



AUDLEY RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACTIVITIES IN 2016/17

The Parish Council elections were held on 7th May 2015. The results of the elections are below, although there were two co-options due to casual vacancies that occurred after the election. Following changes made by the Borough Council, the next Parish elections will take place in May 2018. Audley Rural Parish Council consists of fifteen councillors and is divided into three Parish wards.

Audley Ward	Councillor	Mr R Moody
	Councillor	Mrs V Pearson
	Councillor	Mrs C Richardson
	Councillor	Mr M Whitmore
Bignall End	Councillor	Mr R Kinnersley
	Councillor	Mrs A Beech
	Councillor	Mr D Butler
	Councillor	Mr H Proctor
	Councillor	Mr M Dolman
	Councillor	Rev John Taylor (Chair)
Halmer End	Councillor	Mrs A Frankish
	Councillor	Mr T Sproston
	Councillor	Mr C Cooper (Vice Chair)
	Councillor	Mr R Garlick
	Councillor	Mr P Breuer

The Parish Council A.G.M takes place May each year. At the 2016 meeting, Rev J Taylor and Mr C Cooper were appointed as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the ensuing year.

Council Meetings

Meetings are normally held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at various locations around the Parish, there may also be additional meetings during the year to cater for any extra volume of business.

County and Borough Council Representation

The Parish is represented at Staffordshire County Council by Cllr Ann Beech and at Newcastle Borough Council by Cllr Bert Proctor, Cllr Avril Frankish, Cllr Ann Beech, Cllr Laura Bloor and Cllr Ian Wilkes. The number of Borough Councillors will be reduced and a consultation is underway to change the ward boundaries in the Borough – details can be found here [at www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk). Borough Council Elections will take place in May 2018.

Parish Clerk

Our Parish Clerk is Mrs Clare Withington.

Planning applications

Throughout the year, the Council receives planning applications for consultation.

The Council is committed to avoiding inappropriate developments and is asked by the Planning Authority to express its views on each application and also any comments passed to it by the residents. This they do in an advisory capacity only as the final decision in each case rests with the relevant Planning Authority. Between the period of April 2016 and March 2017 – the Parish Council have

commented on 66 applications. Several of them have been called in to the Borough Council's Planning Committee for full deliberation of the decision, usually due to a number of objections and where it involves developing green belt or large developments on the boundary of the Parish.

Allotments

The parish has allotment sites at Audley and Halmer End with 75 plots provided between these sites; normally allotments are generally well cultivated. Audley Allotment Association are now the leaseholders of the site at Audley, and continue to improve the site for the benefit of the allotment tenants. There is a waiting list of 7 at Audley and 8 at Halmer End.

Grant Applications

A total of 7 applications have received support from the Parish Council. This amounts to funding of £2,650 from Newcastle Borough Council's Community Chest fund.

Audley Fishing Club - Disabled car park/fish stock	£	400.00
Harp of Gold - Party in the Park	£	400.00
Friends of Richard Heathcote School – Forest School	£	400.00
Wood Lane Community Assoc - Windows	£	400.00
Halmer End CIC Institute - Guttering	£	400.00
Friends of Wood Lane School – Dance mats	£	400.00
Audley Library- Start up costs	£	250.00

Other groups have received funding directly from the Parish Council to support their activities that benefit the Parish – including the maintenance of the Millennium Green and hi-vis vests for the school children at Ravensmead Primary.

Notice Boards

There are eight Parish Council notice boards situated throughout the parish. These are well used and contain the latest information in relation to the Parish council meetings plus other relevant public sector information.

Website and publicity

A website exists to provide Parish information to the wider community. The website is updated at regular intervals, and continues to be visited by many people. Standard information about the Parish Council is also published in Audley Community News.

Children's Play areas and Wildlife Areas

The Parish provides and maintains 8 play areas situated at Alsager Road Audley, Albert Street and Bignall End Road in Bignall End, Miles Green, Halmer End, Alsagers Bank and Scot Hay. Play areas are subject to monthly inspections and reports are considered at the parish council meetings. On-going painting and maintenance of all the equipment is carried out as required during the year. Arrangements are in place to monitor the excessive dog fouling on the playing fields and dogs off the leads/excluded. Known people seen allowing their dogs to foul or breach the Dog Control Orders will continue to be reported to the Dog Warden who will issue fixed penalties. New play equipment is being installed at Alsager Road, following consultation with the local children. This will be completed around early summer. To deliver further improvements to the play areas, funding will be invested in new play equipment at Halmer End this year. Sadly, the skateboard ramps at Queen Street have suffered from minor ASB/arson damage. Additionally, to resolve some manufacturing defects on the skate surface, the ramps have been temporarily closed. They will be re-opened once the defects have been dealt with and the ramps are safe to use.

