



The Civil Parish of

Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2022

Wednesday, 22 March 2023 at 7:00pm

All Saints' Church, Leek Wootton

Reports 2022/23

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REPORTS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2022/23

Councillor Richard Coates

For the first time in three years, I'm glad to be reading this report without having to mention the pandemic which as a momentous event I trust is well and truly behind us - until the next time?

The momentous event we have had though was the death in September of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth. Her remarkable life and service to our country was an example to us all. We arranged for a book of condolence to be placed in the Church and the Memorial Stone was used as a place for flowers. On a happier note, earlier this year we planted a Queen's Jubilee commemorative tree in the corner of the Recreation Ground, generously sponsored by the History Group, the WI and the Parish Council. We also went through the time-honoured protocols proclaiming the new King Charles III at a ceremony in the Church. Both these significant events in the history of our country were thus marked in the appropriate way.

Another significant event occurred in March last year when we received notification of a Full Planning application by CALA Homes for 83 new homes on the paddock and old tennis courts on the Woodcote Estate. At the time we felt it was odd that there should be a full application before an outline. It did suggest CALA Homes were supremely confident the application would succeed on its own or that some arrangement had been arrived at between themselves and the District Council. However, the Parish Council was reassured by District Planners that no such arrangement had ever been arrived at. In any event this application generated a great deal of interest and there was a huge response on WDC's Planning Portal.

The Parish Council immediately set about acquiring legal opinion on aspects of the application concerning traffic and transport issues and the legality of having houses on the Woodcote estate at all. Despite differing opinion, it was clear to us that CALA Homes still have a lot to answer for and we, the Parish Council, addressed these concerns in our response to the Planning Portal. The Leek Wootton Focus Group has also worked tirelessly informing the community of the potential dangers this development could bring to biodiversity, habitat and particularly to existing mature trees. The biodiversity reports by Professor David Morley and David Tudway have highlighted just how devastating on the environment this development could be.

Subsequently, and surprisingly, in November last year an Outline Planning application arrived from CALA Homes, which only served to muddy the waters somewhat. Why an Outline after a Full application? Clearly, they have felt the need to revise their approach. At present both their applications remain live and we will have to wait and see how things develop. Once again, the Outline engendered a large and vociferous response from our community which has a keen and acute interest in how our area is going to look on into the future. It is anticipated that the Outline will probably go to Planning Committee in May this year.

On the point of the future, the new South Warwickshire Local Plan has just concluded its 'Issues and Options' phase and the Parish Council has submitted its comments to this document. Our chief concern remains the preservation of the Green Belt and resisting the advancing urbanisation from all directions of Kenilworth, Warwick and Leamington. The South Warwickshire Local Plan proposes looking at how our area develops up to the year 2050 and the next phase is the 'Preferred Options' phase which will run a public consultation from July to October this year. The conclusions of this phase are crucial and will largely go forward into the new Plan so I urge everyone who has an interest in our community's future to engage with this process and make their voices heard. This new Local Plan will necessitate us revising our existing Neighbourhood Plan and the Council will be looking to pull together a team of interested parishioners to take on this work at the appropriate time.

Community events once again got into full swing over the past year – no more worries about lockdowns and masks. We had a successful summer fête combined with the Big Jubilee Lunch celebrating HM the Queen's 70 years on the throne. We are looking forward to this year's fête which takes place on 10 June and plans for this are well advanced. Our *Community Live!* event which had to be cancelled last year because of the Queen's death will now take place on Saturday, 9 September. It should once again be a highlight of our year and special thanks must go to Councillor Allison who is the organising genius behind this. The Council's Community Grant Fund was fully spent up for the first time with grants to the WI for its garden maintenance, the Link magazine, and the Church for the installation of bike stands. I sincerely hope word will get around that this money is available to all community organisations and is so easy to apply for. The playground passed its annual inspection and the Council organised a playground tree survey which resulted in a number of unsafe trees and branches being removed. The Parish Council's Environment Group really took off this year with the establishment of a keen working group whose report can be seen amongst the handouts available here this evening. Community Speed Watch also finally got off the ground with members of the group receiving training, hopefully soon to be seen on Warwick Road monitoring and slowing traffic down. The Recreation Ground Car Park redevelopment is at last scheduled to start in the middle of June this year and I sincerely hope it will begin to alleviate some of the access and parking issues we endure.

