rather than boots & wellies. However, spring arrived and as agreed the topic of footpaths was firmly on the Agenda and then... COVID STRUCK. None of us could really have envisaged what was to come. The horror of this awful disease and the lives lost was almost unimaginable then and the present and the future seemed very dismal & bleak. Yet in the midst of so much sadness rainbows began to appear in people's windows and the sun began to shine. Nothing can take away the grief that some families have suffered but some good did begin to come out of the situation. It was a joy to see families out walking &



As lock down was eased and our Lengthsmen were able to get back to work, in socially distanced circumstances, they have been able to make a start at clearing some of the paths that have been blocked by weeds & brambles for a very long time, repairing stiles and installing new kissing gates.

This project is very much a work in progress. Now that we have gathered much of the factual information, we need to make plans to ensure that repairs are made and that a maintenance programme is devised. Moreover, it is essential that we liaise with the landowners over whose land the public rights of way pass. There are implications for farmers if people fail to respect the crops grown and livestock grazing on the fields that they cross. These are issues that need to be addressed with landowners and in particular it is important to ensure that paths are clearly marked so that walkers do



HEDGES

Please, please, please... will villagers who have hedges that overhang the pavement make moves to cut them back. Despite appeals in the last 3 Parish Council Newsletters for residents to do this there are still many hedges around the estates that are encroaching significantly onto the pavements. This problem has given rise to more complaints than ever during the Covid crisis. More people have been out walking and become aware of how hazardous the hedges can be. There are places where anyone pushing a pram or buggy has to leave the pavement as there is insufficient room to get the buggy around the overhanging hedge. Moreover, it is not possible in some places for two people to walk along side by side and consequently one person ends up walking in the road.

The Parish Council has the power to refer situations where the pavement is blocked or partly blocked to the County Council who will take appropriate action. We wrote to them in December highlighting ten particularly bad areas, where hedges are growing across the pavement or obscuring street nameplates, stretching from the "Oldfields estate" to the St Marys estate. However, the Parish Council would prefer to work with our residents, encouraging them to act responsibly in the interests of others and to ensure that their hedge does not present any sort of obstacle to them.

Hedges should be cut back to the line where the pavement adjoins your garden & road/street names should always be clearly visible and not contained within a hedge. If a streetlight or telephone post is within your hedge then your hedge needs to be cut back.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Lengthsmen have been clearing paths to ease accessibility for all us. Thank you, Phil and Ian.

We are proud to have residents in our community who answered the call for help in response to the Covid-19 alert. The HelpHaywoods group has been managed by Anne-Marie Rattray along with Cllr Colin Rattray and their children. They have co-ordinated HelpHaywoods to run errands, fetch shopping and prescriptions for residents who had difficulty in carrying out their own chores due to lockdown. We are immensely proud of their achievements.

We would like to join with residents in expressing our thanks and gratitude to all the businesses in the village who have worked so hard to meet the needs of the community through the difficult times of these last few months. It would be unfair to mention establishments by name as we may inadvertently leave one out. However, the Parish Council would like to add their thanks to our local shops, pharmacy, garden centres, car maintainers and everyone who has helped to make the lives of our villagers a little easier.

The efforts of the In Bloomers have also played their part in making our villages look attractive as we have walked around on our

daily walks, as have the endeavours of the litter pickers who are referred to elsewhere in this Newsletter.

It has been disappointing to see the anti-social behaviour that our community has experienced recently. It seems that following lockdown, many visitors have become litterlouts. It is not just locally but in many parts of the country. It is an aspect of behaviour to which there seems no answer, but disappointing, nevertheless. Likewise, we have been subjected to visitors who drive to our lovely part of the world and then park their car anywhere, causing stress and ill feeling to our residents.

We are trying to work through these issues with the legislation and the authority that we have but we would ask that if you see any unpleasant incidents, please do not put yourselves at risk. However, a photograph and a call to the police would help us all.

