



Lapley, Stretton  
& Wheaton Aston  
Parish Council

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council held at Lapley and Wheaton Aston Village Hall on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 at 6.30pm.**

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

**Parish Clerk:** A Watson

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**Assistant Clerk:** J Shulman

- 2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023.** The minutes were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

- 3. Community Reports**

- **St Mary's PTA**
- **Brewood Voluntary Car Scheme**
- **Luncheon Club**
- **WASP**
- **Wheaton Aston Football Club**
- **Tinies, Toddlers and Toys**
- **Chairmans report**

**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 £1600 of new outdoor play resources for school, of which the PC £300 funding will be put towards. Items such as a Giant Connect 4, Giant Tower building game, Giant Portable Goal target wall game and a Cannonball Drop Ball game will be purchased this term.

A priority for the PTA this year is to further enhance the play provision at school by funding new playground games equipment that encourage team games and leadership skills.

Play is so important for the mental wellbeing of the children as well as their physical health.

We hope to see the following benefits:

Enhanced social & communication skills, make new friends and improved peer to peer relationships through the use of collaboration and focus during play.

Team games at break times will also encourage good relationships with peers, and they also prepare the children for a focused afternoon of learning in lessons.

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. This facilitates the release of endorphins which improves mental health and wellbeing.

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 & District Voluntary Car Scheme

Annual Report for Financial Year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Brewood & District Voluntary Car Scheme provides passenger travel to three local parishes, covering the villages of Coven Heath, Coven, Brewood, Bishop's Wood, Lapley, Stretton, Wheaton Aston, Blymhill, Calf Heath and Weston-under-Lizard.

A total of 805 passenger journeys were undertaken during the 2023/2024 financial year, covering a total of 11826 fare miles.

The journeys were for elderly / disabled people (who find public transport inaccessible) to attend mainly medical appointments, at an affordable cost.

During the year there has again been an increase in the requests for journeys to Birmingham Hospitals, and other medical centres around Wolverhampton and Stafford that we have previously not driven to.

There are currently only 14 Voluntary Drivers registered to drive for the Car Scheme, having recently gained 3 new drivers. Eight of the drivers are from Brewood, 1 from Coven (though he is on sick leave) 2 from Coven Heath, 1 from Bishops Wood, 1 from Wheaton Aston and one from Codsall. We still need more drivers especially from Wheaton Aston, Weston-under-Lizard and Blymhill to meet the demands of passengers in these areas and reduce the amount paid in light miles to drivers.

Brewood & District Voluntary Car Scheme can report that for the 2023/2024 financial year there has been a surplus of income over expenditure of £59.87 which excluding donations gives a deficit of £1482.93.

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

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

Without these receipts the surplus of income over expenditure for the financial period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, would total:

Surplus of income over expenditure 2023/24	£59.87
Less:	
Donations	£1542.80
Deficit	£1482.93

Hospital Parking and Disabled Badges:

The Car Scheme no longer has any Disabled Parking Badges. Staffordshire County Council advised us that 'we do not meet the criteria set out by the Department of Transport to qualify'. Use of these badges made the

drivers' role a lot easier, especially where car parking is restricted. So, this is a major issue for the scheme with the number of drivers that we have that do daily journeys and the parking restrictions enforced at the main Hospitals that we travel to. Where we can, we do try and get our users to bring their own disabled badges, but this isn't always possible.

#### Grants:

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

The following grants were received during the financial period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024:

Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council	£1250
Blymhill and Weston-under-Lizard Parish Council	£ 200;

£1450

The deficit between grants received from the Parish Councils and the co-ordinator's salary paid is absorbed by Brewood & Coven Parish Council, who provide grant assistance to the Car Scheme to cover this deficit.

End of year accounts finalised by Mrs S Phillips.

Brewood & District Voluntary Car Scheme

End of year accounts audited by Mrs Valerie Turner

#### **Luncheon Club**

For lunch club the grant has been used to offset part of our largest expenditure which is the village hall rental and food. Lunch club meets most Mondays to provide elderly or those with social needs to meet and enjoy a meal and play bingo. There is a small charge for the meals. Up to 22 people regularly attend and is all ran by volunteers

#### **WASP**

The WASP grant is new for this year so has not been spent yet, the groups aim is to replace the WASP door/window stickers for all who wish to replace worn or faded original stickers and to make them available for new residents. It is hoped that when the new ones arrive they will be more resistant to UV light.

#### **Wheaton Aston Football Club**

Thanks for the grant received from the parish council, it has bene spent on nets and children's kits. The club has grown from one team to four ageing from 6-14 year olds. The club has been active in the BKV competition and will host a fundraiser for the recent fires.

