



Lapley, Stretton
& Wheaton Aston
Parish Council

NEWS & VIEWS

Issue 2 / 2021

New Chairman and Vice-Chairman– At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 6 May 2021, Cllr Winnie Millington was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council. She will be supported by Cllr Anita Anderson as Vice Chairman.

Cllr Millington and Cllr Anderson, along with the rest of the Parish Council, look forward to working with all residents across the parish.

On behalf of the community and Lapley Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council, Cllr Millington would like to thank Cllr Ted Noblett for his dedication and hard work as Chairman for four years.

Christmas Lights event

We are planning for (and hoping!) that our Christmas light switch on event will be able to go ahead on Saturday 20th November 2021 4:00-6:00pm. We hope to have the usual array of entertainment and stalls but this is all pandemic dependent and the event will only go ahead if we can be sure to keep you safe.

We would like to create a Christmas market feeling this year so would welcome more stalls. Please contact the office on office@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk or Cllr(Sharon)Whittingham s.whittingham@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk for an application form



SMARTWATER™ - You may have noticed the signs above around the village. SmartWater™ is a traceable liquid and forensic asset marking system that is applied to items of value. The liquid leaves a long lasting and unique identifier, whose presence is invisible except under an ultraviolet light. The liquid assigns your possessions with their own unique forensic code, allowing them to be traced back to you and criminals back to the crime.

We have a small number of SmartWater kits for sale at a reduced price of £7 each. If you would like one please contact the Parish office.

Office@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk





Ex-Chairman – Cllr Ted Noblett

The Ex-Chairman's Report - This year the day to day running of the Parish Council has had to accommodate two disrupting events; The closure of the Parish Office at Codsall, (due to the refurbishment of the Business Hub) and the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The closure of the office resulted in the Parish Council Manager and the Assistant Clerk working from home. The Covid-19 Pandemic meant that Parish Council meetings were held remotely on Zoom. The Government has issued its roadmap out of Lockdown and this has generated rules and regulations which have been communicated via the Village Notice Boards and the Parish Council website.

Unfortunately, the Pandemic resulted in the Remembrance Service being cancelled but myself and Cllr Millington were able to lay wreaths on behalf of the Community at the village's War Memorials. The Christmas Lights Switch On, because of Covid-19, could not go ahead as normal but after a short speech in the heavy rain I switched on the lights. On the Banners around the Christmas tree were Elves, drawn to a very high standard, by the children of St Mary's First School.

In spite of the restrictions imposed by Covid-19 the Parish Council has achieved a great deal. A list of the achievements can be viewed in Issue 3/2020 of News & Views. I am pleased to see the following, among the many diverse items, resolved:

- installation of defibrillators
- installed VE75/VJ75 benches in the villages.
- constantly raised issues of Traffic problems on the A5
- creating a map of Parish walks
- SID (Speed Indicator Device) purchased and erected
- Implemented a climate and biodiversity policy
- Installed bird and bug boxes at the play areas

- Part funded "Support Staffordshire" to hold "a thank you" celebration for volunteers in the Parish
- Made donations to voluntary groups such as Community First Responders, Brewood Voluntary Car Scheme and the Monday Lunch Club.
- Take over the maintenance of WA Village Green and the land at Primrose Close both owned by SSC
- Assisted the police with ASB issues
- held wellbeing sessions with St Mary's Church.
- Implemented numerous policies to improve services
- Working with St Mary's School and the Woodland Trust to plant a tree for each pupil at the school
- Installing suggestion boxes in all three villages

Maintenance throughout the parish is an ongoing commitment particularly grass cutting. Grass cutting is required to keep our play areas, verges and all open spaces in an acceptable condition and because of the effects of climate change the season for cutting extends further and further into the Autumn. I would like to express on behalf of the Parish Council our thanks to our main grass cutting contractor Ditton Services for the diligent way they carry out their work.

