



AUDLEY RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACTIVITIES IN 2022/23

Audley Rural Parish Council consists of fifteen ward councillors and a Parish Clerk. An election was held on 5th May 2022 which saw a number of councillors re-elected and some stand down.

Audley Ward	Councillor	Rev John Taylor (co opted in Dec 2022)
	Councillor	Mr Ian Rowley
	Councillor	Mr Stephen Johnson
	Councillor	Mr Philip Cole
Bignall End	Councillor	Mr Nick Hayes
	Councillor	Mr Deane Jervis
	Councillor	Currently vacant as at May 2023
	Councillor	Mr Tom Cork (co opted in Nov 2022)
	Councillor	Mr Ron Garlick
	Councillor	Mrs Michelle Toft
Halmer End	Councillor	Mr Duran Dwyer (co opted in July 2022)
	Councillor	Mr Brian Billing (co opted in July 2022)
	Councillor	Mr Kelvin Chell (co opted in Nov 2022)
	Councillor	Mr Mike Joynson
Parish Clerk	Councillor	Mr Chris Cooper
	Councillor	Mrs Clare Withington

The Parish Council A.G.M takes place in May each year. In May 2022, Mr Nick Hayes was appointed as the Chair and Mr Deane Jervis as the Vice Chair. 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. The four yearly all out Parish, Borough and County were held in May 2022. The Parish Council were sad to see that Mrs Valerie Pearson, Mrs Catherine Richardson, Mr Daniel Keen, Ms Josie Leydon and Mr Rob Moody had chosen not to stand for re-election. During the year Mr Nick Crisp, Ms Anna Borowski Baskeyfield and Mr David Butler resigned from the Parish Council for various personal reasons. All are thanked for their contribution that they have made to the Parish during their years of service.

County and Borough Council Representation

The Parish is represented at Staffordshire County Council by Cllr Ian Wilkes and at Newcastle Borough Council by Cllr Sue Moffatt, Cllr Nick Crisp and Cllr Ian Wilkes. Borough and Parish Council Elections were also held in May 2022.

Planning applications

Throughout the year, the Parish Council receives planning applications for consultation. The Parish 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 2022 and March 2023 – the Parish Council have commented on 64 applications. Where considered necessary some 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. The next stage of the Borough Council's Local Plan is awaited after the first stage of the consultation closed in January 2022. The consultation is expected to start in the Spring of 2023 when we will see the new housing and employment sites identified and most likely to see some development in the Green Belt within the Parish. The Audley Rural Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish, a group of volunteers formed

to start the is nearing completion with the Regulation 14 for the Draft Neighbourhood Plan expected to be reached in Summer 2023. All residents are strongly advised to input into both consultations to ensure you have your say – as this may be your only opportunity to shape the future of the Parish.

Allotments

The Parish has allotment sites at Audley and Halmer End. The Audley Allotment Association successfully run the Alsager Road site which has 58 plots let and a waiting list of 25. The Parish Council manage the Halmer End Harrison Close site, with all 21 plots let and a waiting list of 3. A number of skips have been provided to both sites to help clear up the plots.

Grant Applications and donations

Contributions towards the Newcastle Food bank have continued since the scheme first started in April 2020. To date approx 3100 meals (1320.2 kg of food) have been donated by Audley Parish. Thank you to Tesco Express in Audley who have the local collection point for donations, which are taken to the Foodbank by the Parish Council. The Parish also has a subsidised the 'Door 2 Door' community transport service to help vulnerable people access transport who would otherwise not be able to. 'Door 2 Door' were awarded further funding of £750.00 to keep travel costs low for the users. This year a total of 98 journeys have been completed for people, with most journeys being for medical appointments.

The Parish Council have also supported Audley Millennium Green Trust with £1000 towards maintenance of the well loved green. Thank you to the volunteers who continue to keep this site going for everyone's benefit.

During the year the following community groups received funding from the Parish Council's Grant Programme and were awarded the following:

- Parish of Audley Medieval Society - fair 2022 - £300.00
- Minnie Pit Centenary Community Group – signs £300.00
- Leddys Field Support Group – bulb planters, paint and materials £170.00
- Audley Parish Angling Club – regrading banks - £300.00
- Leddys Field Support Group- signs £130.00
- Minnie Pit Centenary Comm Group on behalf of Sir Thomas Boughey -tools £300.00

The Parish also celebrated Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 by lighting a beacon at the Wedgwood Monument followed by a community celebration picnic event at Audley Community Centre and Audley Millenium Green with entertainment from Audley Brass, Audley Parish Bowman and other fun activities. Sadly later in the year the Parish paid their respects to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September 2022 when books of condolence were placed in the parish for people to pay their respects. HRH King Charles III formerly wrote to the Parish Council to thank the Parish for sending our condolences.

Parish Council Notice Boards and Website

There are eight notice boards containing the latest Parish Council information across the Parish. The website has been viewed 41,474 times during the year. Standard information about the Parish Council is also published in Audley Community News (Facebook group) and through local social media groups.

Village Car Parks

The Butchers Arms car park refurbishment was finally completed in May 2022. Other sites are being explored to create further opportunities for off road parking, subject to affordability.

