



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council held at Lapley and Wheaton Aston Village hall on Thursday 18th May 2023 at 6.00pm.

- 1. In attendance:** Two members of the public, Cllr W Millington, Cllr R Nelson, Cllr V Renfrew, Cllr J Hodgkiss, Cllr M Griffiths, Cllr M Smith, Cllr J Ford, Cllr S Whittingham.

Assistant Clerk: J Shulman

- 2. Apologies** - None
- 3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 19th May 2022.** The minutes were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.
- 4. Community Reports**
 - **St Mary's PTA**
 - **Brewood Voluntary Car Scheme**
 - **Wheaton Aston Juniors**

St Mary's PTA:

Thank you so much to the PC for the £300 funding recently received which will be put towards purchasing new outdoor play resources particularly focussing on Early Years pupils.

PTA is about to fund £2500 of new outdoor play resources for school, of which the PC £300 funding will be put towards.

The resources include a wooden covered stand for creative and water play, a mobile outdoor kitchen which doubles up as a numeracy/maths learning resource, a mobile double desk which doubles up as a literacy station, a climbing crest, a mobile water wall and many accessories to complement these items.

The balance of the funding has been raised throughout the year through a variety of in school and community fundraising events including Easter Egg Bingo, cakes sales, Mother's Day gift shop, Santa's Grotto, Halloween disco & party, Xmas raffle etc...

Outdoor play is so important for the mental wellbeing of the children as well as their physical health, so this absolutely is a priority for us. The outside provision will meet the educational needs of our youngest children through experimental play and learning. Teaching staff will also be able to provide a wider range of outside learning which will, over time, raise standards within the early year's classes.

We hope to see the following benefits from enhanced outdoor play provision for the pupils at St Mary's

- Encourages children to get out in the great outdoors & gain an appreciation for the environment- which they may not get the opportunity at home or want to with the increase in digital screens.

- Improves overall physical health
- Enhances social skills, make new friends and improves peer to peer relationships through the use of collaboration and focus during play.
- Encourages creativity - Imagination flourishes when a child plays outdoors in the fresh air.
- Supports mental wellbeing. In a society that's increasingly more susceptible to stress and anxiety, it's important for children to learn how to relax and let off steam through play. As they grow they will have to face academic pressures. Luckily, outdoor play facilitates the release of endorphins which improves mental health and wellbeing.
- Enhances Fine Motor Skills.
- Harnesses Talent Early.
- Increased Openness with Parents and Caregivers.
- Greater Self-Awareness.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for this funding of which we are most grateful, and to thank them for their continued support of St Mary's First Academy PTA.

Brewood Car Share Scheme:

Brewood and District Voluntary Car Scheme provides passenger travel for three local parishes, covering Coven Heath, Coven, Brewood, Bishop's Wood, Lapley, Stretton, Wheaton Aston, Blymhill, Calf Heath and Weston-Under-Lizard.

A total of 724 passenger journeys were undertaken during 2022/2023 financial year, covering a total of 14,562 fare miles.

The majority of the journeys were for elderly and disabled people (who find public transport inaccessible). These enabled them to attend mainly medical appointments, at an affordable cost.

There are currently 12 Voluntary Drivers registered to drive for the Car Scheme. (It should be noted that the availability of the Drivers varies greatly. Whilst one is free to undertake four or five trips per week, others only take on one trip a month). Six of the drivers are from Brewood, two from Coven, two from Bishop's Wood, one from Calf Heath and one from Gailey. We really need drivers from Wheaton Aston, Weston-Under-Lizard and Blymhill to meet the demands of passengers in these areas and to reduce the amount paid in light miles (miles the drivers undertake to reach the passengers' homes) to drivers, but despite various appeals, no one has come forward.

Brewood & District Voluntary Car scheme can report that for the 2022/2023 financial year there has been a deficit in income of £818.73

Funds received from donations form a financial buffer that greatly assists any cash flow problems the car scheme may incur during the period between applying for and receiving grants, the unfortunately cannot be relied upon, and therefore cannot be taken into consideration when budgeting for the car scheme's financial future.

Donations and bank account interest, are receipts that are not guaranteed annually, therefore should not be included in the financial forecasts.

Without these receipts the difference between income over expenditure for the financial period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, would total:

Surplus of income over expenditure 2022/2023	£ 212.67
Less:	
Donations	£1031.30
Deficit	£ 818.73

Grants:

The car scheme depends upon grants from local Parish Councils to finance the Car Scheme Co-ordinator's Salary.

Councillors and the representative from the car scheme discussed ways in which more volunteers from Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston might be sought. The representative explained to councillors how the scheme works in terms of payment to drivers and their own insurance cover.

Wheaton Aston Junior Football Club:

Thank you to the Parish Council for their grant donation this year which enabled the club to purchase a set of bibs and footballs. The club have held some good fundraising events and several coaching courses have been undertaken, including a first aid training, DBS checks and Coaching Courses for the Under 7s.

