



Colwich Parish Council

INCORPORATING WOLSELEY BRIDGE, COLWICH, GREAT HAYWOOD & LITTLE HAYWOOD

NEWSLETTER CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Winter 2016

No. 91

It is an encouraging fact that there are so many in our Parish that give an enormous amount of their time making the place better for us all to live in both at a personal level as well as from a practical level. We have therefore decided to launch an annual "Citizen of the Year" award to someone in our Parish who is making a significant difference, often 'behind the scenes' and out of sight. 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. The Council will look through the entries and decide a winner - to be announced at the Annual Parish meeting in May 2017. Needless to say, Councillors, Officials and their immediate families will be excluded from entering!



Cllr Andy Cooper

FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SHOW

This year's Show was held on 4th September in the Little Haywood Village Hall. We had a good turnout with several new entrants, who we hope will return next year!

The Committee would like to give a huge THANK YOU to everyone who entered or visited. It's always so lovely to see what everyone has been growing and making,



and we hope that having the Show to aim for may actually encourage people to have a go at something new or to rediscover forgotten talents. We have classes

for growing produce and flowers, baking, preserves, handicrafts, art, photography and floral art. We also have a children's section which was really popular this year. Have a go, you may even win!

The 2017 Schedule will be published early in the New Year so you know what's included before you start planting. If you have any suggestions of what we could include, or if you have had any other thoughts on how the Show runs, please let us know via email: enquiries@haywoodsflowerandvegshow.com

Don't forget to keep an eye on our website for news of the Schedule at: haywoodsflowerandvegshow.com.

A full list of winners is on the Parish Council website.

Yvette Lycett



TRIATHLON

Congratulations to Daisy Vanderwyk who completed her first kids triathlon organised by UK Triathlon at Trentham on 24th September 2016. She completed a 50-metre swim in Trentham Lake, a 2-km cycle ride and a 1-km run.

Daisy was inspired to compete after taking part in the Iron Kids run earlier this year as part of Ironman70.3 at Shugborough. She decided to raise funds for Cancer Research and so far has raised the grand sum of £616.50.

Daisy's mum Joanne said "Daisy hopes to compete in more triathlons as she enjoyed this one so much even though she hated the swim as the lake was freezing!"

Well done Daisy!

PICTURES ON THE WEBSITE

The Parish Council's new website is up and running at: www.colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk

Currently, there are a number of wonderful photographs scrolling through the screens courtesy of Dawn Lockett. The Council would love to receive more photographs, from the many budding amateur photographers in the parish, showing different aspects of our villages, the surrounding countryside through the year and especially our villagers. The Council's favourite photographs will be added to the website each season. The 'Photo of the Year' will be announced during the Annual Parish Meeting to be held at Colwich & Little Haywood Village Hall in May 2017. Please send any photographs to the Parish Clerk.

YOUTH COUNCIL

The Council has resolved to create a Youth Council. As announced previously, a steering group was set up over the summer. Young People from this group have put their names forward to be the inaugural members of the Council including: Francesca; Ellie; Jacob; Tom; Tolly; Reuben; Archie; Louise and Natasha. The Council is believed to be one of first in Staffordshire and aim to enable the younger generation of the Parish to have a greater input into issues that affect them and to get more involved in local groups and associations. The first meeting was held on 8th December.

Cllr Adam Billingsley

FRACKING

Fracking is a general term used to describe the extraction of shale gas from deep underground. It is a highly technical process pumping water and chemicals under high pressure into the ground strata forcing shale gas to the surface for collection and use. It is a controversial process, with many environmentalists concerned about the impact on our underground water systems etc.

The Government has to balance the need to ensure the UK has an adequate energy supply against the many environmental concerns each method brings (e.g. wind farms and wildlife, nuclear power and its inherent risks, carbon fuels and pollution etc.)

Fracking's big question is where is the best location to extract these viable gas deposits? Before exploration commences, an extraction company would need to negotiate a special licence from the Government which gives a limited period in which to explore the presence and viability of shale gas. We have been advised by Staffordshire County Council (SCC) that there are no such "PEDL" licences in our area.

Once a licence has been obtained, planning permission for exploration would be sought through the normal channels. If the results of exploration suggest extraction is viable then further planning permission would need to be sought to carry out a full-scale extraction.

SCC does not have a policy either for or against fracking and would treat each case on its individual merits against normal planning constraints. The Parish Council would also very much welcome your opinions on the subject.

Cllr Kellie Cowlshaw



By the time you receive this Newsletter, we will be heading into the Christmas season with autumn and the harvest a rapidly fading memory. However, before we leave the year it would be good to send a huge vote of thanks to the St Stephen's fund raising team for their Harvest themed quiz show gave a very entertaining evening to all those who took part. As part of the same seasonal celebrations the annual Farmers' Harvest Service was held at High Coley farm with nearly 200 people in attendance raising funds to support local charities.

Cllr Andy Cooper

PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET

The Parish Council has now set its budget for 2017/18 which will see a 1.9% increase (equivalent to £1.89 per year or 4p per week) on a Band D property.