Finally, I must thank the team of Councillors I have the privilege of working alongside. A more dedicated group would be hard to find, and all have the best interests of our community at heart. That said I have to announce the departure of two Councillors, Peter Tunkle and Keith Knott, who between them have given more than 35 years of service to our community. Quite something and my sincere thanks go to them both on behalf of us all. Apart from their sage advice on so many matters of general parish life, Peter has been our long-standing Councillor for emergency planning, serving also on the playground and highways sub-groups and being responsible for setting up our Community Speed Watch project; whilst Keith has given stalwart service and trained his forensic eye on the Finance Committee as well as contributing to the environment and playground groups. I hope they will continue to play their part in parish activities and wish them well in the new ventures they have planned. I'd also like to formally welcome Jonathan Kingston to our team who has bravely stepped into the breach and was co-opted as a Councillor last year. He has already agreed to take over Peter's responsibilities for Community Speed Watch.

This still leaves us two Councillors short of our entitled number and I would urge anyone who is interested in joining a friendly and committed group of volunteers as a Councillor to contact our Clerk, Helen Eldridge, who will provide you with all the information and support you need. We welcome anyone with the best interests of our parish at heart and although I don't wish to sound desperate, a community thrives on its volunteers, and we really could do with more help easing the burden now resting on fewer shoulders.

Finally, my personal thanks go to our indomitable Clerk, Helen Eldridge, who has once again gone over and above expectations in so many ways. Her value to our community is incalculable as is her commitment to the principles we hold. Further congratulations are in order as she has recently become Clerk to our neighbouring parish of Old Milverton and Blackdown, and I'm sure they will receive the same dedication as we have.

DRAFT Financial Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Helen Eldridge, Responsible Financial Officer

This DRAFT Financial Report is being prepared for the Annual Parish Assembly on 22 March 2023. Therefore, the following closing figures are forecasts only.

The Parish Council's gross income in 2022/23 is forecast to be £22,653 and expenditure £23,322. The Precept income, which is the core income of the Parish Council, was £20,137.

After two years of disruption to ordinary Council business, the Coronavirus pandemic has barely impacted the Financial Year 2022/23 and the Council was able to return to hosting a number of in-person events.

The Big Jubilee Lunch was held in June, but sadly the second *Community Live!* event was cancelled at short notice due to the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II two days before. The Parish Council's protocol for the death of a senior figure states that no Parish Council meetings may be held and holding other events during the period of public mourning requires serious consideration. In this case a decision needed to be made very quickly and it was decided that this event was not appropriate. The Parish Council decided to put every effort into the 2023 *Community Live!* event and build up community enthusiasm through a year's worth of articles in *The Link* about community groups and clubs.

Everything is finally in place for the Council's major project, the Leek Wootton War Memorial Recreation Ground Car Park, to take place in 2023/24. A preferred contractor has been appointed and, having missed out on the primary funding source in 2022/23, the Council submitted its application for £20,000 to Warwick District Council's Rural & Urban Capital Improvements Scheme [RUCIS] early to ensure its place in the queue for April 2023 and has also applied to the Public Works Loan Board [PWLB] for a loan of £22,816. £5,000 of the ring-fenced money raised in the Precept since 2020/21 will go straight to the project, and support is also being given by Leek Wootton Village Hall Ltd. £1,900 in the 2023/24 budget will again be ring-fenced to repay the loan in the future. The car park will be closed from 19 June 2023 for 6 weeks, although the Village Hall and other facilities will remain open.

Unexpected Expenditure

A dominant issue for the Council in 2022/23 has been the outline and detailed planning applications made by CALA Homes Ltd for the paddock and tennis court land at Woodcote (Police HQ). The Council has liaised with the Leek Wootton Focus Group [LWFG] to help coordinate responses to both applications and attended various LWFG meetings. It also hosted two community meetings. Unexpected expenditure in 2022/23 was caused by the need to have professional reports from the Council's planning consultants and a traffic and transport consultancy to assist in its objections to both applications.