The Parish Council employ four part-time personnel whose duties include the repair and maintenance of Parish Council property and Litter picking. This year the Parish Council has observed an increase in volunteers working in and around the villages in general tidying and cleaning up operations but primary litter picking. On behalf of the Parish Council I offer our thanks.

The many black and white finger posts, along with the floral displays outside the Village Hall help to give a distinctive look to the Parish. Once again on behalf of the Parish Council I offer our thanks to those involved in their maintenance.

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the Best Kept Village Competition being cancelled along with "2nd World War Enactment and Spectacular" in September. Let us hope these events return to the yearly calendar.

We now have a Speed Indication device (SID) installed near to the entrance of the Village on Ivetsy Road. A reduction to vehicle speeds has been noticed. In other parts of Parish speeds have to be monitored by the Community Speed Watch Team a group of volunteers who have received training from the Police. Numbers are falling. Please volunteer if you can. Get in touch with the Parish Council Manager.

It is becoming apparent that unless the general Public bring to the attention of the County Council, small Roadworks problems such as Potholes, flooding, footpath repairs nothing will be done. The Parish Council do report the deficiencies but please if you see something amiss please report the problem through the dedicated telephone number which can found under Key Contacts. (Page 8)

Lapley Green renovation is virtually complete and a VE75 commemorative bench has been installed on the green and the old telephone box has been transformed into a defibrillator house.

Repair and maintenance to the play areas has taken place throughout the year such as replacing play sand and bark, and repairs to the wooden framing on the play equipment bases.

We are considering the future of Broadholes Lane as the area is under used. Suggestions to date have been allotments, community dog park and an outdoor gym. Residents in the vicinity have been informed and all suggestions are welcome.

As in previous years vandalism is constant problem at Marston Field. Last year the parish Council decided to install a CCTV camera which has reduced the incidents of vandalism. However, some areas of the field could not be viewed from the cameras resulting in a further camera being purchased and installed.

The pandemic has resulted in the Parish Council re-assessing our Risk Assessments in particular to the Play Areas. The Parish Council Manager produced such a comprehensive document that the District Council and the surrounding Parishes have incorporated the document in their Policy Documents.

The meetings between the Police and individual members of the public raising their concerns which have been cancelled will recommence as soon as the Covid regulations allow.

The one major housing development in the village, on Ivetsey Road, has commenced at last. When complete a mixture of houses and bungalows will be built, a total of 34.Units. The houses will be a mixture of purchase, shared ownership and rent.

The West Midlands Interchange Freight Hub, in spite of strenuous opposition from the Local MPs, District Council and the surrounding Parish Councils (including this Parish) the Government Inspector has

approved the development. Opposition to the scheme is still very strong and the opposition will be trying to mitigate as much as possible as more details of the scheme become available.

As a Parish Council we are fully aware of the problem of Climate Change and with this in mind we are aiming to become, a paperless Council. The first step has already been taken in that Councillors have been issued with tablets which enables the Parish Council Manager and the Assistant to transfer and distribute all correspondence, minutes of meetings by electronic transfer thereby saving trees.

Once again, our finances are in order and well managed, and the Internal Auditor has concluded that the Parish Council's system of internal controls are satisfactory.

The External Auditor has also passed the accounts and states that there are no issues to raise for the Council to consider.

Following an analysis of expenditure for year 2020/21 it was recommended by the Forward Planning and Finance Working Group and accepted by the Parish Council that the Precept be decreased by 10.53% for year 2021/2022.

A number of projects are to be completed using accumulated funds largely due to services being unavailable during the Covid Pandemic and a reimbursement from HMRC

The ratio of attendances by the Parish Councillors at the Council Meeting has been very high which has enabled the various points on the agendas to be dealt with in an efficient matter. The public is always in attendance at the meetings and many points raised have found their way onto the agenda and have been acted upon by the Council.

