



INCORPORATING WOLSELEY BRIDGE, COLWICH, GREAT HAYWOOD & LITTLE HAYWOOD

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025 No.121

FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SHOW



With Spring in the air, the Haywoods Flower and Vegetable Show Society are looking forward with hope for a successful growing season in 2025! Birds are nesting, Spring bulbs are flowering, and the sun has found its way through the winter clouds - it's a magical time of year to look ahead. Seeds are already going into (peat free) compost, but don't worry there's still time to dust off the seed trays and trowels. If you're more comfortable in the kitchen than the greenhouse, you could have a go at baking something you haven't tried before, so by September you'll be a master!

The Show this year will be held as usual at Colwich and Little Haywood Village Hall on Chilwell Avenue, Little Haywood on Sunday 14th September. Entrants stage their exhibits between 9.00am and 11.00am, with doors open to the public at 2.30pm. Presentation of awards is usually around 3.30pm.

By the time you read this we will have reviewed the schedule and hopefully tamed our ideas from the extravagant to the achievable! Please keep an eye on our website: haywoodsflowerandvegshow.com and our Facebook page: [Haywoods Flower and Vegetable Show](#) for news of when and where you can find the new schedule – hot off the press!

We'll keep you posted, and we look forward to a great display of colour, talent and enthusiasm in September! We would also love to welcome new friends onto our team, to secure the future of the Show, so do drop us a line if you're interested.



HEARTS FOR THE MEMORY



Following an article on social media, the Council approached local craft group Craft & Chat to ask if they would crochet some small hearts. These hearts are placed in the hands of deceased patients and a matching heart given to the bereaved family.

As is typical of our fantastic community, they rose to the challenge and delivered the first 29 within a couple of weeks which were delivered to County Hospital. Chat & Knit, have since made a bag full of hearts, as well as bonnets, blankets and toys for the premature baby ward.



SHAPING SHUGBOROUGH DESIGNING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The Shaping Shugborough project marks the most ambitious transformation of the estate to date, aiming to create a safer, more accessible, and environmentally sustainable visitor experience. With planning approval granted in February 2024, preparations have been in full swing, and construction is now beginning. Over the next 18 months, Shugborough will undergo significant changes, with a grand reopening planned for Spring 2026.

A key aspect of the project is relocating the vehicle entrance to the Lichfield Gates, enhancing safety and visibility for arriving visitors. This change will prevent cars from driving through the historic parkland, allowing for the restoration of historic paths and the reopening of Lichfield Drive. Visitors can expect a refreshed landscape that brings Shugborough's heritage to



A brand-new visitor reception will be built, offering modern facilities such as accessible and family-friendly toilets, a coffee shop, a dog wash station, and a visitor shuttle

drop-off area. This will make the estate more inclusive and enjoyable for everyone, including families and those with additional accessibility needs.

Sustainability is at the heart of the Shaping Shugborough project. The new reception will be constructed using a timber structure with straw bale infill, sourced locally, helping to minimise its environmental impact. By prioritising renewable materials, the project aligns with Shugborough's long-term commitment to sustainability.

While construction is ongoing, some paths, including those through former sports pitches, Lichfield Drive, and Bluebell Walk, may be temporarily closed. Any emergency closures will be updated on Shugborough's website and social media. The team is working hard to minimise disruptions and will reopen closed routes as soon as it is safe to do so.

This exciting project will enhance Shugborough's visitor experience while preserving its rich heritage, securing its legacy for generations to enjoy.

BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2025/26

The Council recognises that, along with most organisations, a large percentage of our budget is to cover staffing costs. As a Council, we support paying our staff the appropriate salary for the work they undertake. It was with this in mind that the Council undertook a review of pay bands in 2023 with the corresponding increase in the budget in 2024/25. Moreover, the Council took on additional staff, from April 2024 to provide a better service to residents.

The grass verges won't be cut without staff. The works along Coley Lane won't happen without staff. The JPF won't be maintained without staff. The summer fete won't be organised without staff. The Christmas lights switch-on event won't happen without staff. The Council cannot run without staff. As Staffordshire moves towards Unitary Authority status, in whatever format, our staff will become even more important, should services be moved to parish and town councils. It is in this respect that a new Stafford Town Council is being considered.

Besides the decisions taken by Council, there are numerous strains on the budget from matters outside our control:

- The increase in the Employers National Insurance contribution, from April 2025, coupled with a lowering of the employers exempt amount.
- Under the Pensions Act 2008, employees earning more than £833 per month, MUST be enrolled into a pension to which we MUST contribute.
- The increase in national minimum wage and the amending of the local government pay bands which are agreed between principal authorities (Borough and County Councils) and the local government trade unions.

