

News and updates from around our Parish...

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Our Jubilee Oak Trees

As part of Stretton's celebration and commemoration of the Queen's Jubilee, it was agreed that the Parish Council (PC) and the Pewterspear Green Trust would jointly fund the purchase and planting of two English oak trees. We ordered the Quercus Robur trees from Ladybrook Nursery, but because of the large demand at the time we were not able to have them delivered in time for planting in 2012. Once the weather warmed up sufficiently, they were planted on 21st March 2013 by Green Home and Garden.



One of the trees is positioned on PGT land on the north public footpath off London Road. The other tree is on the triangle green in Summit Close, Lower Stretton. We have since bought a tree guard to protect the tree in Lower Stretton as the green is used regularly by the children of the village for football, etc. Please do take the time to look at our lovely trees.

New PC Website set to launch

On 28th September the PC will launch its new website to help us to communicate in a different way with parishioners. But don't worry, we will still be putting this annual newsletter through your doors! The website will give details of Stretton Parish Council's objectives, highlight projects and current issues we are dealing with. You will be able to find out what is happening in Stretton - from events to local news - and you will be able to view our Councillors' profiles and access the minutes of the monthly meetings.

Our aim is to represent what we, the Parish Council, are all about and how we can help you.

Our Domain will be 'strettonparishcouncil.co.uk' - so put the date in your diary and take a look when we go live. Here is a sneak preview of the site taking shape...



If you have any suggestions on what you would like to see on the website, please do contact us as all suggestions are very welcome.

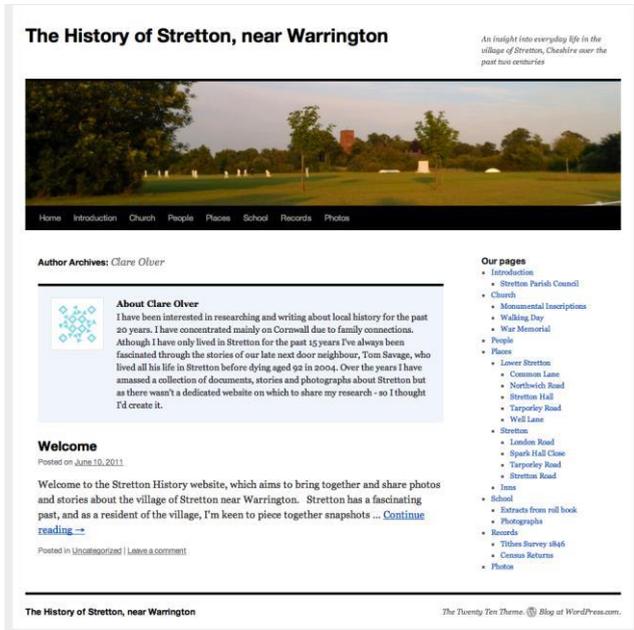
A name for the 'triangle' in Lower Stretton

The grassed triangle area in Lower Stretton which is home to the Christmas Tree and Jubilee Oak has become a focal point for Lower Stretton residents as this is the only shared green space on this side of the village. Residents have worked hard over many months to clear and tidy the area and a park bench has been put in place. It is now hoped to give the area a name and some suggestions from a recent community event - a Mad Hatter's Tea Party - were:

Jubilee Corner; Stretton Common; Oak Common; Christmas Green; The Village Green; Stretton Green; Common Green; Summit Green; Jubilee Oak Green. If you have a favourite or another name idea, please let us know.

The History of Stretton

One of our local residents, Mrs Clare Olver, has spent considerable time creating a website all about the history of our village. It's live now and you can find it by searching 'Clare Olver - history of Stretton'.



Clare has gathered together fantastic old photos of the village with fascinating bits of history. If anyone has any photographs, memories or stories to contribute, do get in touch as Clare would love to hear from you.

Well worth a good read and thank you so much Clare for creating this fabulous site for our village.

**Like to receive this newsletter online?
Just email the Clerk. 😊**

Twinkling Stretton ... or not!!



Sadly, after a very successful switch on of the Christmas tree on PGT land off London Road just down from opposite the Cat and Lion pub, the solar lights stopped working after only a few days. It is disappointing after all the hard work by the PC and residents to raise funds to purchase them.

Tests were carried out in the early New Year and it seems that we may not have had enough daylight to keep the large batteries charged for the whole of the Christmas season. The PC has now decided to purchase lights with batteries built in (that do not require daylight) for next Christmas, so Stretton can twinkle again!

Look out on the notice boards in November for the dates of the switch on ceremonies for both the Stretton and Lower Stretton trees. Everyone is welcome for a few carols by the tree and refreshments afterwards. It's a great way to meet your neighbours!

Vicar Elaine leaves for pastures new



After 12 years at St Matthew's and St Cross parishes, Elaine is leaving us for a new challenge in Stockport. Her new role will be at St George's Church in Stockport, which is probably the largest parish in Cheshire with 22,000 souls to be looked after. Whilst this new challenge in an urban environment, as opposed to our semi-rural parish,

may seem daunting, her last move from the Wirral to Stretton was not without its dual challenges. Bob Rowlands had been in place at Stretton for 29 years and Elaine was the first female member of the clergy to take his place in both parishes. Elaine was selected for St Matthew's through a conventional job application process and had to apply for her new position in a similar manner.

