



Spring 2011

Berkswich Parish Council

www.berkswichpc.co.uk

“End of Term” Report

The coming elections will result in several new Councillors serving on Berkswich Parish Council. Perhaps now is the time to look back and see what has been achieved by the Council in the 4 years since the last elections.

One of the first duties of the new Council was to appoint a new Clerk, Mrs Liz Harrington-Jones. For the past 4 years she has worked steadfastly, carrying out her duties.

The Council has worked to maintain and enhance the environs of the Parish and an annual contract is awarded to carry out the general maintenance of verges, hedges and the play area. Work has taken place in Walton Coppice to plant a hedge along part of the boundary. This project is ongoing. Local residents have helped with hedge planting and tree thinning in the Coppice.

We have been unable to establish the ownership of some land within the Parish on which trees are growing. The Council has arranged for these trees to be inspected regularly and for maintenance to be carried out where necessary. The bank along School Lane is one such area and the Council has now applied formally to the Land Registry to become the registered owners of this land.

A number of kissing gates have been installed on public footpaths to replace stiles. The Council received a bequest from the estate of Olwyn Vaughan and a further donation from a local resident towards their purchase.

EON renewed street lighting in the area but unfortunately contemporary lights were installed within the Walton Conservation Area. The Council negotiated with EON and Victorian style lamps have now been erected within the Conservation Area.

New play equipment has been installed in Holly Bush Field. Financial support was received from both local residents and Asda supermarket. A walk along part of the old parish boundary, followed by a lunch at the Village Hall was organised to raise funds towards the new play equipment.

After a review of the usage of the public telephone box outside Walton Village Hall, BT had plans to remove it. The Council now pay an annual sponsorship fee to BT to keep this box operational, especially for users of the Village Hall.

A Village Design Statement has been compiled. This is intended to be used as a reference for those submitting planning applications in the Parish.

Further enhancement of Walton has been achieved by residents, supported financially by the Council and sponsorship from local companies, in preparing for the Best Kept Village Competition. Walton on the Hill has done well each year and in 2009 won first prize for a Large Village in the Stafford Area and were also overall County winners.

Although crime is deemed to be relatively low in the Parish, it is still a concern for many residents. The Council receive a Crime Report from the Police at each Council meeting and any problems are discussed with the attending officers. Chief Constable Mike Cunningham met Councillors to discuss police strategy, and Inspector Rob Pilling briefed the Council on community policing.

Traffic safety and parking problems are other subjects of concern. The Council was instrumental in getting the 40 mph speed limit along the Milford Road and Main Road reduced to 30 mph.

Over the past four years the Parish Council has been able either to reduce or hold the level of the Parish Precept.

The Village Hall Committee has plans to build a new hall as the present hall is now over 80 years old and requires constant expensive repairs. The Council has signed a memorandum of understanding to contribute £50,000 towards the rebuilding costs, once the final scheme has been agreed to their satisfaction.

The above are example of the activities which are additional to routine matters, such as finance, commenting on planning applications, preparing Newsletters, maintaining our website and keeping up to date with government procedures.

Thanks are due to all the current Councillors for the contributions they have made over the past four years towards improving the lot of residents. May the new Council successfully continue this work!

Roy Bennett
Chairman,
Berkswich Parish Council

Elections

Elections for the Borough and Parish Councils are due to take place on 5th May. Several of your Parish Councillors will not be seeking re-election and therefore we are looking for some new faces! Parish Council meetings take place on the first Tuesday of each month. If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor please contact the Parish Clerk or the Elections Officer at Stafford Borough Council for further information. Information is also available on Stafford Borough Council website.