Being mindful of these pressures, the Council looked carefully at the overall budget to assess what savings could be made, without impacting on the quality of service we offer to you, our residents. The agreed budget saw an increase of just £4,941 from £285,434 to £290,375. This equates to an increase of just 1.73%.

In setting its 2024/25 budget the Council looked at its long-term projects and decide to put a number on hold and to use the funds to reduce the overall charge to residents. The available funds are much lower this year. Consequently, the 1.73% increase in our overall budget has seen a larger charge on the Council Tax and thus to individual households.

The Council uses a Band D equivalent Tax Base in calculating the individual household charge. Properties range from Band A, paying 6/9ths, through to Band H, paying 18/9ths of the average Band D as determined by the Valuation Office on the notional value of a property on 1st April 1991. The Band D equivalent is then adjusted for any discounts, e.g. single occupancy and the Collection Rate, or the percentage of each pound recovered from billed households. Sadly, for various reasons not everyone can or does pay their full Council Tax.

In 2017/18 our tax base was 1,686.41 (Band D equivalents). This rose steadily to 1,922.40 in 2024/25. Unfortunately, due to the economic situation we have seen a sharp reduction in our tax base. Overall, we have about 2,250 properties in the parish, but these are now equivalent to only 1,890.59 Band Ds. This reduction in Band D equivalents has added about 2% to individual household bills.

The Finance Committee and Full Council considered several different options on how to finance the budget this year. The 3 main options were:

- Use no reserves and place the entire budget, minus anticipated income, onto the precept.
- Use the maximum level from reserves to reduce the 2025/26 budget. However, this would see a significant increase in 2026/27 with no increase in the overall budget.
- Use some reserves in 2025/26 and further reserves, if possible, in 2026/27.

The Council went with this final option.

	2024/25	2025/26
Total budget	£285,434	£290,375
Resources	£40,490	£41,633
Employment	£209,769	£225,567
Communications	£2,900	£2,900
Events	£17,500	£16,500
Environment	£2,175	£3,775
Deductions	-£70,584.02	-£49,208.98
Reserves	-£56,000	-£32,000
Income	-£6,600	-£6,798
Central Govt Grant	-£7,984.02	-£10,410.98
Net precept charge	£214,849.87	£241,166.25
Tax Base	1,922.40	1,890.59
Band D	£111.76	£127.56
Change	+21%	+14.1%

VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The last three months have been busy & eventful for the Parish Council. No sooner is the Christmas period over & the festive lights turned off than thoughts must turn to matters financial. The Parish budgets must be set & the sum precept decided upon in anticipation for the new financial year. Our Finance Officers and Finance Committee had been working on their recommendations since before Christmas & these were put before the February Full Council for ratification. It had also been decided to bring the Parish Assembly forward to early March this year, so that the Parish Chairman could present the decisions regarding the Budget and Precept to villagers as soon as possible. The due deadlines were met and at the Parish Assembly on 10th March the Parish Chairman gave a presentation outlining the process that has is gone through to arrive at the decisions regarding our budgets & precept (stated elsewhere in this newsletter).

Meanwhile, Spring was slowly showing signs of arriving. As always, our villages look delightful as the Spring bulbs come out & our thanks are due to our Lengthsmen and members of the In Bloom Group. The purple carpet of crocus at both entrances to the villages from the A51 are of particular note, painstakingly planted several years ago by a group of Bloomers. The wild daffodils going over the Butts, planted by the Lengthsmen and a former Councillor, always look so delicate and pretty & are equally noteworthy along with all the other flower beds that are coming into bloom.

Work continues on the Parish Council's other projects including planning upgrades on the Jubilee Playing Field and slowly bringing the Coley Lane Platinum Remembrance Garden into being. We hope that as the year progresses you will begin to see real progress on these two initiatives.

Finally, the joint venture between the Borough Council and the Parish Council to refurbish the St Mary's Playpark has come to fruition. A suitable tribute to the arrival of Spring has been to see all the children out in the sunshine, using and enjoying the equipment. Not a smart phone in sight! All the young people were far too busy climbing and swinging to have any use for one of those. Long may the Playpark continue to be used to the full for the benefit of all our young families and the quality of life in Colwich and the Haywoods. The Parish Council is here to serve our community. We may not have the resources and ability to meet everybody's needs but we do our best and are always happy to receive your comments and constructive suggestions.

Cllr Annette Bloor

DEFIBRILATORS



There are 10 defibrillators situated across the villages, 5 of which were purchased and are owned by the parish council on behalf of the residents. These defibrillators save lives!

