



AUDLEY RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACTIVITIES IN 2017/18

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
Bignall End	Councillor	Mr M Whitmore
	Councillor	Mr R Kinnersley
	Councillor	Mrs A Beech
	Councillor	Mr D Butler
	Councillor	Mr H Proctor
	Councillor	Mr M Dolman
Halmer End	Councillor	Rev John Taylor (Chair)
	Councillor	Mrs A Frankish
	Councillor	Mr C Cooper (Vice Chair)
	Councillor	Mr R Garlick
	Councillor	Mr P Breuer
		Vacancy

The Parish Council A.G.M takes place May each year. At the 2017 meeting, Cllr B Proctor and Mr R Moody were appointed as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the ensuing year. On Thursday 3rd May 2018, local council elections will be held to elect 15 Parish Councillors who will serve for four years. The Parish Council were sorry to see Mr T Sproston retire from his position as Halmer End Parish Councillor towards the end of 2017. Mr Sproston has been on the parish council for many years and the Parish Council are grateful for his input.

The Parish Council were also saddened to hear of the loss of Mrs Dylis Cornes and Mr Ike Williams, both former Parish Councillors, who served on the Parish Council. Both made a big contribution to the Parish over numerous years in lots of ways and will be sadly missed by all.

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 have been reduced following the ward boundary review – 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 2017 and March 2018 – the Parish Council have commented on 94 applications. As in previous years, 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. The Parish Council also commented on the consultation for the Borough's Joint Local Plan Preferred Options – which looks at sites suitable for development within the Parish and Borough.

Allotments

The parish has allotment sites at Audley and Halmer End with approx. 75 plots provided between these sites; normally allotments are generally well cultivated. Audley Allotment Association manage the day to day running of the site at Audley and continue to improve it for the benefit of the allotment tenants. Halmer End Allotments are managed by the Parish Council. There is a waiting list of 4 at Audley and 8 at Halmer End at the current time.

Grant Applications

Community Chest funding (through the Borough Council) has now been replaced by the Lyme Lottery. A number of local organisations can be nominated to receive funds through this new scheme.

Other groups have received funding directly from the Parish Council to support their activities that benefit the Parish. These include the maintenance of the Audley Millennium Green, Halmer End Bowling Club, Minnie Pit Centenary Commemoration Group, CARA and Audley in Purple.

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. Excessive dog fouling on the playing fields continue to be a problem, although it has improved. 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 was installed at Alsager Road during the summer of 2017. This was a great success and lots of positive comments were received. Special thanks go to the young people of the Parish who have helped to look after it. Consultation has now been carried out with local schools to pick the new play equipment at Halmer End (Harrison Close). This will be installed around the summer of 2018. Albert Street play area will be considered for next year.

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 2021.

Parish Bowling Greens

The Audley Bowling Club has received Lottery funding to install new palisade fencing, following several incidents of criminal damage. Despite the setbacks the club continues to be a success. The membership at Halmer End Bowling Club is going from strength to strength with the continued support from the well-established Halmer End Institute.

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.

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 has now been carried out along with the ongoing routine maintenance.

CCTV

Due to the large amounts of ASB, Criminal Damage and Arson, the Parish Council have installed CCTV at hotspots in the Parish, which allows the Police to track movements of known perpetrators. The Parish Council would urge residents to report these crimes to 101 as soon as they can. Around £3,000 has been spent to repair damage caused by ASB.

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:

R.W Edwards Community Award - Open to individuals or groups that have made an important contribution to the Parish. This year it was awarded to Sandra Ginnis on behalf of the Parish of Audley Medieval Society (PAMS). The Chair of the Parish Council, Bert Proctor, commented that PAMS is part of the fabric of the village and very worthy recipient of the award, which was long overdue.

Capewell Naylor Trophy for Services to the Environment - Open to individuals or groups that have made an important contribution environmentally to the Parish. This year it was presented to Mike Joynson and John Harrison on behalf of the management team at the Halmer End Institute, now a Community Interest Company (CIC). The CIC has managed significant improvements to the land around the Institute including the Bowling Green, football field, car parks and gardens. The Chair added that this is a great contribution to our parish and proves what community spirit can achieve. He commended the CIC for their success and hard work.

Elsie Kelsall Young Persons Award - Open to individuals or groups that have made an important contribution to the Parish. There is an upper age limit of 18. The Parish Council were delighted to award the 'Elsie Kelsall Young Persons Award' to Miss Megan Jones at the November Parish Council meeting. Megan is considered to be an outstanding young person who is a treasure and a credit to the Parish not only in relation to Audley Cricket Club's second team but also as a musician, playing recently with the Audley Ladies Choir.

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. The Trust is desperate for additional hands to help maintain a valuable piece of open space in the heart of the Parish.

Other activities

Below 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
- Installation of 2 new kissing gates – Alsager Road Play area and Leddys Field

Parish Finances for 2017/18


A total income of £125,836 was received: Precept of £106,313, a reducing Newcastle Borough Council grant of £7,569 for concurrent functions and a grant of £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 £22,000 in reserves going forward (less committed spend).

A total amount of £141,171 was spent as follows:

- £22,569 (16%) play area (maintenance)
- £51,013 (36%) play area (investment in new equipment)
- £20,922 (15%) on staff costs
- £8,570 (6%) on miscellaneous including Christmas decorations, CCTV, bunting, unadopted land
- £9,411 (7%) on office administration
- £1,000 (1%) Chair allowance
- £13,321 (9%) on VAT
- £1,485 (1%) donations to community groups and other S137 activities
- £853 (1%) Seats, bus shelters, notice boards and grit bins (parish)
- £1,830(1%) footpaths
- £9,597 (7%) on wildlife areas (maintenance)
- £617 (0.4%) parish bowling greens
- £10 (0.01%) Parish Allotments

The coming year (2018/19) will see an increase of £0.26p per week (based on a Band D Council Tax) to the Precept, which will be used to provide gap funding in order to sustain the Parish bus service, following Staffordshire County Council cuts. More information can be found on the Parish Council website – www.audleyparishcouncil.org

As Chair I would like to thank all Parish Councillors for their support and hard work over the last year. I would particularly like to thank Trevor Sproston, Avril Frankish and Ann Beech who for various reason will not be continuing as Parish Councillors in the new electoral period from May 2018. I would also like to thank the many residents who have worked tirelessly in so many different groups and organisations that add to our Parish life. My final thanks go to our Parish Clerk who often goes beyond her time and duties to ensure that the role of the Council is fulfilled



*Cllr B Proctor
19 April 2018*