Berkswich Parish Council Parish Councillors

Roy Bennett 661055
Chairman

Jim Remon 664820
Vice-Chairman

Ian Bearne 614752

Beryl Holt 665834

Bob Jenkins 662408

John Francis 665490

Sue Francis 665490

Bob Jenkins 662408

Mary Grayson 661959

Bert Martin 660651

Bob Morton 664613

Stafford Borough Councillors

Frank Finlay 664531

Trevor Reeves 601222

Staffordshire County Councillor

Len Bloomer 282336

Parish Clerk

Liz Harrington-Jones,

6 The Crescent,

Walton on the Hill

663198

[lizharrington-](mailto:lizharrington-jones@hotmail.co.uk)

jones@hotmail.co.uk

MAY DAY HOLIDAY—2nd May 2011

However you choose to spend the Bank Holiday on 2nd May, be it gardening, decorating, walking on the Chase, or reading a book, Berkswich History Society would like you to join us at the Village Hall from 3.30 p.m. onwards for afternoon tea to help celebrate the marriage of Prince William and Kate. We are raising funds towards the Building of the New Village Hall.

With the co-operation of Berkswich Primary School, we are asking all children to take part in a "Design Kate's Wedding Dress Competition". The dress most like the one Kate wears will win a prize. All designs will be displayed at the Village Hall on 2nd May. Entries to be submitted to Mr Holmes at Berkswich Primary School or to Bob Morton at "Eastfield", Kitlings Lane, Walton on the Hill, by 6 pm on Thursday 28th April 2011. Entries will be accepted from children who attend other primary schools as long as they

are received by 28th April. There will also be a display of photographs - "100 Years of Village Weddings". See how fashions in dresses and bouquets have changed over the years. To assist with catering please purchase a ticket in advance. Cost: £4 per adult, £2 per child - Family Ticket - £10 (2 adults, 2 children)

If you feel you would like to dust off the cobwebs after days in front of the telly watching every aspect of "The Wedding" come and join us for an informal walk on the Chase before tea. (Either 2 miles or 4 miles on well walked footpaths starting at 2.00 p.m.)

If you have photographs of any wedding which took place in the Village between 1900 and 1980 we would love to include them in our exhibition. Photographs can be copied and returned to you in a matter of minutes. If you think you have something that would be of interest please contact Beryl Holt.

Parking and Grass Verges

Spring is on its way and already the grass verges in the parish are starting to look decidedly battered. We have had such a hard winter when everything was invisible under a layer of snow and (mainly commercial) vehicles were driven over kerbs, grass banks and verges with the resulting damage only now becoming apparent.

Our contractors will start work this month to keep the parish looking its best but in the meantime please can you ask drivers of delivery vehicles to park on the road, rather than damaging our precious verges which so enhance the rural aspect of the parish.

Residents in The Rise are experiencing considerable inconvenience from vehicles parked on pavements

and across driveways during the day, and in Kitlings Lane church functions can lead to a real problem for residents due to the number of cars parked in the road.

The Parish Council has asked St Thomas' Church and Walton High School for their co-operation in addressing these problems.

Sadly Mrs Lynne Sandy and her team are not able to lead an entry from Walton in the Best Kept Village Competition this year. The Parish Council has therefore reluctantly decided to "have a year off" but please will everyone work individually to keep the parish looking its very best even without the incentive of being judged on our appearance.

Anti-Social Behaviour

If you have any concerns about instances of anti-social behaviour, particularly in Holly Bush Field or Milford Common, please telephone the Police immediately on **0300 123 4455**

It is important that the Police build up an accurate database of problems in the area to help them plan future resources.

A national 999 Emergency text number for anyone who is deaf, hard of hearing or has speech problems is now available. For further information and to register for the service contact www.emergencysms.org.uk



Westminster Abbey

For tickets & information

on the walks please contact one of the following:

Bob Morton – Tel: 664613

Beryl Holt – Tel: 665834

Emma Jane Wheatley – Tel: 606527

Walton Village Hall Management Committee Progress on the New Village Hall

We have received outline plans for the new village hall from the architect and these have been shown to users of the hall and other interested parties.

Once all the comments/suggestions made by the various groups have been digested a working set of plans will be produced. We will then be able to get a more accurate costing for the build and commence fund-raising in earnest.

Anyone interested in seeing these initial plans or who is willing to assist with fund-raising please contact Bob Morton on 664613

If there are new activities that you would like to see organised at the Village Hall, please let us know.