The Parish Council owns and maintains the children's playground, which is inspected annually for the safety of the equipment, gates, etc. This year a new layer of playbark was laid and the Council also had an inspection of the trees carried out. This led to a report that cited an amount of work required, including cutting back and felling two infected trees, which has now been carried out. Neither the tree survey nor subsequent works were budgeted for, but a 5-yearly inspection cycle will be implemented going forward.

Community Grant Fund

The Council has in place a Community Grant Fund for organisations to apply to for small grants. During 2022/23 the Council was pleased to make use of the full budgeted fund as follows: an application was made for a contribution to the maintenance of the WI garden (cutting back of the hedgerow); the regular grant of £300 was made to the *Leek Wootton Link*, which the Council supports to ensure it is delivered to every household in the parish as a key conduit in communication with the community; the Church requested a contribution towards the installation of two bike stands for the churchyard, and; the WI requested a further contribution towards the WI Garden, which it is planning to revamp to make it more low maintenance and drought tolerant, following the extreme temperatures of Summer 2022.

Other Funds

On 1 April 2021 the following project funds were open:

- **LW&GC Parish Summer Fête:**

The Big Jubilee Lunch took the place of the Parish Summer Fête in 2022/23 and on 31 March 2023 the balance of the fund is £0.

- **LWWMRG Car Park:**

The Car Park Fund has been ring-fenced. On 31 March 2023 the balance of the fund is £5,700.

Other income to the Council was the recovery of VAT, to which the Council is entitled, a grant of £735 from Warwick District Council towards Platinum Jubilee celebrations in the community, and £300 in donations from community organisations towards the Platinum Jubilee/QEII Memorial tree on the Recreation Ground.

At the time of preparing this DRAFT Financial Report, prior to 31 March 2023, the Parish Council's expenditure over income for 2022/23 is forecast at £669 and along with the Council's reserve funds, the balance at 31 March 2023 is forecast to be £10,287.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Warwickshire County Council: Cubbington & Leek Wootton Division [NO REPORT]

Councillor Wallace Redford

Due to the pre-election period (purdah), C/Cllr Redford has been advised that any Annual report of his activities as County Councillor should be delivered after the forthcoming election has taken place.

The online version of this document will be updated as and when an annual report has been received.

Warwick District Council: Cubbington & Leek Wootton Ward [NO REPORT]

District Councillors Pamela Redford and Trevor Wright

D/Cllrs Redford and Wright are standing for re-election on 4 May and are in the pre-election period (purdah). They will give their report after the election.

Pam Redford and Trevor Wright regularly publish an annual report on their website (<https://www.cubbingtonandleekwootton.net>) which, subject to the election, they will continue to do.

The online version of this document will be updated as and when an annual report has been received.

REPORTS FROM PARISH ORGANISATIONS

1st Leek Wootton (All Saints') Brownies & Guides [NO REPORT]

No report received

1st Leek Wootton (Centenary) Scout Group [NO REPORT]

No report received

All Saints' Church, Leek Wootton [NO REPORT]

No report received

All Saints' Church of England Academy, Leek Wootton

Andrew Morris, Head Teacher

All Saints' CofE Academy continues to be special place within the community that encourages the children to enjoy life in all its fullness.

Our aim is to continue to sustain high quality education right in the hearts of the two villages we serve and to also ensure we support our children and stakeholders to flourish and become the very best versions of themselves they can be. Our AGC (Academy Governance Committee) continues to have a clear overview of the strategic vision for the Academy and offers that perfect balance of support and challenge.

The school continues to have Forest School as a key part of what we offer the children within school. Each class has an opportunity to develop their love of the outdoors and their creativity within this area. It is something that the children thoroughly enjoy at all ages. I have been particularly impressed with the children's ability to make bread whilst at Forest school and even how to 'whittle' a peg.

We have been enjoying the freedom of a post Covid world and the children have enjoyed a mini residential, trips to the Cathedral, dance workshops (multiple), museum visits and singing at the NEC to name a few this academic year.