#### **Tinies, Toddlers and Toys**

Parents/Carers and Toddlers the group has been running about 14 months and has slowly grown, it originally started as support group and a place for sharing toys etc. A food share scheme is also in place during the sessions and well used. Thanks to the PC for supporting the group financially. It has involved into a social group that is proactive in their own fundraising and leadership.

The group largely focuses on adult wellbeing which is invaluable. There have been guest speakers and educational talks.

#### **LSWA PC CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023/24**

We welcomed several new councillors to the Parish Council after the local elections in May. Most of whom have now settled in and are contributing brilliantly to the parish council team.

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. However our new district councillor

Rob Nelson was elected in May and is a regular contributor to our meetings and has helped with several projects during the year.

The Parish Council worked with St Mary's PTFA and St Mary's Church to host The Coronation Picnic in early May. The event was held on the Green and for a change the weather kind. 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 held our annual Community meeting in October in the village hall several suggestions have been received and taken further for consideration.

Remembrance services were held in November and Cllr Millington laid a wreath in Wheaton Aston, Cllr Renfrew in Lapley and Cllr Hodgkiss laid a wreath at Stretton. Tea and cakes were available in St Mary's Church Wheaton Aston after the event kindly arranged by Cllr Whittingham.

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. Pete Whittingham our wonderful milkman and now holder of the British Citizen Award switched the lights on and we were pleased to see such a large crowd from the village again. Lapley Green Christmas Lights are also turned on at the same time. All the lights were lovely and well received. We plan to hold the event again this year on 16<sup>th</sup> November, it is hoped that we will be able to move the date on a little in 2025.

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 Community Speedwatch Team has had two new sites approved since the speed limit changes and now monitors 2 more sites on Ivetsey Road. 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, PTA, the Football Club and the WASP group.

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. 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 has been installed.

Three new benches have been installed this year to replace old and broken ones. A commemorative bench at Marston Field celebrating Ted Noblett's many years of service as a Parish Councillor and volunteering in the village. Ted was also awarded a BCA in January for his huge contribution to the village for many decades. Ted and his family and Amy our clerk attended the award ceremony at Palace of Westminster. We are very proud of Ted and his achievements.

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 continues, the anti graffiti paint on the youth shelter at Marston Field seems to have worked. CCTV has been sent to the police. Consideration will be given to adding another camera when the Marston Field project is undertaken.

The project to renovate Marston Field has begun. A consultation period has been undertaken and many residents have taken part. A pump track, outdoor gym and new play equipment came out as most popular. Funding is now being sought and the project may take place in phases as funding allows. Hopefully starting this year.

The Queens Platinum Jubilee Allotments project at the Broadholes Lane Play Area continues. The site has been cleared and levelled, water has been installed and the kerb lowered at the entrance to the site. A contractor has been appointed to finish the project. We also received some Section 106 funds from the District Council that we had been fighting for for several years. The final funding has been found through the Rural England prosperity fund and although it has been agreed it is waiting to go through full council, so we carry on waiting. We hoped the project would be completed for May this year but hopefully now it will be during the summer.

The Community Food Box was again, with their kind permission, situated at The Spar. Residents generously contributed throughout the winter and Cllr Millington collected items and delivered them to St Mary's school on a weekly basis. They were gratefully received.

At the request of a resident the Parish Council has been looking into the erection of a memorial to mark the second world war airfield at High Onn. A charity called The British Airfield Trust has offered to erect a memorial free of charge and we have been seeking a suitable site. Unfortunately the company who own the pig farm where the airfield is situated have refused any memorial to be installed on their land. We are now looking at other possible sites.

Wheaton Aston and Lapley are both taking part in the Best Kept Village Competition this year. Residents have been busy weeding, tidying and litter picking around the village as well as cleaning signs and producing posters. Cllr Smith has been leading the project in Wheaton Aston and Cllr Renfrew in Lapley. We are keeping our fingers crossed.

Consideration was closely given to the new District Local Plan with 3 sites put forward for development. Ivetsey 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 was put on hold due to new Government legislation. It is now under consultation looking at the legal aspect of the plan.

The defibrillator located at the Bradford Arms has been moved to the garage opposite. This was because the Bradford Arms was closed and we were unsure of it's future. The garage were very happy to have it located on their premises as they are now open 24 hrs a day.

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 d  
woscrutiny.

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.  
Our District Councillor is now also in touch with the Post Office to try to facilitate a service in the village.

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 Assistant  
Jess Shulman for their continued hard work and professionalism 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 pickers for helping keep the village tidy,  
our volunteer who inspects Primrose Bank 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.

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

Resident comment:

The post-boxes are not emptied at the end of the day anymore, they are emptied in the morning, once a day.  
Items to be posted the same day need to be posted in the box before 9am this is due to there not being a post  
office in the parish

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and support and closed the meeting at 7.10pm.

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Chairman

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Date

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