On behalf of the Parish Councillors, the Clerk, and all staff, thank you for your continued support. We are trying our best to serve the community as best we can. Please let us know if you have any ideas or comments to help us ... and please stay safe

CLLR WENDY WELLS

Hello everyone, I had hoped that this newsletter would bring you a summary of village activity over the last three months. As you are aware, a lot of plans have been postponed or changed due to the different society that we find ourselves in.

Our VE Day celebrations became 'virtual' and the Music Festival will not be happening this year. However, the change in habits has led to a lot of us walking more and seeking footpaths that are new to us. I am proud that a Parish Council committee led by Cllr. Annette Bloor has been working hard to identify, map and catalogue our local footpaths. Where areas of these have needed work to clear and make good, the

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2020

Building on the success of our Christmas lights events over the past 2 years, we had decided that Colwich & the Haywoods Christmas lights would be even bigger & better in 2020. We had hoped to have more lights throughout the village and a grand switch-on event at the Jubilee Playing Field. However, the happenings of the last 4 months have meant that planning for this has not been possible. Not only have we been unable to meet & discuss new ideas but it is not possible to predict what the next 4 months will bring. Warnings of a second wave of the virus makes a formal social event look very uncertain.

However, what the Parish Council can guarantee is that there will be lights, at least as many as last year & hopefully with some additions. We are particularly aware that Great Haywood was left in the dark last year after a failure of the source of power on Christmas Eve. The switch on date is set for Saturday 28th November, although this will probably have to be remotely carried out if it is not possible to have a public event. We are also hoping to be able to hold a best-decorated house/garden as we did last year with entries sought from both households and businesses across the parish.

THE GREAT BRITISH SEPTEMBER CLEAN

Join the Keep Britain Tidy campaign for the Great British September Clean from 11th – 27th September 2020, to help bring our community back together to clean up our streets, parks and open spaces.

COLWICH PARISH 2020 SCARECROW FESTIVAL

We have all missed many of our favourite community events and fundraising opportunities this year so Colwich Parish Council would like to announce the first SCARECROW FESTIVAL. We think it would be great to have a scarecrow display around the Villages which people can visit as part of their daily exercise.

Let us make this a two-weekend event by displaying the scarecrows for the weekends of Saturday/Sunday 5th & 6th September and then again on Saturday/Sunday 12th/13th September.

Scarecrows can be made from whatever you have to hand around the house and should be displayed in your front gardens. Let us know if you are displaying a scarecrow and we will add you to the list which we will make available on our website and the Clerk's Facebook page. Entry form enclosed which should be returned to the Council by 5th September 2020. Only officially entered scarecrows will be eligible for the competition.

We will make a list of scarecrows available on our website and Facebook pages together with a map showing their location which you can download and print. **Voting:** We would like the winner to be voted for by residents so please take the time to tell us which is your favourite scarecrow. You can vote by email to the Clerk or by Facebook Messenger to "Michael Colwich Clerk". Votes need to be submitted by Friday 18th September 2020.

All donations received will be given to the Council's Charity of the Year "Little Laura". Winners to be announced at the delayed Parish Assembly in the autumn alongside the Photograph of the Year and Citizen of the Year.

PLASTIC FREE COLWICH & THE HAYWOODS

During lockdown the amount of waste we have in our households has increased. Some packaging, for instance crisp, biscuits and chocolate packets, coffee pods and “Pringles” tubes, that cannot go in the blue bin, can, however, be used by Terracycle to be made it into new products e.g. tables; slides etc. Terracycle give money for the weight of goods collected and this all goes towards the Childhood Cancer Parents Alliance. So far, Tranquillity has raised £1,422 for the charity showing just what a difference a little change can make.

I have started exploring new paths around the parish. Unfortunately, the reoccurring view was of litter. It may not be our litter, but it they are our streets and village and I felt that I could make a small difference. It is a thankless task as often the same areas are surrounded by rubbish later that week, but it certainly gave my walks a purpose. Discarding the rubbish afterwards was so I have contacted the Borough Council to ask for more half waste/half recycling bins.

