



AUDLEY RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 17th April 2014

The Parish Council A.G.M takes place May each year, at the 2013 meeting, Mr. T Sproston and Mrs. K Davison were appointed as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the ensuing year.

Audley Rural Parish Council consists of fifteen councillors and is divided into three district wards.

Audley Ward	Councillor	Mr D Cornes
	Councillor	Mrs V Pearson
	Councillor	Mrs B Kinnersley
	Councillor	Mr P J Morgan
Bignall End	Councillor	Mrs C D Cornes
	Councillor	Mrs A Beech
	Councillor	Mr A Wemyss
	Councillor	Mr H Proctor
	Councillor	Mr M Dolman
Halmer End	Councillor	Mr N Blackwood
	Councillor	Mr E Durber
	Councillor	Mr T Sproston
	Councillor	Mr C C Cooper
	Councillor	Mrs K Davison
	Councillor	Mr P Breuer

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 Andrew Wemyss, Cllr Ann Beech, Cllr Dylis Cornes, Cllr Ian Wilkes and Cllr David Beckett.

Parish Clerk

Our parish clerk is Mrs Clare Withington, who for the majority of the year has been absent on maternity leave. Mrs Claire Dillow, (Acting Clerk) took over Mrs Withington's duties, despite her not living locally and travelling distance being a problem, Mrs Dillow performed her duties in a professional manner and has been a great asset to the parish council.

Planning applications

Throughout the year, the Council receives planning applications for consultation. The Council is committed to avoiding inappropriate developments and may comment on behalf of the residents in an advisory capacity, however, the final decision in each case rests with the relevant Planning Authority.

Allotments

The parish has allotment sites at Audley and Halmer End, 75 plots being provided between these sites; normally allotments are generally well cultivated.

Community Chest Applications

Four applications, shown below, have been supported by the Parish Council amounting to funding of £3.100

*Community First Responders
Audley Parish Angling Club
Audley Football Club
Audley Allotments Association*

Notice Boards

There are eight Parish Council notice boards situated throughout the parish.

Children's Play areas and Wildlife Area

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, also, 'Leddy's Field' wildlife area in Audley, is a very popular venue with residents.

Play areas are subject to monthly inspections, reports on each are submitted to the parish council meeting. On-going painting and maintenance of all the equipment is carried out as required during the year. A grant of £10,000 was obtained from 'Awards for All', for the provision of seven items of adult exercise equipment that is now installed, four units at the Queen Street Site and three at the Miles Green. The Queen Street site under the jurisdiction of C.A.R.A (*Children of Audley Residents Association*) has been included in the 'Fields in Trust', Queen Elizabeth II Playing fields deed dedication involving the National Playing Fields Association to ensure its future as a play area. A new main gate entrance has been installed together with new play equipment, a youth shelter and other improvements are planned for the C.A.R.A site as funding is secured. Again, it must be said that C.A.R.A has worked tirelessly to improve the facilities for the young people.

Website

A website exists to provide Parish information to the wider community. The website is updated at regular intervals, and to date has been visited by a large number of people.

Millennium Green Trust

Once again, a payment of £700 was authorised to the Millennium Green Trust for its on-going work.

Annual Maintenance Programme

The Annual Maintenance programme continues for the year up to the end of 2013/14, when it will be again reviewed to ensure the best value for 2014/15.

Bateswood Park

Despite being designated as an alcohol free zone and fishing being banned on the lake, this park had been problematic for years, constantly littered with empty alcohol containers plus evidence of vandalism. In addition to general litter, discarded line and fishing tackle left by people fishing the lake illegally, on which many of the waterfowl were often injured was of grave concern to residents.

Newcastle Borough Council, who have jurisdiction over Bateswood recently revised their outlook designating the lake as a 50/50 split between Angling and Wildlife area.

The parish council was able to act as intermediaries between N.B.C and local residents who volunteered their services to help manage the site, to this end an organisation has been formed to

work in partnership with N.B.C, managing the fishing and provide wardens. With this new partnership in force, remedial work has been undertaken and a great many improvements made.

Great Oak/Diglake opencast mining

An additional parish/public meeting requested by residents was called on the 2nd April 2014 at the Audley Methodist Church Sunday School Room. Once again, this was a result of an open cast mining proposal made by UK Coal for the Great Oak and Diglake area of Bignall End through to Red Street and Talke Pits, land that UK Coal do not own.

The hall was full, circa 150/200 people attended the meeting and with the exception of officials from UK Coal etc, not one single voice was raised in support of this 'Open Cast' proposal. In fact, quite the opposite, the general feeling is that for so small an amount of coal, (450.000 tonnes) raping the landscape is undesirable. Add to this, the proposal is on the site of the old Diglake Mine disaster, which is the final resting place of approximately seventy-five miners who could not be rescued, or their bodies retrieved, making this a hallowed site. Concern was also expressed that as UK Coal does not own this site and (*as announced by the media the same day,*) are currently in financial difficulty, the danger of it becoming a 'landfill site' close to residential property could not be ruled out.

Bowling Greens

The Audley Bowling Club continues to thrive, however, Halmer End Bowling Club is at risk due to falling memberships, the Parish Council offers support wherever possible to retain this asset at Halmer End.

Public Seats

A total of 75 seats are located around the Parish and an ongoing maintenance programme will continue to keep these in good condition.

Parish Precept

The parish council again took the decision not to increase the parish precept in the present difficult times.

Annual presentations

The Parish Council annually awards two trophies for an individual's work in the community; this year a third will be added in memory of the late Mrs. Elsie Kelsal, a long serving member of the parish council and stalwart of the community.

As Chair of the Parish council, I would like to thank all of the Parish Councillors for their support during the year and their on-going hard work on behalf of the people of the Parish of Audley.

Trevor Epton