



## AUDLEY RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACTIVITIES IN 2015/16

The Parish Council elections were held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015, which take place every four years. The results of the elections are below, although there were two co-options due to casual vacancies that occurred after the election. Audley Rural Parish Council consists of fifteen councillors and is divided into three district wards.

<b>Audley Ward</b>	Councillor	Mr R Moody
	Councillor	Mrs V Pearson
	Councillor	Mrs C Richardson
<b>Bignall End</b>	Councillor	Mr M Whitmore
	Councillor	Mr R Kinnersley
	Councillor	Mrs A Beech
	Councillor	Mr D Butler
	Councillor	Mr H Proctor
	Councillor	Mr M Dolman
<b>Halmer End</b>	Councillor	Revd John Taylor
	Councillor	Mrs A Frankish
	Councillor	Mr T Sproston
	Councillor	Mr C Cooper
	Councillor	Mr R Garlick
	Councillor	Mr P Breuer

The Parish Council A.G.M takes place May each year, at the 2015 meeting, Mr H Proctor and Revd J Taylor were appointed as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the ensuing year.

### Council Meetings

Meetings are normally held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Andrew Wemyss, Cllr Ann Beech, Cllr Ian Wilkes and Cllr Avril Frankish.

### 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 may comment on behalf of the residents in an advisory capacity, however, the final decision in each case rests with the relevant Planning Authority. Between the period of April 2015 and March 2016 – the Parish Council have commented on 85 applications. A number 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, 75 plots provided between these sites; normally allotments are generally well cultivated. Audley Allotment Association are now the leaseholders of the two sites at Audley, and have completed the security fencing around the perimeter of the site, following fund raising efforts.

## Grant Applications

Seven applications, shown below, have received support from the Parish Council amounting to funding of £2,650 from Newcastle Borough Council's Community Chest fund.

Audley Cricket Club - Benches	£400.00
Audley Football Club - Redecoration	£350.00
Audley Community Centre - Washer dryer	£350.00
Halmer End CIC - Flooring at The Institute	£400.00
CARA - Litter bins at Queen Street Play area	£500.00
PAMS - Medieval celebration event	£300.00
Audley Rural Parish Council - Children Road Safety vests	£350.00

Additionally the following groups received funding directly from the Parish Council to support their activities that benefit the Parish:

Audley Library	Adult learners day	£150.00
Audley Millennium Green	Donation towards maintenance	£700.00
CARA	Donation toward fun day	£300.00
Audley Women's Institute	Donation towards celebration event	£250.00
Breast Cancer Now	Donation towards pink week	£400.00
Audley Library	Birds of prey Family Learning event	£50.00
Two Saints Way	Donation towards guide book	£100.00
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	Donation	£34.00
Audley St James Mothers Union	Donation towards the Celebration event	£50.00

## 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 and 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 a large number of people. Standard information about the Parish Council is also published in Audley Community News.

## 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 provided is 'Leddy's Field' a wildlife area in Audley, which is a very popular venue with residents. This year a formal licence has been issued to the Audley Parish Bowman to allow them to carry out their weekly training events on Saturdays and their annual archery competition. Also an area of hard standing was created to allow residents to picnic in Leddy's Field. 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. However expensive damage to the play equipment and surfaces costing thousands of pounds continues, which results in money being spent repairing equipment rather than replacing it. Ongoing monitoring 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.

The Parish Council secured £15,000 of funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner for the new skateboard ramps and surface at CARA in Queen Street, which was topped up by £10,000 of parish funds. To deliver the further improvements to the play areas, the Precept will increase for 2016/17 to bring in an additional £60,000 to invest in new play equipment in the Parish – this was following a public consultation exercise, which saw no comments raised.

### **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 years maintenance until March 2018.

### **Parish Bowling Greens**

The Audley Bowling Club continues to thrive and the Halmer End Bowling Club is going from strength to strength following the re-opening of the Halmer End Institute.

### **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.

### **Leddys Field**

The second phase of thinning work took place towards the end of last year, and there is a third phase planned which may see the horse loggers back again. Interest has been shown from researchers for the BBC's Countryfile programme to film this – so watch this space!

### **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 Ernie Moulton for the fantastic newsletter that is produced for the Audley parish.

#### *2. Capewell Naylor Trophy for Services to the Environment*

This award was presented to Mrs Jane Lancaster on behalf of Audley LAP for their services that they provide when carrying out the voluntary litter picks around the village on a monthly basis.

#### *3. Elsie Kelsall Young Persons Award*

This award was presented to Miss Lara Dale for her talents as a shooter both nationally and also internationally when she will be attending the Olympics in 2020 to represent Team GB.

### **Millennium Green Trust**

Once again, a payment of £700 was authorised to the Millennium Green Trust for its on-going work. Unfortunately, the Trust also has been a victim of severe criminal damage and arson, with almost all seats damaged beyond repair.

### **Bateswood Park**

Support continues to be provided to the Fishing Group and the Borough Council have been asked to provide additional resources to maintain the wildlife area – however litter, dog fouling and fly tipping continue to be a problem for this area.

### **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 2 trees in the Village
- 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 bidding for funds from the War Memorial Trust to repair Alsagers Bank (due to be announced later in the 2016)
- Requesting action from Highways regarding the lack of maintenance of roads and pavements in the Parish
- Campaigning to save Audley Library from closure
- Supporting Audley in Pink week
- Working with partners to address the ongoing parking issues in the Parish, particularly around the schools and Village centre.
- Achievement of the Local Council Award Foundation Level.

### **Parish Finances for 2015/16**

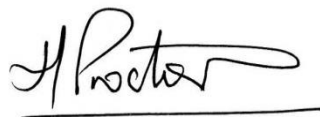
A total income of £78,500 was received - Precept (£42,879), Newcastle Borough Council grant (£9,800) for concurrent functions and a grant (£4,397) for the reduced council tax base. The rest of the income is from external funding sources such as funding bids. There is approximately £33,000 in reserves.

A total amount of £116,000 was spent as follows:

- 41% play equipment (maintenance and investment in new equipment)
- 16% on salaries
- 14% on wildlife areas (maintenance)
- 9% on VAT
- 8% on office administration
- 6% on unplanned spend/miscellaneous
- 2% footpaths
- 2% donations to community groups
- 1% parish bowling greens
- 1% on concurrent funding (funded by the Borough Council)

The coming year (2016/17) will see an increase of 0.47p per week/139% (Band D Council Tax) to the Precept, to provide approximately £60,000 of additional funding to invest in new play equipment. More information can be found on the Parish Council website – [www.audleyparishcouncil.org](http://www.audleyparishcouncil.org)

**As Chairman 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. Furthermore as Chairman of the Parish Council, I cannot express strongly enough the tremendously professional service given by the Parish Clerk Mrs Clare Withington without whom we would not have achieved the very prestigious local council foundation award. Clare brings a level of professionalism to the role that we should all be extremely proud and grateful for.**



Cllr H Proctor  
21 April 2016