The Council defibrillators may be found at: Great Haywood Sports and Social Club (GHS&SC), the JPF, the Parish Office, the Allotments, Coley Lane and Colwich & Little Haywood Village Hall, Chilwell Avenue.

The others are located at: Canalside Farm Shop, 1 School Lane, Great Haywood, Oakedge Shooting Club, The Wolseley Arms PH and Oakedge Park. These are only available during working hours and may not be available at weekends. The GHS&SC defibrillator was recently used in a medical emergency. West Midlands Ambulance Service used to replace the pads after use. However, upon collecting the defibrillator from Stafford we were informed that they no longer replace the used pads.

The Parish Council are committed to put the residents and visitors to the village's safety first, so having defibrillators situated in strategic places and fully functional is our priority. We have, therefore, created an enhanced budget head to replace used pads. If any residents or local businesses could think of a way of funding the replacement pads could you please contact the Chief Officer.

Cllr Glenn Hall

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AND CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

At the Parish Assembly the Chairman was delighted to announce that the winner of the Citizen of the Year award for 2025 was Mr and Mrs Roger and Julia Hughes for their work over many years with local churches including the renovation and installation of the kitchen at St Michael's and monthly lunches for over 17 years as well as the Age Concern "Cooking at Home" initiative, local choirs, guiding rainbows, brownies, guides, queen guides and as a divisional commissioner.



The award was presented at the St Micheal's monthly lunch.



This year the Council agreed to issue a Chairman's Award in 2025, for only the second time. The winner was Cllr Christine Hill who has been a stalwart of numerous community groups for many decades including WI including establishing the Flower and Vegetable Show, Katherine House Hospice Support Group, Twinning and the Haywood Society. Moreover, Cllr Hill was also consort during her aunt's year as Mayor of Stafford.



ST MARY'S PLAYPARK

The sun had certainly got his hat on and was out to play on the afternoon of Friday 7th March, as the children came home from school to find the playpark on St Mary's, which had been in need of refurbishment for a number of years, open. It didn't take long for the news to get around and the play equipment was very quickly in use.

The Borough Council owns the field and the play facilities. Following liaison with the Parish Council the decision was taken that a total renewal of all the equipment was needed. Play equipment is an expensive commodity and so section 106, developer contribution, money was allocated to finance the venture. This money is the levy on property developers to provide leisure amenities for the communities where housing development is taking place. Over the last 10 years a significant number of houses have been built in the Parish and consequently a significant amount of money has now accrued. The majority of the money has been earmarked for improvements to the Jubilee Playing Field, as detailed previously.

The Borough Council were responsible for obtaining the design and commissioning the contractors to carry out the work. Kompan supplied the equipment and the speed with which the ground was prepared and the equipment installed was impressive, a matter of six weeks, start to finish. The Borough will shortly be handing the playing field over to the Parish Council on a lease basis to maintain it. Emptying the waste bins will remain as the Borough's responsibility.

Let us hope that the sun continues to shine on us all throughout the summer so that our children can continue to enjoy this wonderful new amenity. Happy playing, young people and do be careful and respectful towards everyone using the play equipment.



DATES FOR THE DIARY

Full Council meetings

Annual Meeting – 1st May 2025

Monthly Meeting - 5th June 2025

Events

VE Day – 8th May 2025

Summer Fete – 21st June 2025

VJ Day – 15th August 2025

Christmas Lights – 29th November 2025



A date for your diary:
Colwich Allotments Open day
Sunday 20th July 2025
From 10am to 4pm

DIARY OF A LENGTHSMAN

The working life of a Lengthsman is varied. During the early part of the year, for

instance, our Lengthsmen have been hard at work making improvements around the villages & cleaning pavements and gutters.



Their efforts on Coley Lane have been particularly significant uncovering the sandstone embankment that has for years been hidden behind soil & vegetation. Unfortunately, they are not able to do all the outstanding work around the Parish due to their limited hours & some tasks that are beyond their remit, but they make a real difference in the villages, and we are lucky to have them.



Unfortunately, one of the gabions installed near the canal bridge on Trent Lane was damaged. The Lengthsmen have now installed a new cage.



The mowing season is now upon us, and they can be seen around keeping the grass down & at the same time taking care to ensure that wild areas are kept in some places for the benefit of wildlife & plants.



Chairman: Wendy Plant
Chief Officer: Michael Lennon
Head Lengthsman: Phil Russell
Parish Office: St Mary's Road, Little Haywood, ST18 0TX



Colwich Parish Council

E: wendy.plant@colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk
E: clerk@colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk
E: lengthsman@colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk



@colwich.parish.council

T: 07378145397
T: 07378177241
T: 01889 882665

www.colwichparishcouncil.gov.uk