I would like to remind the Parish that Parish Councillors attend not only the regular monthly Parish Council meetings but also some of the Working Group meetings, external meetings and training courses.

Finally, my thanks, as Chairman, to all the Councillors and the Parish Council Manager and Assistant for the work they do on behalf of us all in representing our interests and welfare and my thanks also, on behalf of the Parish Council, to Bev Cross, a diligent and hardworking Councillor, who has had to resign from the Parish Council due Family Matters.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN



Aspire Active Camps - Weekday activity camps for 5-14year olds running Monday 2 - Friday 27 August. Find out more and book at www.aspire-sports.co.uk/active-camps

HOLIDAY Activities AND FOOD

Holiday Activities & Food Scheme - This is for children in receipt of free school meals. FREE access to the Aspire Active Camps plus a free food parcel. Contact leisure@sstaffs.gov.uk. To request access however provide proof of eligibility.

A promotional poster for 'Active Youth Passes'. It features a smiling young man and woman. Text on the poster includes: 'Gym sessions for 13 - 17 year olds', 'Supervised gym access all summer £1 per session', 'ACTIVE YOUTH PASSES', and a list of leisure centres with their respective session times: Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre (Tuesday 6pm-7pm & Wednesday 2:15pm-3:15pm), Codsall Leisure Centre (Thursday & Friday 3:30pm-4:30pm), Penkridge Leisure Centre (Tuesdays & Fridays 4pm-5pm), and Wombourne Leisure Centre (Wednesday and Friday 4pm-5pm). It also states 'PROOF OF AGE MAY BE REQUIRED - ADVANCED BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL - www.sstaffs.gov.uk/space' and features the 'Space Live Laugh Learn' logo. A bottom banner says 'BOOK NOW by calling your nearest leisure centre'.

The Space Scheme – Subsidised swimming, gym sessions and hire charges for the 3G pitches for 13-17 year olds. Find out more at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/leisure/the-space-scheme-2.cfm



Rewilding of the Grass Verges

You have probably noticed that some of the Parish grass verges have been left long cut by South Staffs Council who look after the verges on behalf of Staffs County Council.

The mowing of some grass verges has been reduced to the start and end of the season to allow wildflowers to grow and support an abundance of insects such as bees and butterflies. Love them or loathe them, they left long cut in response to climate change and to encourage biodiversity.

The majority of the highway verges continue to be cut regularly to ensure viability for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.



Broadholes Lane Play Area

We are still looking at options for the use of Broadholes Lane and intend to consult wider once we have received suggestions of what would be appropriate from planning officers at South Staffordshire Council. The area has been under used for some years and could be a great facility if we know what is required. If you have a suggestion please send it in. Current leading suggestions are allotments and an outdoor gym.

News from All Saints and St Mary's Churches - Our four churches (Lapley, Wheaton Aston, Blymhill and Weston under Lizard) have had services every other week since Easter and plan to maintain this pattern through August, September and October. We are conscious that some people are ready to shake off all the restrictions whilst others are understandably cautious. We want people to be comfortable and feel welcome. It is also important that we continue to protect those who are vulnerable. Whilst legal restrictions are lifted, we still have a duty of care for those who come into our churches and there is a great deal of advice we are encouraged to follow (especially the government recommendation to mask in busy places). So, for now

- Where social distancing is possible, we will continue encourage mask wearing.
- Where social distancing is not possible, masks must be worn (unless medically exempt). Where possible provision will be made for those who feel vulnerable to maintain a safe distance from others
- We will continue to ask people to sanitise, and to give contact information for test and trace.
- We will remain in our places to share The Peace rather than moving around and physically greeting others.
- We are asking people, please, to be careful with the physical boundaries of others. Consent will be an important consideration moving forward: please ask before getting close to or physically touching someone.
- We are permitted to sing indoors again but are reminded that this significantly increases the risk of aerosol transmission. When we do sing indoors, we are advised to be masked and distanced, and not sing for long.
- Whilst it is permissible to reintroduce the chalice to communion, we believe it is not wise to do this yet. We are considering how to reintroduce the distribution of both bread and wine without drinking from the shared cup