The Council has decided that there are a number of important projects to progress next year.

The Council will look to fill two part-time positions to cover, amongst other roles, the maintenance of the JPF and toilets; grass cutting and clearing footpaths and gullies etc. rather than using contractors. The majority of funds for these posts will be found from savings elsewhere. The Council has allocated £20,000 to renew the footpath along Mill Lane as well as for traffic calming under the bridge. An initial £10,000 has been earmarked towards a new burial site/garden of remembrance in the parish complementing the funds from Colwich Union of Remembrance and Burial. £5,000 has been set aside to renew the worn out noticeboards together with a new one at the JPF with a section dedicated to community groups' news and £10,000 towards a new toilet block at the JPF.

The Council has also started considering more long-term projects including the proposed footpath from the Memorial Hall carpark to the Surgery and a centrally located War Memorial, as detailed in the Chairman's report. Approximately £5,000 has been allocated to each with the intention to allocate additional funds in future years to ensure the monies are available to the Council when the projects are ready to proceed. By forward planning and allocating a small amount each year the Council aims to avoid being forced to raise the full amount in one go, as happened with the previous precept.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Done and dusted! Our plan has finally been formally made with Stafford Borough Council approving it on 22nd November. So what next? Well – there is now an opportunity to develop our own local "Bio-diversity plan". We are all aware of the beautiful countryside in which we live, so the Council is considering developing a detailed plan which will describe how we and fellow parishioners with the backing of land owners, can support this resource and see it enjoyed in a coordinated manner. We will work with organisations such as the Wildlife Trust and Cannock Chase AONB, to develop the plan. This will not be as weighty as our Neighbourhood Plan, nor will it hold the same legal status, but it will provide a good basis detailing what we have and how we can work towards its preservation and enhancement. If you are interested in getting involved, please let the clerk know or contact Cllr Lyall as she is heading up the working party taking this forward.

Cllr Andy Cooper

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

When the current Parish Council took office we were keen that we should become as forward looking as possible rather than just reacting to events that come our way. To that end we instigated the annual strategy review to enable councillors to get together informally and consider what needs to be done around the Parish. This review in turn enables us to take a detailed look at Council finances and set budgets and the precept accordingly. Last year you will recall that we realised that years of lowering the precept, whilst spending on major projects, had not left us as financially able as we could have been. This resulted in the higher than normal rise Council Tax.

We have carried out the same process this year, as detailed above. The changes in precept this year are less than 2% - equivalent to between 3p and 8p per week.

As some of you will have noticed, the hedge in Mill Lane has at long last been cut back improving the view through the bridge for road users. This has exposed the old pavement which the Council is now looking at getting repaired to improve safety on that stretch. At the same time, we are in negotiation with Staffordshire County Council to improve safety for pedestrians under the bridge.

In support of road safety around the Parish, we now have our own Community Speed Safety team, (details below), who will be out and about with speed cameras. If anyone is caught exceeding the speed limit, then they will be notified to the Police. Please respect the speed limits around the villages – they are for the benefit of all road users and pedestrians, especially our younger and older residents. If you are interested in getting involved in this project, then please contact Cllr Andy Dunn and training can be provided.

You may also have noted the poor condition of many of our Parish Noticeboards, so therefore we are planning a programme of replacement. These will have a common design and look much smarter than the existing ones.

The Parish remembers its war dead with memorials based in the Memorial Hall and our three churches. This means that we don't have a central single monument like so many other Parishes around us and we end up alternating our remembrance services across the Parish. We believe it would be good to change from this variable routine and so the Council is looking at the feasibility of locating a central memorial (probably in an area set aside in the JPF car park). This idea is very much in the early days so we welcome your general comments on the subject. I believe it



Councillor Andy Cooper

would be good to look to organising special fund raising events and sponsorship if we go ahead.

Staffordshire County Council is working on closing the gap in funding loss from central government which is being withdrawn by 2020. At the moment around 70% of their funds are used on protecting vulnerable people – young and old (a legal requirement), and recent news programmes have also highlighted the pressure that these services are already under. Ultimately, this means that increasing amenity work and other maintenance items are going to be pushed further down the line to Parish level. This has led us to look seriously at bringing back the traditional "lengthsman" service to ensure our Parish is kept in as good a state of repair as is practicably possible.

More details of these projects and others will be provided in future Parish Newsletters and on our new website in due course.

I can assure you that the 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 a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Cllr Andy Cooper

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

In response to concerns raised about the excessive speed of vehicles through our villages Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) was approached to provide a presentation to the Council on the introduction of a Community Speed Watch Group (CSWG).

CSW is where Police trained residents monitor speeds of vehicles using a radar device. Throughout Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent there are 39 active groups with a further 20 in the pipeline. The objective of the CSW activity is to: reduce the speed of vehicles to the speed limit; increase awareness of the dangers of travelling at an inappropriate speed; reduce the risk of injury to pedestrians and drivers; and to improve the quality of life in our community. When a vehicle is caught speeding, the details are recorded and submitted to the police who send a letter to the registered keeper that their vehicle has been noted to have exceeded the speed limit, the dangers of doing so and the consequences if they are found speeding again. In cases of repeat offences (even from other Groups) further contact from the police can be expected.