Discussion took place about the need for a scheme to keep children and young people active, particularly in rural communities, and the representative gave an update on the progress made so far to establish the club.

The club has yet to apply for other community grants, and their representative gave an update on the pitch at the Sports and Social Club, explaining that older children and adults play their league matches on 4G pitches.

The Chair reminded those present that they could reapply for further grant funding this year.

6.Chairman's Report. Cllr Millington gave a report of the previous year's activity.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023

Covid restrictions were thankfully lifted and we are now able to meet normally in the village hall.

Our Parish office at Codsall is now fully open and our Clerk and Assistant Clerk continue to work flexibly using the office at least 3 days a week. The district council staff continue to work from home the majority of the time, which means our useful links face to face are reduced and most of our communication is via email.

The Parish Council worked with St Mary's PTFA and St Mary's Church to host The Big Lunch on Sunday 5th June 2022 for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The weather unfortunately could not have been worse and we had move everything indoors into the school. However despite the rain the event was extremely well attended with entertainment from the children, the kick boxing group and a local band. A good time was had by all.

Sadly in September we lost our beloved Queen Elizabeth II. Cllr Sue Whittingham read the decree on the Village Green announcing the death of the Queen. Cllr Millington read the decree on the Village Green welcoming the new King. It was a very sad time for us all.

We held our annual Community meeting in October in the village hall. Several residents attended and we had the allotment plans on show for consultation. The plans were also sent out in our Newsletter. A resident made a request for a sign to show the direction of the village hall car park

from Yew Tree Drive to try and encourage parking at the Village hall car park rather than in the residents only area. The Parish Council agreed signs should be installed and they were in December.

Remembrance services were held in November and Cllr Millington laid wreaths in Wheaton Aston and Lapley and Cllr Nelson laid a wreath at Stretton. Cllr Millington also laid a wreath at a service held at Staffordshire District Council.

We were delighted to be able to hold the Christmas Lights event at the end of November. The event was bigger and better than ever with Dangerous Sheep providing the stage and compere, more stalls and a visit again from the lovely Wildwood Alpacas. The weather was kind, the children from St Mary's School performed beautifully. Jimmy The Mower switched the lights on and we were pleased to see such a large crowd from the village again. We plan to hold the event again this year on the slightly earlier weekend than pre covid years in the 18th November.

The Parish Council has carried on with it's work. Communicating with our villages by Newsletter, Facebook , suggestion boxes and the noticeboards in the three villages.

The Parish Council continues to express concern about traffic speed and problems on the A5 in our area, especially at the junction with Ivetsey Road at the Bradford Arms and is pursuing a speed limit change with the County Council through discussion with other local Parish Councils. Due to the complaints by residents, horse riders, cyclists and walkers, and the new houses on Ivetsey Road the Parish Council in conjunction with the County Council have changed the speed limits on Ivetsey Road and Lapley Road. The 30mph limit was moved further towards the A5 on Ivetsey Road to the end of the new housing development. A 40 mph speed limit has been imposed from the A5 at the Bradford Arms into the village and on Lapley Road a 40mph speed limit has been imposed from the T junction at Sunnybank to the 30 mph limit just past the Sports & Social Club. The Community Speedwatch Team are waiting for new sites to be approved by the Police so they have then check the speeds in the new areas. Unfortunately despite several requests the CSW team has been unable to recruit any new members to boost their small numbers.

The Parish Council has made donations to voluntary groups such as the Monday Lunch Club, Brewood Voluntary Car Scheme and PTA and the Sports & Social Club for their new football initiative.

Work at Lapley Green has been completed and they also now have space for a Christmas Tree and Christmas lights were installed for the 2022 festive season. The County Council are no longer able to help us to establish the Green as an official village green so the PC have asked Tedstones Solicitors to assist us in this matter.

Maintenance throughout the parishes is an ongoing commitment. Grass cutting to keep our play areas, verges and open spaces in good condition continues, with climate change making the cutting season extend further into the Autumn. Our thanks to our contractor Ditton Services for the co-operative and diligent way they carry out their work.

We will continue to maintain our beautiful trees and have inspections at regular intervals to ensure that our stock is healthy and thriving. We are very pleased that the old oak tree at Primrose play area is still doing well, and have installed a protective fence around it this year. The Parish Council in conjunction with The Woodland Trust have planted new trees for the Queens Green Canopy on Marston field and a commemorative plaque will be installed later this year. We are also hoping The Woodland Trust will be able to plant some more trees with St Marys School at the back of their school field.

The black and white finger posts around our villages have been adopted by the parish councillors and each one is now looked after and cleaned annually by their volunteer councillor. Thank you to the Councillors for taking this on to save the Parish Council paying for this service.