Our regular Church Services July – October - 1st Sunday of the month	
9.00 am Holy Communion at Lapley	10.30 am Service for All at Weston under Lizard
2nd Sunday of the month	
10.30 am Holy Communion at Blymhill	10.30 am Service for All at Wheaton Aston
3rd Sunday of the month	
9.00 am Holy Communion at Lapley	10.30 am Holy Communion at Weston under Lizard
4th Sunday of the month	
10.30 am Service for All at Blymhill	10.30 am Holy Communion at Wheaton Aston

We will continue to offer our online services, including Morning Prayer on Facebook each Monday – Friday at 9.00am; Holy Communion on Facebook Sunday at 7am; and a variety of forms of afternoon/evening worship on a Sunday. In September, we plan to move our WWW Café and Dying Matters groups from Zoom back into St Mary's. Our monthly service of Healing and Wholeness will also move back into the church buildings. Other Zoom groups and events will remain online for now. We hope to open the Drop in at Wheaton Aston on Wednesdays from 10am-12pm at the beginning of September. (we will look at reopening on Tuesdays at a later date). In addition, we hope to launch our 'Place of Welcome' at All Saints on Thursday mornings from September.

Some special dates for your diary in Lapley and Wheaton Aston

Sunday 29th August – Songs of Praise in the church garden at St Mary's at 10.30am

Saturday 11th September – Ride and Stride (the annual event where cyclists and walkers visit Staffordshire's historic churches.). St Mary's and All Saints will both be open, so do pop in for a chat and a cuppa.

Saturday 25th September – Autumn Fayre at St Mary's from 12.30-3.30pm. Visit us for stalls, refreshments, raffle, tombola and more. All proceeds to our general funds to help keep the churches open after a difficult year.

Sunday 3rd October – Harvest Festival at All Saints at 9.00am*

Saturday 9th October – Messy Harvest on Facebook at 10.00am

Sunday 10th October – Harvest Festival at St Mary's at 10.30am*

**We have continued to support The Well Foodbank throughout lockdown, and we especially welcome your donations of in-date packets and tins etc. at our Harvest Services.*

Youth Alpha - We will be offering a 6-week course for anyone in Years 7-11 who would like to explore Christianity or prepare for Baptism/Confirmation. The course will begin in late September. Please register your interest with Revd Rachel by Sunday 12th September.

There are some exciting new things in the pipeline over the next few months – so please keep your eyes open for news. Don't forget that you can be added to our 'Shed' mailing list to get the weekly news about all the events and services across the Watershed Benefice. Just let us have your email address.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at revrachel@dale@gmail.com. I am, as always, available for anyone who would like to talk or would like me to visit. You don't need to be a regular churchgoer!! Please just ask. Please also check our noticeboards, The Grapevine, www.watershedbenefice.org or Facebook for the most up to date information.

Citizens Advice – Contact Staffordshire South West Citizens Advice Bureau on 03444 111 444

Brewood Voluntary Car Scheme is Back!

Just call the office on 01902 851 786. We're open from 09.30 – 12.00 Monday to Friday. (There is an answerphone out of hours).

Giving as much notice as possible, tell us your name and address, telephone number, destination and the date and time of your appointment.

Covid precautions will apply. You will be advised of these when you make a booking.

As ever, we are looking for new drivers too!

If you would like more information, just call Sofena on the number given above.

Support Staffordshire – offers charities, voluntary and community groups in Staffordshire support, advice and training on how to set up and run your group, support for volunteers and discounted services. Tel 0300 777 1207 or email to info@supportstaffordshire.org.uk

Damage to the Highway - You can report potholes/damaged pavements / problems with lighting columns and road signs on the Staffordshire County Council website, or download the "My Staffs" app, which lets you send in photos and locations straight from your phone.