Elaine came originally from Cleethorpes in Lincolnshire before moving to Merseyside to start her nursing career, becoming a district nurse. Elaine has not met too much prejudice in her career, only the odd expression of surprise at her appointment. Elaine admits to being disappointed that female bishops are not yet appointed by the Church of England but thinks that time will take care of this oversight. When Elaine received the calling, training of female clergy was segregated from the male counterparts; thankfully this is now not the case. One of Elaine's joys has been training several new members of the clergy in her time at St Matthew's. She feels that she has a real contribution to make in ensuring development of new priests and can often sense the potential that the individual has within.

Financial issues face all parishes and there have been a large number of church closures across the country. Elaine's husband, Peter, in a recent sermon mentioned the demise of over a hundred village churches in Lincolnshire. The empty churches are now locked up and their peace and beauty denied to the public. The message is clear - use your church, support it financially or potentially lose it.

Being a member of the clergy is a stressful job. In theory it is a six day a week job with one day's rest but that is not always the case. Dealing with tragedy and bereavement is stressful. How has Elaine coped? She feels that this has been possible only with the love and support of a close family group and an excellent team at both churches. Elaine is not certain as yet when the family will relocate to Stockport. They have only just moved back into the vicarage after a major plumbing failure, which was very distressing. As they move on to pastures new, we wish her and her family well in the future and thank her for the last twelve years of care and prayer she has given to the two parishes.

Being a Stretton Footpath Warden



Andrea Marshall has been acting as a Stretton Footpath Warden for over 2 years. She said "It's been an interesting task, keeping me fit and

up to date with what's going on in other parts of the borough. My job is to regularly walk and survey these routes and ensure they remain fit for purpose. I report any obstructions, overgrowth and problems with signs etc to WBC who then try to rectify them as quickly as possible. We have 11 public rights of way in our parish - 10 are public footpaths and one a bridleway but many of them are only used by a few walkers. I've included a pleasant 3km (approx) circular walk for you to try which crosses over to Hatton and Whitley for short periods. Start at the Hollow Tree and walk through metal gate to end of hardcore. Follow fingerpost sign to Pilmoss Lane. The path is well signed and follows field edge crossing styles and bridges. Continue through Hatton stables yard and turn left at Pilmoss Lane. Follow lane to end and cross over A49 onto Limes lane. Walk along this road/track bearing left at pond, pass stables on right and carry on to School Lane. Turn left and pass wooded area on right side. Take footpath on the left which continues behind Walnut tree farm and Hollies farmshop. The path eventually comes out on Northwich lane, turning left up to Ring o Bells.

Please let us know if you have any problems with any of the footpaths by emailing us at strettonparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk. It would be great to see some of these paths being used more often and avoid them becoming overgrown. Happy Walking!"

Could you be a Special Constable?

The PC Chair recently attended a meeting with John Dwyer, Cheshire Police Commissioner, and he asked if the PC could ask local people if they would be interested in becoming Special Constables.



John is looking to have local people working at constables in their own patch - back to the village bobby days! So if you are interested in the opportunity to work in your local community, please let us know and we will pass your details on.

Grit Bins

Just to report that grit bins that were located around the village last winter really made a big difference to local residents when icy conditions hit our roads. Thanks to WBC for providing these for us. Bins are located at Summit Close, Common Lane, Stretton Road (outside the school), Bower Crescent and Fir Tree Close.

Bins are dark green in colour and are full and unlocked during the winter months for use by anyone dealing with an icy parish road - just bring your own bucket and shovel!

Latest on Travelling Showpeople application on former Roots and Shoots site

As most residents of Stretton will know, the land just south of the M56 roundabout, formerly occupied by "Roots and Shoots Ltd" was acquired by Travelling Showpeople who were refused planning permission following their application to use it for a number of "Chalets", caravans, and storage of fairground equipment.

In late May 2012, we received notification that an appeal against this refusal had been launched by the Travelling Showpeople, and a Public Inquiry took place over five days in early January this year. The Borough Council defended their decision and the Parish Council and Stretton Residents Group took an active role in the proceedings. There was an excellent turnout by local residents over the 5 days and this really showed the strength of feeling from our community. Despite a decision being expected in March, we are still waiting. Following a written Ministerial Statement on Planning and travellers issued by Brandon Lewis on 1st July 2013, a number of appeals involving travellers in the Green Belt have been recovered. We initially thought this appeal had been recovered but this was not the case. However the Inspector has recently written to all parties to get their view on whether the Ministerial Statement affects this case. We strongly feel it does, and indeed strengthens the Council's case by stating clear guidance on protection for greenbelt land and communities. We are now expecting an imminent decision from the Inspector on the Inquiry.

