



Haughton Parish Council Newsletter

2012

June 2012

Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report

At the May 2011 election Peter Lawrence and Peter Rowley stood down as councillors and I thank them both for their contributions. Gill Anslow and Mike Little joined the five remaining councillors to form the new council. Cllr. Anslow became the council's representative on the Village Hall Committee and continues to manage the parish website. Cllr. Little joined the playing field committee and took over editorship of the council's quarterly newsletter.

The concurrent allowance to the parish was again reduced and, in order to maintain local services, councillors raised the precept by an average of £1.41 per household. Services include grass-cutting, amenity van visits, provision of dog gloves, support for the Village Hall, help with maintenance of the churchyard and provision of a warden at the playing field.

An excellent community effort, ably managed by Peter Lawrence, saw the village win the Best Kept Village (Large Section) in Staffordshire, BKV in Stafford District overall, and a unique award presented by the chairman of Staffordshire County Council for the children's poster display. The village received further honours by securing a Silver Gilt award from Heart of England in Bloom, and our thanks go to Cllr. Warbrick, vice-chairman, for ensuring those judges saw all the village's good points. The village is again entered in the BKV and Heart of England competitions and Maxine Hutt has assumed the co-ordination role with Peter Lawrence and Cllr. Warbrick in support. The Garden Guild is now running the village garden and hanging basket competitions and this year will see extensive sponsorship from local businesses.

After consultation and research, suppliers were chosen for the playing field equipment and funding secured to enable the £50K project to proceed. The council gratefully acknowledges financial backing from Staffordshire Environmental Fund, Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council who jointly contributed 96% with the parish council providing the rest. The project was managed by Cllr. Warbrick with assistance from Cllr. Little, the clerk Julie Hill, and Julie Sleight and the youngsters themselves who chose the equipment. Adult Exercise equipment is to be added to the playing field with financial aid from Sport England and Route One. Cllr. Warbrick is again co-ordinating this exercise with the playing field committee and help from Julie Hill. The council wishes to thank Reg Mathews, the playing field warden who visits the area regularly to monitor the state of equipment, log his visits and alert the council should repairs be necessary. The playing field is also checked for any dangerous materials.

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The trophies for the 2011 BKV win can now be seen in the Village Hall

Chairman's Annual Report (continued from page 1) ...

Over the Christmas period the now famous village lights won admiration from far and wide and, together with the annual post-Christmas tractor run including more than 60 entrants, over £7,000 was handed to local charities.

This is the Queen's Jubilee Year, and Houghton will be on the route for the Olympic Torch. The parish council will provide financial support for these events including plenty of bunting.

Lastly, the council's thanks to the clerk. Julie is the proper officer and the responsible financial officer of the council. She advises the council on legal, financial and procedural matters and again ensured the council obtained a clean report from the Audit commission in 2011. She also shouldered the work involved in the election process and conducted council business during the interregnum.

**The Olympic Torch**

... was carried through Houghton Village on the 30th May 2012, starting just after 5.12pm. The runners were Adele Bisbey and Steve Girdler and they carried the torch in two stages from Station Road, along the A518 through the village to Prince Avenue, and it was then taken by convoy into Stafford. Large crowds lined the A518 in Houghton to celebrate a remarkable once-in-a-lifetime event.

As part of this procession, there was a significant police outrider presence which certainly kept the crowds interested as the motorcycles zoomed through the village while spectators awaited the torch. Some photographs of this Houghton procession also appeared on the BBC

UPDATE – Jim Jarvis Playing Field facilities:

The Parish Council have a programme underway to install extra equipment in the Playing Field to provide exercise equipment for adults living in the village. The survey for this has been completed, grant applications submitted and we await the outcome of our funding application. More as soon as we hear. . . .

In addition, there have been recent instances where other parts of the village such as the Village Hall and Retail shop car parks have been used as playing areas. These are privately owned areas and should not be used in this fashion. Local Police have been informed and they will be keeping an eye on this use.

Using these locations for play purposes should not continue.

Superfast Broadband Communications

At least ninety percent of Staffordshire residents and businesses will have access to superfast broadband by mid-2015 following approval of a £7.5m investment by the council. The County Council is leading a major infrastructure project which began recently and has match-funded a further £7.5m grant secured from Government to unlock a massive investment programme.

Cabinet member for assets and environment Mark Winnington said: "Access to superfast broadband is vital for modern day living whatever your age and we see this infrastructure as important as road or rail. Our aspiration is that 90 percent of homes and businesses will have access to broadband speeds of 24Mb or more within 3 years. Like any major investment made by the County Council, this has been carefully thought out based on its positive long-term returns for Staffordshire people and our economic prosperity."

Through a process of public consultation - which included a broadband survey and roadshows - Staffordshire County Council has been gathering firm evidence of broadband problem areas. Feedback was obtained from over 1,000 people who completed the broadband survey, and 400

people came to roadshows in June and July 2011.

The broadband survey, which has been conducted in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, helped form the case for Government funding to help private sector providers improve broadband in Staffordshire. The Government has announced that £7,400,000 will be made available to help fund these improvements. This core funding will encourage future investment from private sector providers and leverage for other potential grants and funds.

Staffordshire County Councillor Mark Winnington, Cabinet Member for Environment and Assets, said: *"We share the Government's commitment to improving the broadband network and this funding is most welcome. It will help us to work with broadband companies to improve the services they provide to residents and businesses throughout Staffordshire"*.

Please note the Staffordshire County Council message below and help with your feedback ...

"Staffordshire County Council are leading a project to bring improved broadband services to Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. They want to make sure that the benefits of broadband technology are available to even more people in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent and need your help to make sure we get it right and you get the best service. Their previous consultation really helped to develop initial plans and now they need your help again to make sure they haven't missed anything out.

If you want superfast broadband in the future they need to know now so that they can make sure that your area is included in the plans of broadband providers. To make sure that your views and needs are included, please complete the online survey at the link below. Don't worry this is not a sign-up document; they just need to build a picture of your needs.

<https://www.snapsurveys.com/swh/surveylogin.asp?k=133484544219>

If you are unable to complete this online, you can either look for the coupon to complete and return in Your Staffordshire or contact Matthew LeDoux-Deakin at the Transformation Support Unit, Staffordshire County Council, Wedgwood Building, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH, telephone him on 07815 173003 or email him at matthew.ledoux-deakin@staffordshire.gov.uk with your name and address and he will send you a paper survey to complete."

2012

Houghton Parish Council
Accounts for Year Ending 31st March 2012

| INCOME | £ | EXPENDITURE | £ |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Precept | 12,250 | Administration | 6,129 |
| Concurrent Allowance | 1,072 | Grass Cutting contract | 4,275 |
| Common Rents | 350 | Playing Field ... maintenance | 1,079 |
| Grass Cutting recharges | 1,219 | ... new equipment | 49,763 |
| Photocopier (less costs) | 108 | Churchyard maintenance | 1,500 |
| Grants | 47,920 | Village Projects | 476 |
| Bank Interest | 121 | Village Hall support | 1,000 |
| VAT Refunds | 10,379 | Best Kept Village | 979 |
| | | Donations | 100 |
| | | VAT Payments | 9,949 |
| Total Income: | 73,419 | Total Expenditure: | 75,250 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--|---------------|
| <i>Reserves brought forward</i> | <i>11,238</i> | <i>Expenditure year ending 31/3/2012</i> | <i>75,250</i> |
| <i>Income year ending 31/3/2012</i> | <i>73,419</i> | <i>Reserves carried forward</i> | <i>9,407</i> |

May 2012 UPDATE — Best Kept Village and Heart of England in Bloom

Initial judging has been made and the consensus is that the village looks magnificent. Litter picks continue with support from the school, Brownies and a broad cross-section of the community—**two remaining sessions are scheduled for Monday 25th June and Monday 23rd July.**

Pupils at Houghton Primary School have produced a record 120 BKV posters, plus special input to mark the Olympic Torch coming through the village.

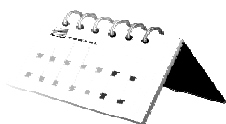
Response from sponsors has been tremendous, with well over £500 being kindly provided (for full details of

donors please see the BKV update in the village notice boards).

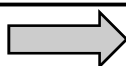
Removal of bulbs and spring flowers has commenced, summer planting is underway and sponsor border plaques are now in place. The Brownie pack have created an attractive red, white and blue floral dinghy planter to celebrate Olympic boat racing, and the Sunday School have used the churchyard wildlife area as a resource for inspiring seed planting and pot-painting as part of their New Life project. Watch this space for further more detailed updates

Current Parish Councillors:

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Chairman: | Mike Allen | 780328 | Councillor: | Gill Anslow | 780371 |
| Vice-Chairman: | Derek Warbrick | 780592 | Councillor: | Ian Forrester | 780124 |
| Treasurer: | Ian Sunley | 780585 | Councillor: | Mike Little | 780594 |
| Barry Stamp (also Borough Councillor) | | 822723 | Clerk: | Julie Hill | 282607 |



Key Dates:



Parish Council Meetings:

Monday 25th June, Monday 23rd July