If you see it, report it! - If you see a crime in progress, call 999 immediately. Please report non-urgent crime including graffiti, anti-social behaviour, and damage by calling the police on 101 or via the police website www.police.uk/pu/contact-the-police/report-a-crime-incident/ Officers can only investigate matters which are reported.

Staffordshire Police Smart Alert

Know what's going on in your area!

Register with Staffordshire Smart Alert to receive crime prevention advice and updates from your local policing team about crime and engagement events.

To sign up please visit our website: www.staffordshiresmartalert.co.uk



Crime Prevention / Cybercrime - There is a wealth of advice on the Staffordshire Police website.

For more information visit:

www.staffordshire.police.uk/crimeprevention

www.staffordshire.police.uk/cybercrime

CrimeStoppers - Give information anonymously. <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/> or Tel: 0800 555 111

South Staffordshire District Council – The Council Offices remain closed to the public and residents should use alternative ways of contacting the Council rather than visiting in person. 'My Account', the Council's online facility, gives residents online access to council services 24/7. You can register or access it at: www.sstaffs.gov.uk/myaccount. Email: info@sstaffs.gov.uk Tel: 01902 696000

South Staffs Community Lottery – You could win up to £25,000, and help support local good causes by taking part in the South Staffordshire Community Lottery. This weekly online lottery takes place every Saturday night at 8pm. To purchase tickets Tel: 01902 213777 or www.southstaffslottery.co.uk

South Staffs Leisure Centres (Penkridge, Codsall, Wombourne & Cheslyn Hay) – Get the latest information about the leisure centres at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/leisure



Garden Waste Collection Service – You can still sign up for the service for 2021-22:

- £43.60 per green bin for the duration of the scheme year
- Permit sticker will be posted to you within 14 days of sign up
- Sign up at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/gardenwaste

South Staffordshire Work Clubs – Need help getting work? Find them on Facebook, Tel: 07718 911367, or email: staffsworkclubs@gmail.com

Staffordshire Warm Homes Fund - Residents are urged to register for the Staffordshire Warm Homes Fund that could save them money on their heating bills. For more information visit www.staffordshirewarmerhomes.co.uk.

Who does what?

Understanding how your Council works...

Local government in South Staffordshire operates under a three-tier system involving County, District and Parish Councils. The Councils work closely in partnership together, along with other partners.



Staffordshire County Council covers the whole of the county of Staffordshire. You can find your local Councillor at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/yourcouncil/who/who.aspx

Contact about:

- Adult social care
- Blue badges (new and renewal)
- Bus passes
- Childrens' services
- Education
- Footpaths
- Highways maintenance (including potholes, road closures and diversions)
- Household recycling centres
- Libraries
- Parking on street
- Public transport
- Registration of births, deaths and marriages
- Street lighting
- Trading standards
- Weather-related issues • Waste disposal management (not collection)

www.staffordshire.gov.uk

Report a problem directly on the My Staffs App at:

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/mystaffs-app

Highways:

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/reportit

Adult Social Care:

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/care

Apply for a blue badge:

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/bluebadge

Tel: 0300 111 8000 (general enquiries)

@yourstaffordshire



The county is divided into eight districts and South Staffordshire is your district. There are 49 District Councillors in South Staffordshire. Find out more about your local Councillor at <https://services.sstaffs.gov.uk/cmis/Councillors.aspx>

Contact about:

- Anti-social behaviour and community safety
- Bereavement services
- Building control
- Business Hub services
- Commercial development and regeneration
- Council Tax collections and Business Rates
- Elections
- Environmental health
- Fly-tipping
- Food hygiene and safety
- Grounds maintenance (excluding public highways)
- Homelessness prevention
- Housing advice
- Housing benefits and Council Tax support
- Leisure
- Licensing
- Litter, graffiti, fly-posting and dog offences
- Noise nuisance/pollution
- Planning applications/policy
- Planning enforcement
- Road sweeping (routine only)
- Tourism
- Waste and recycling collections

www.sstaffs.gov.uk

Report a problem online at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/report-it

Email: info@sstaffs.gov.uk

Email:

customerfeedback@sstaffs.gov.uk

Tel: 01902 696000 (general enquiries)

www.sstaffs.gov.uk/myaccount



The Parish Council is the first tier of local government. There are 27 Parish Councils in South Staffordshire, of which Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston is one.