We also ensure children develop their love of music and this has been enhanced with a partnership with other schools which culminated with a huge concert at the NEC arena in Birmingham. Our Christmas performances were enjoyed in person and the parents once again enjoyed the opportunity to see the children excel in their acting and singing.

We continue to focus in school on developing our curriculum to ensure the children not only know all of the key requirements, but get to learn then in an enjoyable and fun context. We have enhanced many of the areas we study (such as computing and art) to ensure the children develop skills that are of the highest level.

We are currently looking forward to our Easter performance by Waller class which will once again take part in church.

Bring Back Guy's Cliffe [NO REPORT]

No report received

Leek Wootton & District Horticultural Society

Brian Melling, Chairman

It probably goes without saying that recent years have presented us with various difficulties due to the restrictions imposed generally to deal with Covid, so we were very pleased to be able to host our Annual Show again in August. The dry and hot summer however did result in limited entries for both the flower and vegetable classes, but despite this the day was a great success and raised funds for Society.

Another success was the introduction of a wreath making event in November 2022 which proved very popular, with the Village Hall full of enthusiastic participants producing a variety of wreaths to be taken away for display over the Christmas period. The success served to demonstrate that we are more likely to attract support for this type of event as opposed to talks and presentations which have historically been generally poorly supported.

The Committee has considered other such events and it is likely that a hanging basket production event will be organised in the spring.

The annual show in 2023 is planned for Saturday, 19 August but using the Village Hall will be unlikely as the car park will be closed for resurfacing.

We are examining possible alternative venues and hopefully we can maintain our presence in the parish. Please keep an eye out for more details in the coming months.

A new website has been designed and hosted with the help of Jim Perryman. The new address is:

www.LWHSociety.cv35.uk

In the past we have been generally unsuccessful in attracting new members to the Committee and this has served to put extra pressure on the current serving members. I am pleased to say that we have attracted two people who will be proposed to join the Committee at the March 2023 AGM. That is countered by the resignation of our Treasurer, Christine Hurcomb who has decided to step down after some 20 years of service. Christine has been an enthusiastic participant in Committee events and she will be sorely missed. I can say that one of the current Committee members will be proposed as Treasurer. We have given consideration to the title of our organisation and propose that we will promote ourselves locally as a gardening club as opposed to the local Horticultural Society as we feel this is a better representation of the activities we undertake. We will, however, continue to officially be the Leek Wootton & District Horticultural Society and will remain affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society with whom we obtain insurances and who provide our senior show prize The Banksian Medal.

We very much look forward to your support throughout the year and look forward to welcoming you to our events.

Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe Parish *Community Live!*

Councillor Stephanie Allison, Organiser

Sadly, the second *Community Live!* event was due to be held on 10 September 2022 and when the announcement of the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II was made on Thursday, 8 September, the Parish Council had to make a quick decision whether to go ahead and it was decided to postpone the event.

In time it was decided to cancel, as it was not possible to re-book the Village Hall and other facilities. Instead, all efforts would be put towards the 2023 event and Cllr Allison undertook to promote the event and various community clubs and groups throughout the interim year in *The Link*.

To take part in *Community Live! 2023*, please contact communitylive@leekwootton.org.uk

Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe Parish Environment Group

Councillor David Elsy, Contact

This is a fairly recent group set up by the Parish Council. It includes Parish Councillors as well as interested members of the parish community. It has met three times.

Our Mission statement is **"A greener village for all"** and its primary goal is to bring people in the parish closer to nature and to promote biodiversity and wildlife.

Activities so far:

- The running of a 'bee garden' competition.
- Carrying out a parish hedgerow survey. There are about 370 hedges in the Parish and so far, we have surveyed 175.
- Writing regular features in the LINK magazine about our local wildlife and asking for information on wildlife sightings to help us with monitoring populations. Many parishioners have already responded to our requests for information and we are gradually building a data base of wildlife species.
- Investigating ways of digitally mapping and presenting habitat and species information in order to produce a Parish Wildlife Map.
- The setting up of a Facebook page called Leek Wootton and Guy's Cliffe Parish Environmental Group. Any parishioner is welcome to join it. Its purpose is to share environmental information relating to the parish and for sharing sightings and photographs of fauna and flora, thus increasing our awareness, knowledge and appreciation of the wildlife on our doorstep.
- Trying to identify potential sites in the parish where we may encourage management that is more sympathetic to our native flora and fauna.

Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe Parish Summer Fête Committee

Stephanie Allison, Committee Member

The Big Jubilee Lunch: Sunday, 5 June 2022

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee over the four-day bank holiday weekend 2-5 June 2022 was celebrated with a Big Jubilee Lunch. This combined summer fête-type activities with a picnic-style lunch and was a chance for people to celebrate not only an incredible monarch serving for 70 years, but also our community having the freedom to gather once again after COVID restrictions.

Unfortunately, the weather was not the best, but many people turned out to celebrate. Entertainment included a silver band, terrier racing and a best dog show, a tug-o-war, a family treasure hunt via an app, cricket-, football- and golf-themed games as well as traditional garden games, crafts and an art tent.

LW&GC Parish Summer Fête: Saturday, 10 June 2023

2023 will see a Summer Fête return once again to the Recreation Ground, the first since 2019, and we are hoping to see many old and new faces. After the successes of last year, there will be terrier-racing and tug-o-war, as well as the silver band, country dancing, etc.

If you wish to be involved, have a stall, or find out more, please contact clerk@leekwootton.org, or keep an eye out for the planning meetings in *The Link*.

Leek Wootton History Group

Lesley Eldridge, Secretary/Treasurer

The History Group has continued to contribute material to *The Link* and, with an online presence, continues to respond to a variety of enquiries, sometimes being able to liaise between a person with some answers and the enquirer.

In January 2022 the 1921 Census was first published, which is an interesting addition to the History Group's archives.

Sadly, at the end of 2022 we received news that Bill Wright, son of Doreen Wright, who we all worked closely with during the *Doreen's Diary* project in 2012, had died.

In February the History Group contributed the tree guard to protect the HM Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee/Memorial tree on the Recreation Ground.

The Group will continue its efforts to respond to enquiries and share its knowledge about the history of this parish.

Leek Wootton Link

Lesley Eldridge, Co-Editor

Over the past year *The Link* has continued to provide a monthly update to the parish of activities in the community and other news relevant to our readers. *The Link* continues to grow in strength with more pages (at times) and more content.

The cost of printing has continued to increase during the energy crisis, but thanks to the advertisers and generous donations from many readers, we are confident that we will be able to continue to provide the quality of magazine that we are currently producing. Also, the GiftAid that many donors commit to is bolstering our income and we thank all those good enough to donate. We hope that the quality of the product and information provided will encourage even more of our readers to donate.

We must thank all our contributors, distribution organiser and distributors again for their ongoing assistance.

Leek Wootton Sports Club [NO REPORT]

No report received

Leek Wootton Toddler & Baby Group

Janet Jackson, Contact

The group meets at the Village Hall on Thursday mornings during term time. Leek Wootton benefits greatly by being able to host a village Baby & Toddler Group as it creates a regular community space for parents, carers, babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers.

It is able to exist because we have a treasurer, someone who looks after publicity and Janet continues to be the link person with the Church and the Village Hall.

The group continues because people turn up and attenders are able to support by helping with opening up, set-up of equipment, snack-time, leading the singing games, clearing away and closing up.

Leek Wootton Village Hall Ltd

Ian Watson, Chairman

Leek Wootton Village Hall provides a facility for the use of the inhabitants and employees within the Parish of Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe and the local area. The Hall is used for meetings, parties, community suppers, flower shows, as well as providing a regular venue for playgroups, scouting groups, dancing classes and many more clubs and societies. Hirers include parish organisations and charities, groups for adults, youngsters and children.

Leek Wootton Village Hall Ltd is a limited company charity with Trustees who are unpaid Directors. The Hall is managed by the Leek Wootton Village Hall Committee. This is made up of the Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer; other Trustees/Directors; the Booking Secretary; a representative from each of the parish organisations/user groups and elected members who provide particular assistance.

We are always looking for volunteers to help manage and maintain the Village Hall so if you would like to assist and join the Committee, please contact us.

