

News and updates from around our Parish...

Stretton Parish Council needs YOU!



We have 2 Parish Councillor vacancies and if you are 18 or older, on the electoral roll, have lived in the Parish or within 3 miles of its borders for the last 12 months, or your principal place of work is in the Parish, you can apply. So are you interested? Or maybe you don't feel you know enough about what's involved. Well the Parish Council (PC) meets at 7.30 pm in the Church Hall on the first Monday of the month, except January and August. It's a chance to consider village planning applications (we have considered many but also commented directly on 14 in the last year); deal with local issues (we raised 33 issues in the last year); set the annual precept (money given by you through Council Tax) and decide how to spend it for the good of the Parish; and Councillors also individually represent the PC on the boards of external organisations, at community information meetings and events. A Parish Councillor basically helps to build and promote a stronger community and represent the views of the Parish electorate.

Let's hear from our current Councillors. Firstly, why did you want to join Stretton PC?



Linda Jones (LJ), PC Chair 'I love where I live and wanted to give something back and hopefully help in the community.'

Jill Higgins (JH) 'When I joined I was relatively new to the village and wanted to get involved in community issues and projects and meet more people.'



What sort of time commitment is it each month?

David Hutchinson (DH) 'I probably spend 10 hours a month on correspondence, meetings and observations in the village.'



Tony Lyons (TL) 'Roughly 2-3 hours per month plus any one-off activities. I also put in a similar amount of time as the PC rep on the Pewterspear Green Trust.'

What do you get from being on the PC?

Dennis Buckley (DB) 'I get satisfaction from seeing what a difference we as a Parish Council can make to our village.'



TL 'The enjoyment and satisfaction from representing the community and helping to shape opinions.'

What's the best thing you've been involved in?

LJ 'Wow - probably the Christmas trees, organising charity disco's, collecting money at Creamfields, doing sponsored walks and raffles ... and doing all the litter picks.'

DB 'This is hard to say but I was involved in setting up the PC website - it keeps people informed about what we are doing.'

DH 'The Jubilee Oak trees - they will last a long time and hopefully somebody will think about us in years to come!'

JH 'Organising Blooming Stretton, our daffodil planting around the village. It always brings a lot of joy every spring.'

How do you think the PC benefits our community?

DH 'Somebody has to champion issues that frustrate others...others like me in the past when I had no time to contribute but was annoyed by litter, holes in the road and damage to signs. We do get things done.'

TL 'By providing a focal point for informed and constructive debate about issues that affect the residents of the village.'

What is the biggest challenge for the PC?

DB 'For sure it is to unite the 2 halves of our village.'

JH 'Getting more interaction with parishioners - producing the newsletter helps, but it would be great to see more people at our meetings.'

LJ 'Definitely the planning laws as they have changed the whole area...and with cut backs from Warrington Borough Council (WBC) we need to keep on top of things in our lovely village.'

So if we've now convinced you to apply, please send a letter or email introducing yourself to the Clerk.

Goodbye to Clerk Linda



Sadly we are saying goodbye to our Clerk Linda Crewe who will soon be moving on to pastures new. Linda said "I have been the Clerk for 7 years now

and have thoroughly enjoyed the job. It's great to know that I have supported the Councillors in times that can sometimes be challenging. Even though we are a small Parish, there is never a dull moment! One of my favourite jobs has been to support Twinkling Stretton, our living Christmas tree project. It's great to go to the Christmas services and help to serve the residents

refreshments afterwards. Everyone has such a good time and it's magical for the children. I am reluctant to leave but my circumstances warrant this. However I will do my best to ensure a new Clerk settles in well." A big thank you to Linda for all her hard work and support. If you are interested in taking over the Clerk's role, see the vacancy on the back page.

Harriet is our litter picking champion



The PC has recently sent a letter of thanks to Harriet Olver from Common Lane for doing such a sterling job litter picking in the village. Harriet has been carrying out weekly litter picks for the past 3 months as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. Her aim has been to help to make Stretton a tidier and nicer place for local residents. Well done Harriet!

The PC held a village litter pick back in April - thank you to all residents who joined in. However, within a day the M56 roundabout already had rubbish appearing. We are now looking at commissioning signs for the roundabout to ask motorists to take their litter home and are also planning to buy a number of the litter picker tools so we have them readily available for future litter picks.

Want to hear direct about events in the village? Give the Clerk your contact details. 😊

On the case of flooding

In August last year, the PC finally got WBC to carry out work on the drains in Lower Stretton to address the flooding issues that were impacting local houses. Some gullies were found to be blocked with debris from the road works carried out constructing the traffic calming measures back in the early 00's.