Parish Councils form an important part of the local government system, particularly in areas ensuring communities like Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston have a voice. The Parish Council provides a grassroots representation of the community and forms a significant channel of communication to the relevant local authorities and other regional bodies and agencies.

Central Government increasingly recognizes the value of parish councils, who can make decisions and spend money on matters that make a real difference to their local community. Find out more about your local Councillor at

<https://wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk/your-parish-council/council-members/>

Contact about:

- Annual Christmas Illuminations and Christmas Light Switch on Event
- Annual Act of Remembrance
- Flowers and planters around the Village
- Play areas and play equipment (Primrose play park, Broadholes play park, Marston Field play equipment and Skate Park)
- Street furniture (Benches, Bus shelters, Finger posts, Suggestion boxes, Noticeboards)
- Village Greens
- Village War Memorials

www.wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk Email: office@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Tel: 01902842556/ 07495789051/07398 743554

Your Parish Council

<u>COUNCILLOR</u>	<u>WARD</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>
A Anderson	Stretton	a.anderson@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
E Dadd	Stretton	e.dadd@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
M Griffiths	Lapley	m.griffiths@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
J Hodgkiss	Wheaton Aston	j.hodgkiss@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
W Millington	Wheaton Aston	w.millington@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
R Nelson	Wheaton Aston	r.nelson@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
T Noblett (Chair)	Wheaton Aston	t.noblett@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
V Renfrew	Lapley	v.renfrew@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
M Smith	Wheaton Aston	m.smith@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
S Whittingham	Wheaton Aston	s.whittingham@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
S Whittingham	Wheaton Aston	sue.whittingham@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk

OFFICE

A Watson	Parish Council Manager	office@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
K Daker	Assistant Clerk	assistant@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Office Address	Office F7, South Staffordshire Business Hub, Wolverhampton Rd, WV8 1PE	
Telephone	07495 789051 (Parish Council Manager)/ 07398 743554 (Assistant Clerk)	
Website	www.wheatonastonparishcouncil.co.uk Also find us on Facebook	

Other Key Contacts

County Cllr Mark Sutton	01902 851682	mark.sutton@staffordshire.gov.uk
District Cllr Brian Cox	01785 840482	b.cox@sstaffs.gov.uk
District Cllr Ve Jackson	01785 840256	v.jackson@sstaffs.gov.uk
Staffordshire County Council	0300 111 8000	www.staffordshire.gov.uk
South Staffordshire District Council	01902 696000	www.sstaffs.gov.uk
Police	101 (non-urgent) 999 (emergency)	www.staffordshirepolice.org.uk
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111	www.crimestoppers-uk.org
Highways	0300 111 8000	www.highways@staffordshire.gov.uk

If you have any comments, compliments or criticisms to make about the work of the Parish Council or if you would like clarification on what we do, then please contact us in one of the following ways:

- By email - to [office @wheatonaston.gov.uk](mailto:office@wheatonaston.gov.uk) (or to a Councillor, as above)
- By phone - to the Parish Office on 07495 789051
- By post/in person - to the Parish Office at Office F7, South Staffs Business Hub, Wolverhampton Rd, WV8 1PE

2021 Parish Council Meetings – 2nd Sept, 21st Oct, 9th Dec (Precept)

Please follow government advice, stay safe and have a great Summer. www.gov.uk/coronavirus