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, Rileys Field 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. Dog fouling on the playing fields continues to be a problem although it has improved thanks to the responsible dog owners. If you see a dog owner failing to pick up, please do report it to the dog warden (www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/environment/dog-wardens) who will fine people if they are known. CCTV installation was approved at Queen Street following a large amount of ASB and Vandalism.

Annual Maintenance Programme

The Annual Maintenance programme of the Parish assets continues, and the contract has been awarded to a local contractor to provide a 3-year maintenance contract until March 2024.

Report from the Audley Parish Bowling Green Club:

The Bowling Club continues to prosper with membership nearing 60. The Club fields eight competitive teams including two ladies' teams. The teams operate in the Newcastle and Stoke on Trent area. It has been pleasing to note that competitiveness apart, there is now a distinct feeling of friendly, social togetherness in the club which helps to bind the people of the Parish. Annually the Club plays friendlies with Barthomley and Betley which also helps to link villages in close proximity to Audley. A warm welcome awaits new members – please contact the parish council for details.

Public Seats, Bus Shelters, Grit Bins

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. We have also installed a further 7 grit bins and will keep them topped up with grit (16 in total) to help keep the Parish moving in bad weather.

Leddy's Field and Bluebell Wood, Alsagers Bank

Leddy's Field wildlife area continues to provide a much-needed sanctuary for both wildlife and residents to enjoy being outdoors. The Leddys Field Supporters Group are continuing with their fantastic work and have been working with the local High School students too. Most recently a project working with Staffordshire Wildlife was completed to install 2 new ponds to attract Great Crested Newts. Bluebell Wood continues to be monitored for any future work that is required.

Margaret's Garden, Church Street

This year saw the front pillar rebuilt due to the brick work corroding. A new bench was also installed in memory of "Little Geoff", with the cost donated by family and friends. Ongoing maintenance of the pocket park in the middle of the village continues.

CCTV

The CCTV cameras have assisted the police with their investigations. Around £765 was spent as a result of ASB/criminal damage to Parish owned assets (£600 last year). CCTV footage requests from the Police have reduced this year to 5 (13 last year). Police resources are allocated based on the numbers of crimes reported. Please do your bit and report non-urgent incidents to 101 or online, as soon you can. Further investment is being made at Queen Street play area, to provide CCTV.

Annual Awards

The Parish Council annually awards three trophies, this year they will be awarded in May 2023:

R. W Edwards Community Award – This year it will be awarded to the staff at Audley Health Centre for their services to the community.

Capewell Naylor Trophy for Services to the Environment – This year it will be awarded to Mrs Val Pearson for her longstanding contribution to Leddys Field and the Parish overall.

Elsie Kelsall Young Persons Award – This year it will be awarded Caitlin Wooton , nominated by the teachers at Sir Thomas Boughey Academy for her sporting skills in football and gymnastics, great determination and work ethic.

Vehicle Activated Signs and Speed Indicator Devices

The Parish Council continue to monitor the speed within the parish with the 9 speed indicator devices at key areas across the Parish. These help to slow the traffic and gather vehicle quantity & speed statistics. So far these seem to be working well and the Police have used the data to review the hotspots.

Parish Finances for 2022/23

A total income of £203,979.41 was received. This consisted of the Precept £167,603 and a grant of £4,397 for the reduced Council Tax Base. The rest of the income (£31,979.41) is from other sources such as funding bids, grants, VAT reclaim etc. There is approximately £24,710 of un-ringfenced reserves going forward (plus earmarked reserves of £71,300 for a new car park and other projects).

A total amount of £251,045.00 was spent as follows:

Amount	%	Budget Heading
£64,888.40	25.8	Creation, maintenance and fees for the car parks
£40,979.96	16.3	Staffing costs (inc on costs)
£26,326.19	10.5	Bus subsidy
£22,980.56	9.2	Play area (maintenance)
£21,410.93	8.5	VAT
£18,925.36	7.5	Neighbourhood Plan Grant
£16,777.87	6.7	Special Projects (inc Xmas lights, CCTV, Community Transport)
£10,716.19	4.3	Office administration costs including insurance
£6,428.00	2.6	Wildlife areas (maintenance)
£4,620.56	1.8	Donations to community groups and other S137 activities
£3,649.60	1.5	Seats, bus shelters, notice boards and grit bins (Parish)
£3,194.99	1.3	Misc. spend – unadopted land and other Parish assets eg Grit bins
£2,551.90	1.0	Play area (investment in new equipment)
£2,470.00	1.0	Highways Speed devices and projects
£1,800.00	0.7	Parish Grants Programme
£1,200.00	0.5	Chair's allowance
£921.49	0.4	Parish bowling green (Audley)
£843.00	0.3	Parish allotments
£360.00	0.1	Footpaths

The coming year (2023/24) will see an increase of 10% to the Precept (previously £65.14) now £71.65 per year for Band D Council Tax to provide a precept of £186,719.90. More information can be found on the Parish Council website – www.audleyparishcouncil.org

Mr Nick Hayes
Audley Rural Parish Council
May 2023