Maintenance is ongoing at the play areas in the village and although vandalism has increased on Marston field, including inappropriate graffiti and damage to the newly planted trees. CCTV has been forwarded to the Police and the perpetrators have been spoken too. The youth shelter area is to be painted with graffiti repellent paint to help prevent further damage.

We hope to look at beginning a project to renovate the play equipment at Marston Field within the upcoming months. Following consultation on the use of Broadholes lane as allotments, we received many votes in favour for outdoor gym equipment being installed in the parish. We hope to install this at Marston field when we look at the refurb of it

The Parish Council hope to begin the project of replacing the play equipment at Marston Field and installing an outdoor gym in the near future.

The Queens Platinum Jubilee Allotments project at the Broadholes Lane Play Area has begun. After full consultation, planning permission has been obtained and plans drawn up for the allotments. The first stage of work, felling and removing the trees has been completed. The second stage of removing the tree stumps, clearing and levelling the area will hopefully be completed soon and tenders will be invited to install the allotments and parking area. The Parish Council hope this work will begin in November.

We have installed a map board on the village green in Wheaton Aston at the request of residents looking for walks around the village.

A right of way from Stretton through to near Bickford Farm has been approved to be added to the Definitive Map.

The rights of way at Bellhurst lane has also been considered by cabinet members and has received support to add this to the definitive map too. This process can take many years but thanks to the past council this particular application was expedited

Consideration was closely given to the new District Local Plan with 3 sites put forward for development. Ivety Road, Bridge Farm and Fentonhouse Lane. The consultation was completed and the Fentonhouse Lane site was removed because of the close locality to the important SSSI at Motte Meadows. However the District Plan has now been put on hold due to new Government legislation which is undergoing consultation.

A new defibrillator has been installed outside St Mary's School on Marston Road and the PC are negotiating a site for another defibrillator on the edge of the new houses on Watermeadow Way.

On 7th May the Parish Council, in conjunction with St Mary's Church hosted the Big Coronation Community Lunch Street Party on the Village Green for the Coronation of King Charles III. There was tea and cakes in the village Hall and tables to bring your own picnic on the Village Green. The children were entertained by Mr Sparkles with his Punch & Judy Show and we welcomed Daniel James Acoustic to entertain with music. A big thank you to Rev'd Dale who was very busy in St Marys Church where she hosted a children's craft afternoon. The Scout Group provided a barbecue at the Coach & Horses pub. We were very lucky with the weather and it was a beautiful day enjoyed by all.

A big thank you to the wonderful ladies of the bunting sewing group as their beautiful bunting was again this year around the Village Hall, Village Green and the Church for the Coronation celebrations.

The Parish Council presented the children of St Mary's School in Wheaton Aston with commemorative coasters for the Coronation of King Charles III. A mosaic stone square has also been installed on the Green in Wheaton Aston containing stones decorated by local children as a commemoration of the coronation.

We continue to support residents with queries about potholes, fly tipping, waste collection and parking issues by making sure they know who to contact at the District or County Council. We also regularly contact Highways as a Parish Council about the ongoing state of the roads in our area.

The Parish Council continues to try to be as sustainable as possible in order to follow our climate change policy.

Once again our finances are in order and have passed both the Internal Auditor and External Auditors scrutiny.

We continue to liaise regularly with Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire County Council and South Staffs District Council.

We email the post office for an update regularly on when they will be able to offer a service in the village. They are still seeking premises and are encouraging anyone who can assist to get in touch with them direct.

The Parish Council Manager and myself have taken part in several Local Forums with the District Council to discuss the District Council's latest initiatives and to enable us to ask any questions or make any comments about issues in our parishes. Several Parish Councillors have attended Parish Summits at South Staffs district Council.

I would like to say some thank you's. Firstly, to the Parish Council Manager Amy Watson and our new Assistant Jess Shulman for their continued hard work representing our interests and enabling our projects to proceed to completion and for all their patience and forbearance. Also to thank our very diligent Village Orderly who does wonders behind the scenes, to our Litter picker for helping keep Marston Field tidy, our volunteer who inspects Primrose Lane Play area and our volunteer who assists with the battery changing of the SID at Stretton every month.

Finally thank you to the Parish Councillors for giving their time to attend all our regular meetings and the various working groups and on site meetings and training courses. As well as their hands on help every year with various events and particularly with the Christmas Lights Event and our 2 special Royal Events in the last 12 months.

We have just gone through the election process have said goodbye to Cllr Emma Dadd and Cllr Ted Noblett. Ted had served the parish council for over 28 years, a truly remarkable amount of time and we thank him for his incredible service. We welcome Cllr Jeff Ford to the council and are interviewing for the three remaining spaces shortly

We look forward to helping and representing our residents over the next year.

5. Comments from parishioners:

None.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and support and closed the meeting at 6.30 pm.

Chairman

Date

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