Want to hear direct about news & events? Just email the Clerk. 😊

Opportunities to be a Youth Cadet

Cadets have the chance to learn new skills and engage in adventurous activities in disciplined and well-structured organisations based on the traditions, values and standards of the Armed Forces. Cadets can also work towards a range of nationally-recognised qualifications which will help with their future education and careers. Here are the local contact details for Army, Navy and Sea Cadets should any young people in our parish be interested:

Warrington Army Cadets, TA Centre, Peninsula Barracks, O'Leary Street, Warrington WA2 7QS

Warrington Sea Cadets, TS Obdurate, River Road, Wilderspool Causeway, Warrington WA4 6ZD

Warrington Air Cadets, Tedder House, River Road, Wilderspool Causeway, Warrington WA4 6ZD

No excuse, dog fouling is unacceptable!

Some dog owners in the village are still failing to clean up after their pets and are treating the roads, footpaths and verges outside residents' homes in Stretton as a dog toilet. At best this is unpleasant and anti-social, but at worst is very dangerous as dog faeces can cause blindness through an infection called 'Toxocara Canis'.

Stretton PC is looking at the issue and has trialled signs that local

residents can use to mark dog faeces in the hope of sending a message to lazy dog owners.

(If you would like to try out the local signs, please get in touch with the Clerk.)

WBC have also put up warning signs in some places stating that it is an offence for an owner or keeper of a dog to fail



to clear up after their dog has fouled. Failure to comply can result in a prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000. The PC has been in touch with WBC who can send out dog wardens to target repeat offenders. Once dog owners have been identified, further action can then be taken. So please remember, it is everyone's duty to clean up after their dog. There is no excuse, fouling is unacceptable!

The PC's Planning Duties explained

The role of the PC is as advisor and not the final arbiter of ultimate decisions. Our responsibility is to echo the views of parishioners through our own experiences or by direct contact with members of the parish community.

Our PC meetings are open to the public and everyone who attends is encouraged to air their views on planning cases or any other issues when invited by the Chair.

Councillors receive copies of planning applications by email from the Clerk and we also view the applications on screen during our PC meetings. We view or print the details available on the WBC Planning hub using the unique reference to find the relative documents. In addition to the copy application, there are plans of the changes envisaged by the applicant - both exterior view and internal floor plan. There is also a map of the property location and a view of adjacent properties directly affected by the proposal. Also available are the existing drawings and floor plan.

Using this information we can make a direct comparison between the 'before and after' position of the proposed development. As a PC, we consider:

- Is the proposal improving the existing property?
- Will changes adversely affect neighbours?
- Is there an adverse effect on the immediate vicinity?

- Will the plans change the general environment of the village?
- Will the plans have an impact on traffic or create a noise nuisance?
- Will there be a visual impact on our local environment?
- Is there an impact on the green belt?
- Is the property a listed building?

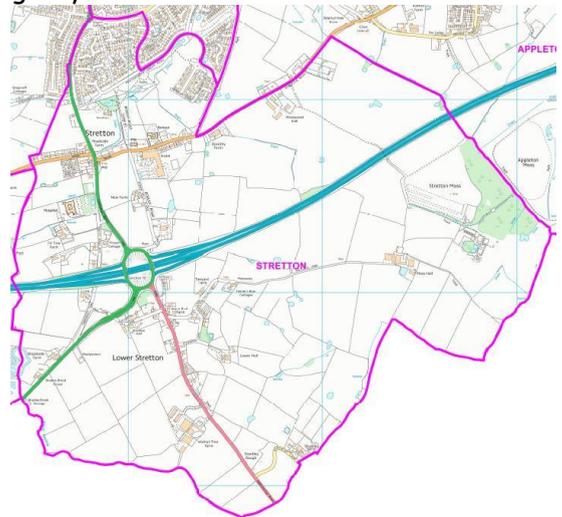
Once we have given our individual comments, we agree a collective PC decision with reasons and this is communicated to the Planning Department. If an application timescale falls outside our normal PC meeting timetable, we will hold a special meeting to discuss the application. A negative decision will need to be communicated to the Planning Department and this will need to be supported by a valid reason for that view. We need to be prepared to represent our views at a resultant WBC Development Control Committee meeting where more contentious planning decisions are decided.

If any of the councillors has any personal interest in any application, then they have a duty to declare this and exclude themselves from the voting process.

We collectively spend many hours at our meetings and at home studying the applications and make every effort to give applicants and parishioners a fair and balanced PC decision.

Stretton Parish boundary

We are such a spread out parish that sometimes people don't think they live within it. The map is a bit small, but it may give you a clue!



About the Parish Council

Stretton PC meets in St. Matthew's Church Hall on the 1st Monday of the month at 7.45pm. All meetings are open to the public and the latest agenda can be found on the PC noticeboards (outside Stretton Newsagents, the Ring O' Bells pub and on Pewterspear Green Road). If you have any problems that you would like us to help with or want to be involved, please come along or contact:

**Clerk to Stretton PC, Mrs Linda Crewe,
20 Algernon Street, Stockton Heath, Warrington
WA4 6EA. Tel: 450759**

Email: strettonparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk