

Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe Bulletin ...



Welcome to the annual report issued by Leek Wootton and Guy's Cliffe Parish Council to keep you, the Parish residents, informed about the work of the Parish Council.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014/15

2014/15 has been a very busy year for the Parish Council. Preparation of a new Local Plan by Warwick District Council required a great deal of activity by the Parish Council to ensure that the views of parishioners were properly represented as WDC moved through the various phases of the process before submission of the Plan to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

We learned in June 2015 that as a result of an initial hearing before a Planning Inspector held in the first week of May, the Inspector had indicated that if the Plan is not withdrawn he will recommend non-adoption because of a shortfall in proposed housing numbers. WDC has written to the Minister in an effort to overturn this opinion, but it is fair to say that this leaves the process in a state of flux. The following notes describing the various steps to-date are nevertheless still relevant.

In November of 2013 WDC published a set of options for housing development in villages, along with proposed new settlement boundaries. These proposals had serious implications for the preservation of the Green Belt surrounding the settled areas of the Parish and the number of new dwellings to be accommodated.

As a result of strong representation against these proposals made by the Council, we were able to achieve a reduction in the number of new dwellings proposed from 85 to 45, as well as some adjustment to the Settlement Boundaries for Leek Wootton and Hill Wootton. The lower allocation was then included in the WDC 'Submission Draft' for the Local Plan.

In mid-May we were then able to hold a very successful consultation session – attended by more than 100 parishioners – at which we explained the various stages of the Local Plan process and the implications for the Parish going forward. This participation by parishioners was crucial in strengthening our case with WDC.

As the WDC Local Plan submission evolved, there was a further reduction in the designated number of new dwellings to 26 in Leek Wootton, following representations made by English Heritage to the WDC planners.

These proposals have now been submitted to the Ministry for eventual public examination in front of an Inspector. We can expect that the new Local Plan will be challenged by developers who still regard the Parish as a lucrative area for new housing development, but we will continue to argue our case to maintain the separation from neighbouring towns and to resist proposals for significant expansion.

In this context, the Localism Act has provided a mechanism for parish councils to exert greater influence over planning through the development of individual Neighbourhood Plans. We have therefore embarked upon preparation of such a Plan covering our vision for the development of the Parish over the next fifteen-year period (in tandem with the WDC Local Plan).

Our initial efforts to obtain formal designation were delayed by proposed changes to the Parish Boundaries but, once again, we have been able to resist changes that would have resulted in further encroachment into the Green Belt from Kenilworth.

Formal designation for the Neighbourhood Plan was finally obtained in November 2014 and we have embarked upon the detailed work required to construct a Plan. This embraces a much wider range of subjects beyond planning with the objective of creating a set of guidelines for the future as a formal input to the Local Plan and future decisions by planners.

In order to complete this work, we have set up a Steering Group, which includes six parishioners and four members of the Parish Council.

We have also been able to obtain Grant Aid for this process, enabling the employment of a consultant expert to support our efforts.

We expect to hold another informal consultation early in the summer in order to share ideas with the community, to obtain further valuable input to the process and to begin to shape the final content of our Plan for eventual submission to WDC and referendum.

We will continue to provide regular progress updates through *The Link*.

The second important effort undertaken by the Parish Council in the last year has been the replacement of the Children's Playground equipment. Following various concerns expressed by RoSPA concerning the safety of some of the equipment, we decided to explore the possibilities for replacement and upgrading of the Playground.

Thanks to the sterling efforts of Councillors Coates and Knott, aided by the Clerk, we were able to obtain grant assistance for a new scheme from WREN and the Playground has now been completely replaced in record time. We will conduct a formal opening of the new facility, but the new equipment is already proving to be a hit with local children.

As we look ahead to another, inevitably, busy year, it remains for me to personally thank our Clerk, Eileen Clayton, for her steadfast support during the year as well as each individual member of the Council for their continued commitment to making our Parish a great place to live.

Finally, I should note that all Councillors were automatically re-elected in May because there were only seven nominations for the eight posts. This means that we need to co-opt an additional member. Anyone wishing to be considered for the vacancy, please contact the Clerk, Eileen Clayton, or myself.

Colin Smith

FINANCIAL REPORT 2014/15

Total income to the Parish Council for 2014/15 was £10,575.00. However, we were fortunate to receive a generous grant from WREN of £42,599.20 for the Playground renewal, plus two other grants, one from WALC for £250.00 on an Award Scheme and £4,000.00 from the Community Development Foundation towards the Neighbourhood Plan expenses and this has produced a distorted income figure for 2014/15. Although £24,610.33 was brought forward into the current financial year, the majority of this was Playground grant money, meaning in real terms, the sum of £3,300.00 was brought forward for the year 2015/16. This is somewhat less than previous years - mainly caused by an over spend of £900.00 on general maintenance necessary for the play and memorial areas plus approximately £1,000.00 for new website costs. We also contributed to the Church Bell Restoration Appeal and increased the grant to the PCC towards production of *The Link*, plus the usual grants we award to the PCC and Sports Club. The loan from the Public Works Loan Board has been paid off early.

The Precept for 2015/16 was increased slightly to £7,777.00, a modest increase of £152; total income for 2015/16 amounts to £10,664.00. The asset register has been updated to include the new play equipment and it is expected that insurance costs will increase. The Budget for 2015/16 has to be conservative until a small reserve is accumulated. The Parish Council manages a very small budget to the best of its ability being unable to obtain extra income due to restrictions on increases in the precept above 2%, but endeavours to give value for money at all times.

This year's Annual Audit return for 2014/15 has been completed and returned to the auditors. Notices informing the public of their rights to view the accounts were displayed as instructed.

PARISH PROFILE

Parliamentary Constituency:	Kenilworth and Southam
County Division:	Arden
Parish:	Leek Wootton and Guy's Cliffe

The Parish Council is the first level of Government and in this Parish is non-political. The Parish Council is not the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

What does the Parish Council do?

The Parish Council is empowered by Parliament and has authority to raise money through taxation (the Precept) and to spend that public money. It is consulted on all planning applications in the area; pursues WDC and WCC on highway matters; is responsible for community safety; owns and manages the Children's Playground; provides public seats, bus shelters and dog bins; ensures that rights of way are protected and endeavours to keep the area well maintained. These are only some of the issues that concern your Parish Council on a regular basis.

It is the job of the Parish Council to represent the interests of the whole community and Parish Councillors have a responsibility to be well informed about diverse local views.

For the future, the Government wishes to encourage Parish Councils to deliver more services and to play a greater part in their communities.

Description of the Parish

The Parish includes the village of Leek Wootton, the communities at Hill Wootton, Chesford, Guy's Cliffe, North Woodloes and outlying properties. The boundary extends from the River Avon in the east to the outskirts of Warwick and Kenilworth to south and north and the Wedgnock and Goodrest areas to the west.

Parish Electorate

Some 845 names appear on the Register of Electors for 2015/16. The area covers 1089 hectares and there is a total population of approximately 1100, occupying some 400 properties.

Parish Councillors

There are eight Parish Councillors who are elected every four years, and are volunteers. At the moment there is one vacancy. The Councillors for 2015/16 are:

Chairman

Cllr Colin Smith	1 Home Farm CV35 7PU	512815	colin.smith@laceysmith.co.uk
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Vice Chairman

Cllr Richard Coates	Westside, Hill Wootton Rd CV35 7QL	856223	coatesrich@hotmail.com
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Cllr Dennis Eassom	42 Tidmarsh Road CV35 7QP	854208	d.eassom27@btinternet.com
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Cllr Paul Eldridge	30 Hill Wootton Road CV35 7QL	854347	paul@eldridgeuk.org
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Cllr Keith Knott	4 The Meadows CV35 7QQ	859725	knottallen@onetel.com
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Cllr Alan Moore	Hill Wootton Farm, Hill Wootton CV35 7PP	852603	
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Cllr Peter Tunkle	85 Warwick Road CV35 7QR	511879	petertunkle@ymail.com
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There is a Clerk to the Parish Council, who is an employee of the Council, and has no voting rights:

Eileen Clayton	2 The Hamlet CV35 7QW	855124	clerk@leekwootton.org.uk www.leekwootton.org.uk
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County Councillor

Cllr Mrs José Compton	20 Welsh Close, Warwick CV35 5JY	402936	CllrCompton@warwickshire.gov.uk
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District Councillors

Cllr Mrs Susan Gallagher	Apple Tree Cottage, Haseley Knob, Warwick CV35 7NJ	484654	Susan.Gallagher@warwickdc.gov.uk
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Cllr Peter Whiting	5 Moss Grove, Kenilworth CV8 2WB	07802 796436	Peter.Whiting@warwickdc.gov.uk
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Meetings

The Parish Council meets on the second Tuesday of each month, except in August and December, in the Committee Room at the Village Hall. Dates and agendas are posted on notice boards and published on the web-site.

The public is welcome to attend and an opportunity to put forward any matters of concern is provided.

Parish Council's Role

We can:

- Represent your views to Local Government.
- Give our view on planning applications from a local perspective, taking into account your opinions.
- Put you in touch with people at District and County level who may be able to help you deal with environmental problems, road safety, road and footpath maintenance.
- Maintain the playground/memorial areas.
- Assist in making things happen in the Parish – we were instrumental in the provision of the new School and Village Hall and recently the refurbishment of the Playground.
- Assist in funding projects that benefit the Parish, i.e. Local History Group, Church, Sports Club, Guides, Scouts and the Women's Institute.

We cannot:

- Solve neighbour disputes.
- Act as an extension of the Police.
- Override District, County, National, Government or EU decisions.
- Always give you what you want – we may not be able to, or consider it not to be in the best interests of the Parish as a whole.

For more information about the Parish Council go to: www.leekwootton.org.uk