Some gullies are now blocked again despite assurances from Sharon Walls, from WBC Environment and Regeneration, that gullies in Stretton are included within a regular maintenance programme. The PC is not convinced that this is happening, but following another request for action, some gullies have now been cleared. The PC will continue to monitor the situation.

Have you had your smiley face yet?

Do you remember what it felt like to get a smiley face from your teacher on your homework? Or perhaps you remember that sinking feeling when you got the sad face! Well with a more serious purpose behind it, you can re-experience those emotions by driving through Stretton. The PC voted in favour of buying a speed indicator device (SID) for the parish to help address the issue of speeding vehicles, and ultimately to prevent accidents and even save lives. It has been proven that a gentle warning about excess speed leads to an overall reduction. SID was partially funded from the 2014 donation from Creamfields.



The PC has identified a number of hotspots in the village and SID is being periodically moved by the local PCSOs. So far we have targeted Stretton Road and the A559. Although there are 2 rechargeable batteries that are managed by the PCSOs, the PC has noticed

SID has been out of action quite a bit, so we are looking at how we can rectify this teething problem. Make sure you get a smiley face and support safe speeds in Stretton.

A559 HGVs a danger to residents

Following concerns from residents in Lower Stretton, the PC has been looking at the problem of A559 HGVs. More and more are using the road and, when 2 meet, they are often unable to pass. This has led to vehicles mounting pavements and some driving the full length between the Ring O Bells pub and garage. Residents on pavements have also been clipped by HGV wing mirrors, and property has been damaged. The PC believes this is a totally unacceptable situation. Joanne Evans, Traffic Management at WBC has offered no solution. She claims there is no CCTV evidence; no widening of the carriageway could take place; no changes to build outs or traffic signals implemented; little benefit from imposing an "Access Only" order due to local businesses. The Police say that have no reported accidents. The PC believes that many HGVs are using the A559 as a cut through to avoid problems on the motorway network and are not actually visiting local businesses. We would like to see restrictions imposed with only HGVs visiting local businesses allowed. The PC has now contacted all other PCs along the A559 to see if we can join forces. Currently Marston and Great Budworth are keen, Wincham is still deciding, and Whitley and Antrobus unfortunately do not support us. We will be meeting with Marston PC in September.

Twinkling Stretton plans



A really big change this year for the tree lighting events in Stretton. We have decided to light both trees on the same night - Saturday 28th November. The Lower Stretton tree will be lit at 4.00pm followed by the PGT tree at 5.00pm. We are hoping to have carol singing around both trees. Following the lightings, we would like to bring everybody together for refreshments (soft drinks, mulled wine and mince pies) in the pavilion at PGT.

This has been such a success at the pavilion over the last couple of years and will be a wonderful start to the Christmas season!

And watch out for the new commemorative sign for the Christmas tree on the PGT site. One of our local residents is making this for us and it should be in place soon.



Pewterspear Green Trust update

It's hard to believe it's 20 years since the Pewterspear Green Trust (PGT) starting creating the wonderful amenity that is enjoyed by many members of our community and visitors alike. Since 1995, it is estimated that PGT has spent around £2.5M on the outdoor amenities and, with the support of the National Lottery, built the Sports Pavilion. The Trust is proud of its association with both Appleton Boys AFC and Stretton Cricket Club and continues to support both clubs by providing excellent playing facilities at a subsidised cost. In return, it is estimated that over 5,000 club members, their families and guests visit PGT every year! Looking ahead, PGT needs to continue to evolve and identify ways to increase and diversify its sources of income to ensure its long term financial viability. Currently there is relatively low income from the hire of the pavilion, so the



Trust is looking at ways to improve its appearance, internal layout and suitability so that it will attract different events and users and can become a facility

fulfilling a greater role at the heart of our community. Residents will be kept informed about the Trust's plans as they are developed during the next 12 -18 months. Find out more about PGT on the website and if you have any "before and after" photographs of the PGT site, the Trust's Secretary would be really pleased to hear from you via the website www.pewterspeargreentrust.org.uk.

Our 2015 Project - what do you think?

With time marching on, the PC is keen to allocate project funds for this year. We have some ideas from residents, and with the Creamfields grant (see below), it should be possible to fund more than one.

- 1 Flower bed - permanent beds near the phone box opposite the Cat & Lion pub. Also tidying up area.
- 2 Bollards - replacing village concrete bollards with decorative black/gold ones
- 3 Litter removal - paying for regular litter pick.
- 4 Village maintenance - paying for regular work on verges, fences, hedges and trees.
- 5 Village name and welcome signs
- 6 Decorative planters - as seen in other villages.
- 7 Commissioning an Art installation
- 8 A Village community event - perhaps in Spring/Summer with a BBQ, Ceilidh and band. Or have some local bands / musicians to entertain.
- 9 Community bank/Xmas savings club
- 10 Database of approved traders to help residents find reliable tradespeople to do repair work.
- 11 Information evenings with talks from local businesses/organisations eg home safety
- 12 Village suggestion box at the Stretton Newsagents and/or the Post Office to collect ideas.