You may also be interested in an online Sustainable conference, run by Jen Gale, with the message to start your journey with what you have as small changes can make a huge difference. <https://www.asustainablelife.co.uk/the-sustainableish-online-festival/>

KATIE REED

IMPROVEMENTS AT THE JPF

Last autumn we advised that the existing facilities at the Jubilee Playing Field were to be reviewed and work has begun on the access and car parking facilities. You will no doubt have noticed the flooding that regularly occurs in the overflow car park making the area unusable. The existing foul and surface water drainage systems have been investigated, cleaned, and mapped and further work is in progress to determine how best to dispose of the surface water from both the building’s roof and the car park surface in a sustainable manner to prevent further flooding; it is hoped to complete this work before the end of the year. Once completed, the intention is then to improve the car park surface.

Those eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed the new concrete path between the front wall and the path in front of the building. This is the first part of works to install a new pedestrian entrance and soon a short section of the wall will be removed and a gated entrance provided to improve access to the JPF when the main vehicular gates are closed.

Other developments are being planned to include the refurbishment of the public toilets and the provision of further sporting and/or recreational facilities that are suitable for all age groups and abilities to enjoy. The previous article suggested various leisure and sporting facilities that could be provided and sought further feedback on what types of facilities the community would like to see, and some suggestions have been received. Feedback to date supports the provision of a football pitch, outdoor gym equipment, and on-field facilities to support village fetes. To help provide these facilities s106 funding is being sought as is the use of HS2 Community Funds.

There is still time to forward your suggestions for the JPF and if you have any ideas for improvements or the provision of additional facilities please contact the Clerk or forward details to one of the following Councillors: Cllr Ben Walters; Cllr Colin Rattray; Cllr Robert Harris; Cllr Andy Dunn.

CLLR DUNN

VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

The VTS Committee has decided it is not feasible to re-open the service for the time being. They will review the situation at their September meeting. We are all extremely sad that our clients continue to be left without our service for we do like to help them, but it is impracticable to re-open at the present time.

LINDA FORD, VTS SECRETARY

COLWICH & HAYWOODS TWINNING ASSOCIATION

The Twinning Association commenced this year with a full programme of events to take us through to October and our biennial trip to Rimbach. In actuality, we managed the first two activities before all events had to be cancelled including the Skittles Evening scheduled for September 5th.

We have, regrettably, decided to cancel this year’s trip as there was a general reluctance to take the risk of travelling.

Much as our hosts enjoy our company, and we theirs, none of us relished the thought of being locked down in Germany for 2 weeks or even more. In consequence the trip is off and hopefully we shall be able to rearrange for next year, possibly in the spring when anyone who is interested in joining us will be more than welcome.



YVETTE LYCETT

FLOWER & VEGETABLE SHOW

The Haywoods Flower and Vegetable Show 2020 has been cancelled due to social distancing requirements. However, the team behind the Show have not laid down tools and we hope you haven’t either! So we are hosting a Virtual Show online this year, to keep the Village Show vibe going. There will be a scaled back version of the schedule, but we took the most popular classes from previous shows, and hope that you continue to grow, tend, make, bake and create in true ‘Dig For Victory’ style, so that you can find something to enter and brighten up computer screens across the Parish!

The Virtual Show will operate via an all new, dedicated website www.haywoodsvirtualshow.co.uk and our existing Facebook page: Haywoods Flower and Vegetable Show. Keep an eye out on Facebook and on www.haywoodsflowerandvegshow.com for news on when the new website goes live. It will have all the information you need to enter photographs of your exhibits, the rules and details of how to vote for your favourite - yes, for one year only, you are the judges! The results from the voting will be announced on the new website. No trophies will be awarded, just the warm glow of satisfaction for the winners! Please note that we have brought forward the date of the Virtual Show to Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th August, with results published on Monday 31st August.

We hope you all have a happy, healthy and productive summer, and look forward to seeing lots of entries for the Show! Good Luck! from The Haywoods Flower and Vegetable Show Society.



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