Annual Maintenance Programme

The Annual Maintenance programme of the parish assets continues and the contract is awarded to a local contractor to provide a further 2-year maintenance contract until March 2018.

Parish Bowling Greens

The Audley Bowling Club continues to thrive, although has been the victim of vandalism. The Halmer End Bowling Club is also doing well with the support from the Halmer End Institute, which is also a thriving community resource.

Public Seats and Bus Shelters

A total of 75 seats and 5 parish owned bus shelters are located around the Parish. An ongoing maintenance programme will continue to keep these in good condition. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing ASB issues the Parish Council was faced with the difficult decision of removing the Pensioners Shelter at Castle Hill.

Leddy's Field

Leddy's Field is a pleasant wildlife area in the centre of Audley village for the benefit of the parish. A third phase of tree thinning is planned for later in 2017 along with the ongoing routine maintenance. The ASB continues to be a problem with large amounts of rubbish and wheelie bins burned on the site. The Parish Council would urge residents to report these crimes to 101 as soon as they can.

Bluebell Wood, Alsagers Bank

This area continues to be monitored for any future work that is required.

Margaret's Garden, Church Street

Mrs Pearson continues to maintain this area with the help of volunteers, and it provides a lovely feature for the centre of the village.

Annual presentations

The Parish Council annually awards three trophies:

1. R.W Edwards Community Award

This award was presented to Mr Mike Joynson for the hard work in getting the Halmer End 'Stute' back up and running again as a thriving asset for Halmer End.

2. Capewell Naylor Trophy for Services to the Environment

This award was presented to Mr Rob Moody on behalf of Audley Parish Bowman for their hard work in helping to maintain Leddy's Field.

3. Elsie Kelsall Young Persons Award

This award was presented to the pupils (past and present) of Sir Thomas Boughey High School in recognition for their work within the community.

Millennium Green Trust

Once again, a payment of £700 was authorised to the Millennium Green Trust for its on-going work. The Trust also continues to be a victim of severe criminal damage and arson.

Bateswood Park

Support continues to be provided to the Fishing Group who are doing a great job at Bateswood. Improvements are being made to make fishing accessible to disabled people and to renew the fish.

Other activities

The list is endless but here is a summary of a few of the other things carried out by the Parish Council:

- Christmas lights on 4 trees and 11 Christmas streetlight decorations throughout Church Street
- Erection of bunting during the summer months
- Action taken on overgrown hedges by highways/pavements
- Organisation of Remembrance parade and maintenance/cleaning of the War memorials at Alsagers Bank and Audley, and repair and refurbishing Alsagers Bank war memorial
- Requesting action from Highways regarding the lack of maintenance of roads and pavements in the Parish
- Supporting Audley in Pink week
- Working with partners to address the ongoing parking issues in the Parish, particularly around the schools and Village centre.
- Donation towards improved CCTV for Audley Community Centre

Parish Finances for 2016/17

A total income of £158,548 was received: Precept (£105,044), Newcastle Borough Council grant (£10,040) for concurrent functions and a grant (£4397) for the reduced council tax base. The rest of the income is from external funding sources such as funding bids. There is approximately £36,000 in reserves.

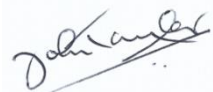
A total amount of £96,307 was spent as follows:

- 31545 (33%) play equipment (maintenance and investment in new equipment)
- 18786 (20%) on staff costs
- 12460 (13%) on miscellaneous including 11 new Christmas decorations and infrastructure, bunting, maintenance of unadopted land and parish awards
- 12000 (12%) on office administration inc Chair allowance
- 6888 (7%) on VAT
- 5980 (6%) donations to community groups and other S137 activities
- 3211 (3%) Seats, bus shelters, notice boards and grit bins (parish)
- 1631 (2%) footpaths
- 2139 (2%) on wildlife areas (maintenance)
- 1070 (1%) parish bowling greens
- 604 (1%) Allotments

The coming year (2017/18) will see an increase of 0.01p per week (Band D Council Tax) to the Precept, to provide additional funding to invest in new play equipment at Halmer End. More information can be found on the Parish Council website – www.audleyparishcouncil.org

As Chair of the Parish council I wish to thank all the Councillors for their support during the past year and their efforts on behalf of the Parish.

My personal thanks also to the Parish Clerk Mrs. Clare Withington for her help, advice, and her untiring work for the council during my year as Chair.



Rev J Taylor
20 April 2017