If you have a new idea or would like to support one of these, please contact the Clerk. The PC is already keen on the idea of Planters for the village, but will be firming up plans at our September meeting.

Creamfields

The PC was very pleased to receive a £2,000 donation from the Cream Group in August 2014 in recognition of any disruption the annual festival caused to our village. Many other villages in the Creamfields vicinity receive donations, but this is the first time Stretton has been considered, despite the village being impacted by some traffic issues, unsociable behaviour, litter and noise. And we have just heard that a 2015 donation has been made this month so we will be looking for ideas at how best to spend the money on the village.



Here is some info on this year's Creamfields festival:
Fri 28th Car Park/Camping opens 12pm Music 3pm-11pm
Sat 29th Music 2pm - 4am
Sun 30th Music 12pm - 11.30pm
Mon 31st Campsite closes 12pm Carpark closes 2pm
Again we ask that if any residents experience any problems with the event, please let us know so that we can report these to the relevant bodies.

Outcome of Travelling Showpeople application on former Roots and Shoots site

In our last newsletter we reported that a challenge to the Secretary of State's (SoS) decision was being made by WBC. A hearing took place in Manchester on 11th / 12th September, and was attended by Gary Borrows representing the Residents Group and Jill Higgins representing the PC. The Judge decided in favour of the SoS and as such the Applicants were then able to proceed on the basis of the Planning application approved on Appeal. The PC has subsequently been involved in the applications to discharge the planning conditions for the site that were put forward as part of the Inquiry in January 2013. Following very real concerns regarding the landscaping scheme for the site, representatives from the PC met with WBC and gained some assurances in terms of the size of the proposed gates and treatment of the Hall Lane/A559 verges. However screening of the site and the highway changes are still of concern. The site is now under development.

At a recent PC meeting where the destruction of some of our wonderful daffodils on the corner of the Hall Lane/A559 junction was discussed, the owners of the site who were in attendance offered to replace the bulbs. This was well received by all concerned.

Will you be a Friend of St Matthew's?

The Friends of St Matthew's scheme aims to fund projects that will ensure the church building is adequately equipped to serve the community today and into the future. Current plans include internal access to toilets, a kitchen area and restoration work to the



treasured Willis organ. Many members of the Stretton community have links with the church, even if they do not regularly attend services, through the school, weddings, baptisms and funerals and are supporting by joining Friends. Fundraising events have included an interesting and amusing talk about the history of Stretton by Clare Olver, songs from musicals, an organ recital, a coach trip to Tissington, and a very successful showcase of talent. The next big event will be another showcase on 3rd December. For more information about the scheme and how to join, visit www.stmatthewschurchstretton.org.uk and follow the link to Groups, or contact Linda Buckley on 730791.

Grants for young people in Stretton

When the old Church of England School on Stretton Road was sold in 1982, rather than the money being returned to the diocese which administered the school, the proceeds were invested in a charitable trust called The Stretton School Trust, for the religious & educational benefit of young people under the age of 25 in the parish of Stretton & neighbourhood. The Vicar and Church Treasurer worked very hard to achieve this. The Trust was set up in 1986 with 5 Trustees: the Vicar as an ex-officio member, a member of the Parochial Church Council, a member appointed by the Warrington Educational Trust, a member of Stretton PC and one co-optative Trustee. The Trust capital is invested in the COIF Charities Fund and the annual income is currently in the region of £1,400. The Trustees hold 2 meetings a year (January and June) to consider investments and award grants which they feel are justified & affordable. Recently the Trust has financially supported youth groups' use of the Church Hall and bought bibles for St Matthew's School leavers. If you know of any young person who would benefit from a small grant from the Trust to support a religious or educational activity, contact Jill Higgins, the PC Trust Representative, via the PC Clerk.

**** Vacancy for Stretton Parish Clerk ****

The post is part-time to be worked flexibly on the basis of approx. 5 hours per week on average. This includes attendance at the 10 PC meetings each year. The position is home based.

The post holder is the Council's Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and will be required to schedule and co-ordinate meetings, take minutes and deal with correspondence. As RFO, the successful applicant should have experience of basic accounting and record keeping. Computer skills are essential. The applicant should have use of a car. The Clerk must have strong interpersonal skills and be a good communicator, both verbal and written. Salary £238.52 per month plus expenses. Further details and written applications (letter or email) to the current PC Clerk (details below).

About the Parish Council

Stretton PC meets in St. Matthew's Church Hall on the 1st Monday of the month at 7.30pm. 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: 07432 157591**
Email: strettonparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk