



## AUDLEY RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013

The AGM is held in May each year. The Chair Bert Proctor and Vice Chair Val Pearson were re- appointed at the meeting in May 2012. The Council is made up of 3 wards involving 15 councillors:

<b>Audley Ward</b>	Councillor	Mr D Cornes
	Councillor	Mrs V Pearson
	Councillor	Mrs B Kinnersley
<b>Bignall End</b>	Councillor	Mr P J Morgan
	Councillor	Mrs C D Cornes
	Councillor	Mrs A Beech
	Councillor	Mr A Wemyss
	Councillor	Mr H Proctor
	Councillor	Mr M Dolman
<b>Halmer End</b>	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

\*Councillor Mr Neil Blackwood was co-opted onto the council following the resignation of Councillor Mr P Warren.

### Council Meetings

Council meetings are normally held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at various locations around the Parish. There have been additional meetings during the year to cater for the extra volume of business. An additional parish council meeting was called on the 12th February at the Audley Methodist Sunday School Rooms as a result of the submission of a scoping document in respect of an open cast mining proposal by UK Coal for Great Oak and Diglake area of Bignall End through to Red Street and the Talke Pits area. Approximately 150 people attended the meeting and unanimously apposed the proposals. UK Coal held a number of consultative meetings including one also at the Methodist Church School Rooms when displays of the proposals were exhibited. A group of residents have formed an organisation called CAGOO (campaigning against great oak open cast) who have also held numerous events including a public walk / demonstration through the parish from Audley along Bignall end up to the Monument at the top of Bignall Hill on the parish boundary.

### County and Borough Council Representation

The Parish is also represented at Staffordshire County Council by Cllr C D Cornes and at Newcastle Borough Council by Cllr Andrew Wemyss, Cllr Ann Beech, Cllr Dylis Cornes, Cllr Ian Wilkes and Cllr David Beckett.

## **Parish Clerk**

The parish clerk is Mrs Clare Withington who in March was replaced by Mrs Claire Dillow for the purpose of covering maternity leave. Mrs Clare Withington has preformed her duties in a professional manner and has been as asset to the parish council.

## **Planning applications**

During the year the Council have received 47 planning applications for consultation. The Council is committed to avoiding inappropriate developments and can comment on behalf of the residents of the Parish in an advisory capacity but of course the final decision in each case rests with the Planning Authority.

## **Allotments**

The parish has allotment sites at Audley and Halmer End with a total of 75 plots being provided on all sites. There is currently a waiting list of 8. The allotments are generally well cultivated. Sadly following sporadic damage and thefts during the year, a concerted attack in the allotment took place during the half term of February 2013 when during ten consecutive nights the boundary fence was cut and a large number of greenhouses, garden sheds and other property were seriously damaged and or stolen. Incidents of arson also took place with sheds and other property being destroyed. Areas of woodland adjoining the allotments on land belonging to the Audley Millenium Green Trust were also seriously damaged by the fire. Eventually the police detained a large number of youths who have been bailed pending a decision when the investigation is complete. A review of the security fencing is underway following a crime prevention report from Staffordshire Police. Improvements to the gateway to the allotments at Alsager Road have already been undertaken and the security improved.

## **Community Chest Applications**

A total of 8 applications, shown below, have been supported by the Parish Council amounting to funding of £4,000

Parish of Audley Medieval Society/Medieval & Community Fair  
 Audley Parish Bowling Club/Sprayer for Bowling club  
 Audley Parish Council/Resurfacing with stone on carparks at  
 Halmer End Podmore Lane and Audley Methodist Church  
 Audley Parish Council/Planting of Beech trees along Nantwich  
 Road in Commemoration of Diamond Jubilee  
 Audley Cricket Club/Purchase of mower  
 Audley Millennium Green/Tree felling and maintenance  
 Beat the Cold/Warm and safe in Audley  
 Children of Audley/Timber team swing

## **Notice Boards**

There are 8 notice boards within the Parish and two new ones have been provided one in Halmer End and one in Bignall End.

## **Children's Play areas and Wildlife Area**

The Parish provides and maintains 8 play areas based at Alsager Road Audley, Albert Street and Bignall End Road in Bignall End, Miles Green, Halmer End, Alsagers Bank and Scot Hay. The wildlife area in Leddy's Field is a very popular venue with residents.

The play areas are subject to monthly inspections with reports submitted to each parish council meeting. Ongoing painting and maintenance of all the equipment was carried out as required during the year. A grant of £10,000 was obtained from Awards for All, for the provision of 7 items of adult exercise equipment to be installed with 4 units at the Queen Street Site and 3 at the Miles Green Area. The Queen Street site under the control of Cara 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 Cara area as funding is secured. Again it must be said that Cara has worked tirelessly to improve the facilities for the young people.

### **Website**

In June a website was created to provide Parish information to the wider community. The website is visited at regular intervals, and to date has been visited by a large number of people.

### **Millennium Green Trust**

In July a payment of £700 was authorised to the Millennium Green Trust for its on-going work.

### **Quality Status**

A decision was made to form a sub group to work towards Quality Status for the Parish. This work will be on-going, although some areas have already been completed.

### **Annual Maintenance Programme**

Tender documentation has been issued for the Annual Maintenance programme to continue for the year up to the end of 2013/14, when it will be again reviewed to ensure the best value for 2014/15.

### **Bowling Greens**

The Audley Bowling Club continues to thrive, work has been carried to the roof and driveway, the costs of replacing wooden surround of the bowling green has been met by the parish council but the club will carry out the work itself. Halmerend Bowling Club continues but with falling memberships, the Parish Council agreed to pay the rent for the bowls club to the private company given the lease by Staffordshire County Council.

### **Public Seats**

A total of 75 seats are placed around the Parish and an ongoing maintenance programme will continue to keep these in good condition. A number of these have been repainted and repaired during the year.

### **Parish Precept**

The parish council undertook the decision not to increase the parish precept (£46,460) in the present difficult times however due to the changes in the number of Band D properties within the parish being used to calculate this, unfortunately the wishes of the parish council were not met causing a small increase of around £2.00 per year on average within the parish. An apology to all parishioners has been issued in the Audley and Wood Lane newsletters giving an assurance that this will be rectified at the next available opportunity when the figures are set again for 2014.

### **Queens Jubilee Tree Planting**

To commemorate the Queens Jubilee in 2012 20 native beech trees have been planted along Nantwich Road as one enters the parish from Balterley.

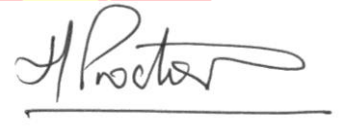
## Annual presentations

At the April 2013 meeting awards will be made as follows –

1. The community Cup - The head boy & girl of Sir Thomas Boughey High School, Jonathon Pratt and Nicola Palmer were jointly presented with the award for their contributions to the LAP and the Parish Council Meetings at the school with the Youth Activities.
2. The Green Award – Mr Tony Lancaster for his involvement in the Millennium Green Trust and had served as a member since inception.

In addition to the annual awards a letter of thanks from the Parish Council has been sent to Mr Peter Sadler for his ongoing commitment to litter picking and the general contribution to the community in the Miles Green Area and a letter of thanks has been sent to Mr Bill Cooper for his assistance in the management of Audley Allotments.

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



Bert Proctor  
Chair 2012/13

Acting Parish Clerk – Mrs Claire Dillow, 2 Druids Way, Penkridge, ST19 5HS. 01785 711150