To enquire about availability or to make a booking, please contact the Booking Secretary, Mrs S Fewtrill. t : 01926 409641 (after 4:00pm) / e : lwvh@outlook.com).

Leek Wootton War Memorial Recreation Ground [NO REPORT]

No report received

Leek Wootton Women's Institute

Lesley Kirkwood, President

I am pleased to report that our Women's Institute has gone from strength to strength over the last year.

We currently have 52 members, with a very active committee of 12 who work very hard in delivering a varied and interesting programme.

This year our meetings included talks / workshops on Circle Dancing, through Wildlife photography to Vision Aid Overseas

Whilst keeping in mind the need to keep an eye on Covid figures we have enjoyed a great year where once more we have got out and about enjoying the Warwickshire Countryside with our Walking Group.

Rugby School hosted our annual summer outing, which included a guided tour followed by a perfect summer supper.

The theatre, book and cinema groups have also flourished whilst our restaurant visits are certainly greatly valued by our members.

We look forward to another successful year and would certainly be delighted to welcome anyone who would like to come along to a meeting.

The Leigh Educational Foundation [NO REPORT]

No report received

Mothers' Union, All Saints' Branch

Janet Jackson, Contact

All Saints' Leek Wootton Mothers' Union Friendship Group is linked to Mothers' Union Worldwide as it supports family life, women and communities. Annual membership subscriptions help to support the work of MU, there is news in the *Link* magazine, some months we plan a walk from church together and we can participate in events in our wider area.

Individual members in everyday life endeavour to support community life and have also helped with activities such as Leek Wootton Baby & Toddler group, the Young at Heart group and fundraising for the work of MU in communities worldwide through making greetings cards for Mothering Sunday; helping to lead a workshop for youngsters to make gifts, and for food share collections making cards, lavender bags and 'Hug in a Mugs'.

We celebrated MU's Patron HM Queen's 70 years of Service by helping the Toddler Group to make a greetings card to be sent to Her Majesty by Karen our Diocesan President on behalf of MU. MU members also took part in Karen's Challenge for the year and made well over 70 lavender bag/card mementos to give away at the parish celebrations.

Contact: mu@leekwoottonchurch.co.uk

Neighbourhood Watch [NO REPORT]

No report received

Safer Neighbourhoods Team, Warwick Rural West

Jack Power, PCSO

Your Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) is a group of local police officers dedicated to serving your community. The team is made up of Police Officers, PCSOs, Special Constables and volunteers based in your area, supported by additional officers from the wider area. The team is accessible and has the skills and experience to identify and address local issues to ensure that communities are safe places to live, work and visit.

Key to the success of the Safer Neighbourhood initiative is the involvement of our local partners. Together with Safer Neighbourhood teams, they are committed to addressing local and force-wide concerns that impact upon quality of life. The Safer Neighbourhood teams work with many partners from the wider community, many of them volunteers like our Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, who are willing to give up their time to help make their communities safer.

The Warwick Rural West team covers the Bishop's Tachbrook, Budbrooke, Lapworth and Leek Wootton electoral wards in Warwick District. These four wards cover the parishes of Baddesley Clinton, Barford, Beausale, Bishop's Tachbrook, Budbrooke, Bushwood, Haseley, Hatton, Honiley, Lapworth, Leek Wootton & Guys Cliffe, Rowington, Sherbourne, Shrewley, Wasperton and Wroxall.

If you would like to contact the team then you can call us on 01926 684397 or you can email us on www.snt@warwickshire.police.uk. However, if you need to report a crime then please call 101 or report this on the police website on www.warwickshire.police.uk. In an emergency, call 999.

We are also encouraging the use of our Warwickshire Connected service. This is a free messaging service brought to you by Warwickshire Police where you decide when and how you hear about the issues that matter most to you, whether that be getting regular crime updates, the latest information on ongoing incidents and emergencies or learning more about what your local police are doing. This is also the place where you can get involved in helping to make your local area a safer place, tell us what police should be doing in your area, shape the initiatives that help to keep people and property safe and tell us what matters are causing your communities harm.

To sign up, go to <https://www.warwickshireconnected.com>