The Colwich CSWG has now been set up and six initial sites have been identified in Great Haywood, Little Haywood, and Bishton and the volunteers will soon be able to start the first event. Please contact me if you are interested in becoming a CSW volunteer.

Cllr Andy Dunn
Colwich CSW Co-ordinator



HS2

We held a meeting with HS2 Ltd representatives in October where we raised numerous concerns including road congestion; noise during construction and the impact of the maintenance/construction depot sited on the A51 just north of Great Haywood. The Council was very concerned about access onto the A51 by Roseacre and how they will try to ensure this would not become more arduous that it already is!

We also asked about Community Funding. Current thinking is for this to come via the County Council. We were concerned about this given the funding crisis the County Council finds itself in. Would any of these monies find their way to the community? There was supposed to be an engineer representative at the meeting but he was stuck in Manchester. If only there was an easier way of getting there!

Cllr Adam Billingsley



TWINNING VISIT TO RIMBACH

On the 22nd October, 29 lucky Colwich and Haywoods residents were transported to Rimbach, staying in Leuven in Belgium overnight on both legs of the trip.

We all had a terrific stay, the highlights of which were the visit to Strasbourg including the European Parliament and a visit to Heidelberg with its fairy tale castle which dominates the town. Other visits included a wine-tasting and a visit to Carl Benz' town – the park which features a garage housing the first Mercedes Benz prototype and the museum where we were able to see a range of vehicles designed by Carl Benz.

This was not just a holiday – I would say that this was more of a cultural visit, especially because on the Wednesday evening we were treated to an organ recital in a local church. It was also a cultural visit because we stayed with German families – tasting their food, listening to their views and experiencing their way of life.

Everyone was very friendly and it just shows that the value of a self-funding visit like this (everyone paid for him/herself) is that extra dimension – almost seeing the region through German eyes. I think that we realise that many people who live in The Haywoods, old and young, could take advantage of this type of experience, albeit tweaked to appeal to the young.

Cllr Sylvia Gibson



A REMINDER TO DOG WALKERS

Failure to clear up after your dog can result in prosecution. Bins are placed in strategic locations throughout the parish.

When walking footpaths in more rural locations where there are no nearby bins it remains the responsibility of owners to collect and remove their dog's mess. It is environmentally and socially unacceptable to bag it and leave it piled up in gateways or hanging from branches.

Poo bags, even those purporting to be biodegradable, take many months or years to decompose and can leave a sludge of toxic chemicals which are a danger to wildlife and children. There is simply no point in bagging dog mess only to abandon it; thereby compounding the problem with piles of unsightly and smelly poo bags littering access points to local beauty spots.

If the prospect of clearing up after your dog in areas without immediate access to bins is unduly onerous you may wish to consider restricting yourselves to those areas in which bins are more readily available, thus leaving the countryside for those better able to behave responsibly

Cllr Jane Featonby

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Blymhill Community Hall recently hosted the Lichfield Diocesan Churchyard Awards' presentation at which St. Michael and All Angels' was to receive a Gold Award for the second year. Unbeknownst to us we also received a Nature-Friendly Award for the third year running. We were delighted!

St Michael's also received an award as the overall Best-Kept Churchyard Award. Roy and Yvonne Munro received the very heavy granite plaque from Mrs Sue Cooper of the charitable organisation, "Caring for God's Acre". This is the first time that it has been won by a church in this area since it was inaugurated in 1993. The majority of previous winners have been churches in Shropshire. We were, to say the least, flabbergasted and highly delighted. Roy and Yvonne and the other volunteers have made a huge difference to the churchyard over the past years. These volunteers are to be congratulated on their hard work.

William Ives

COUNCILLOR KELLIE COWLISHAW

I have lived all my life in the Haywood's where my family history can be traced back for over 100 years. I attended St Johns RC Primary and then onto Blessed William Howard in Stafford.



On leaving school, I worked with young adults with severe learning and physical disabilities, and then trained to do community nursing and Palliative care. In the last ten years I have worked as an Administrator for Ophthalmology/Orthoptics Departments based at County Hospital at Stafford.

I am the Warden for St. Stephens Church in Great Haywood and Chair for their Fundraising Committee where we recently raised over £800 at our Autumn Charity Quiz night, held 8th October.

Whilst finding this first term as a Parish Councillor challenging I also find it very rewarding being able to represent those in the community I live within.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Skip: 14th January; 18th February and 11th March 2017

Tree Collection at JPF/Wolseley: 3rd - 10th January 2017

Office Closed: 26th December – 2nd January inclusive

Best Kept Village AGM - 7th February 2017 @ 7:30 pm in the Parish Centre



Chairman: Cllr. Andy Cooper

E: andy.cooper@colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk

Clerk: Michael Lennon

E: clerk@colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk

Parish Office: St Mary's Road, Little Haywood, ST18 0TX

T: 01889 882665

facebook: www.facebook.com/colwich.clerk

www.colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk