

**Brewood and Coven Parish Council
with Bishop's Wood and Coven Heath**



Annual Report

2016-17

Chairman's Report – Linda Tomkins

Welcome to this year's Annual Report. May I thank my fellow Parish Councillors for their hard work and support throughout the year and also thank the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for their loyalty and tireless work to make sure Brewood Parish Council operates effectively and efficiently. Also thanks go to County Councillor Mark Sutton and District Councillors Brian Cox and Joyce Bolton for their regular attendance, advice and information.

Quite apart from all the recurring events such as Civic Sundays, the Brewood Junior Football Club tournament, the Christmas carol services and Christmas lights switch 'ons'. I have enjoyed attending various training sessions and workshops which I urge both old and new Councillors to attend.

The 'one off' events this year have been particularly enjoyable, for example: presenting Brewood Bowling Club with a cheque for £10,000, representing Brewood and Coven Parish Council at Brewood Music Festival, the Clerk's wedding celebrations, obtaining I.D. badges for all Parish Councillors and staff, the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations, collation of a new Vicar for St Mary's and St Chad's church, the gardener/handyman's award for flowers and planters, The Clerk achieving CiLCA qualification, the Assistant Clerk's certificate and training programme, establishing Community Speed Watch for Brewood, Coven and Coven Heath, representing Brewood and Coven Parish Council at 'Link for Life' dinner at Wolgarston School and attending the opening of Coven Memorial Hall extension. Finally, last but not least updating the honours board and Chairman's badge of office.

Brewood and Coven Parish Council is proud of its Quality Council status, thanks to the Clerk's leadership and all our own hard work.

I would also like to say special thanks to Richard Dakin for being such a support and strength as Vice Chairman this year and I wish him good luck and fortitude for his year of office.

Finance Report:

Precept Calculation

The Council's anticipated budgeted expenditure for the financial year to 31st March 2017 was £335,588. Members resolved to set a precept demand of £139,880 giving a charge of £47.35 on a Band D property in the Parish.

In support of the 2016/2017 budget, the anticipated income was £8,861 excluding VAT refunded, the Precept Demand and income from Roseclaim. This income was derived from administration, rent and lease agreements, provision of facilities and bank interest.

Income

The income received excluding the Precept was £64,562. However this amount includes a grant from Tesco, part of the grant from Veolia, and the community benefit payment which will all go towards the new play equipment at Coven. There is also a payment from Zurich, the Parish Council's insurance company, to cover the cost of replacing the bus shelter at Coven Heath which was burnt down at the beginning of 2016, VAT recovered was £10,654. The actual income figure is therefore in the region of £7,652.

The Council's changing rooms and football pitch at Coven were hired by 4 teams for the season which straddles two financial years: Brewood Old Boys, Wednesfield 86, AFC Castle and Brewood U15s. Unfortunately Brewood Old Boys and AFC Castle folded during the season. Sparta Gym also hired the pitch for a short period of time for a Boot Camp.

Expenditure

The actual expenditure incurred in summary comprised of:

- Staff salaries, including all on-costs, amounted to £81,346. The Parish Council has been committed to

providing the Living Wage for employees and over the past three years has increased salaries at the lower end of the pay scale by annual increments to achieve this end.

Parish Councillors do not receive any remuneration for the work they undertake other than £25 telephone allowance paid out once a year in December (£375 in total).

- A further £12,885 was spent on administration, associated overheads such as heating and lighting at the Council offices, subscriptions, audit fees and training. Lease agreements at Coven playing field and Coven Heath allotments amounted to £1,809.
- The Parish Council quarterly newsletter printing totalled £2,389. Other incidental expenses such as BKV entries, the Chairman's Civic Sunday and a new honours board totalled £1,952.
- Maintenance of the Council's playing fields, amenity areas and open spaces, Sandy Lane WC and allotments, including water totalled £9,036.
- Grants of £2,380 were awarded to both Coven Memorial Hall and the Jubilee Hall in Brewood and £600 was granted to Coven Heath Community Association. The accumulated grant of £6,938 for Bishop's Wood Village Hall together with this year's award of £2,380 was also paid; some of this was spent on essential roof repairs at the hall.
- Brewood Parish Sports Association was granted £3,000 some of which was spent on ground maintenance and improvements. Unfortunately there were some urgent works required to the electricity cable at the ground and repairs cost an additional £8,948.
- The Council once again provided grants to the independent community groups who organise the Christmas lights in all four villages to a total value of £5,860.
- The Brewood and District First Responders were awarded £2,000.
- A donation of £150 was given to the Royal British Legion towards poppy wreaths for Remembrance Sunday.
- Brewood Tennis Club was awarded £1,000; which will be carried forward to next year.
- Friends of Barnfield Sandbeds had £250 towards the planting of native flowers.
- Brewood Music Festival was awarded £2,000.
- Stafford Samaritans received £30.
- Many projects were completed this year. Coven playing field had the skatepark upgraded which cost £11,417 and a new fence around the tennis/basketball court at a cost of £5,888.
- Jubilee Park Brewood had some additional skate board pieces which cost £3,785 and seven pieces of outdoor gym equipment which cost £9,900.
- Coven playing field committee began consultation on the park equipment and £12,000 earmarked money will be carried over into next year towards the project of around £65,000. In addition to the grant, the Parish Council awarded the community benefit payment of £2,160, income from the solar farm at Lawn Lane, Coven. The Parish Council also paid the Third Party Contribution of £4,814 to ENTRUST to release the grant from Veolia for Coven playing field rejuvenation.
- For some years the Parish Council had been holding the grant for Brewood Bowling Green until the committee was in a position to proceed. A cheque for £10,000 was handed over in the spring.
- Money collected for Coven defibrillator held in trust by the Parish Council was redistributed by Coven Heart Start committee and £1,077 was divided equally between 3rd Coven Brownies, Coven Lunch and Sunday Social club (CLASS). Coven Christmas lights committee and St Paul's PCC Coven.
- Cycle racks were installed outside Sandy Lane WC in Brewood which were £114.
- The 2016/2017 repayment of the loans taken out to build new changes rooms at Coven and to install perimeter fencing at Brewood and Coven playing fields cost the Council £11,644.
- VAT recovered for the whole year was £10,654.

Planning Report

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications. We attempt to have a positive input in relation to our local knowledge. We accept that we are not experts on the relevant guidance and legislation.

We are informed by the South Staffordshire Council of residential or commercial planning applications, Tree Preservation Orders and tree works within the Conservation Area.

During the year we have received details of 91 applications; we made comments on all of these. 11 were withdrawn by the applicant before determination. Seven applications were for listed building consent, 14 applications were for commercial premises. Four applications were for six or more houses or major development. Eight were refused by South Staffordshire Council, six of these were objected to by the Parish Council.

The SAD document will go for inspection and comment by the Secretary of State at central government during August. This year we will be involved in the consultation process for the proposed rail hub on Green Belt land at Four Ashes/Gailey.

I thank the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for their prompt, efficient and accurate handling of the collation, dispersal and commenting on applications. Parish Councillor Richard Taylor.

Playing Field Reports:

Bishop's Wood

The playing field and play park in Bishop's Wood continue to be well used especially after school by younger children with their parents. New swings will be installed inside the fenced area shortly as the posts on the original swings have rotted and were removed.

Flooding continues to be a problem as the field has always been liable to hold water which makes it problematic for the grass to be cut as often as the Parish Council would like; it is difficult for the heavy machinery to get onsite as there is always the danger of them being bogged down. As access is restricted it would be impossible to get a bigger machine into the park to pull a stranded vehicle out.

No further problems with trees have been reported since the tree surgeon removed the overhanging branches on the perimeter.

Our thanks go to our caretaker Rachael Dunbar who can always be relied on to open and close the gates every day and keep an eye on things. Our thanks also go to our handyman Martin Smith for his work in maintaining the playing field throughout the year and being on hand to help with any unexpected issues. Parish Councillor Mary Sambrook.

Brewood

The Jubilee Park and the playing field continues to be popular and is enjoyed by all ages from our community. The equipment is well used despite the wet winter that we have endured. The equipment remains clean which has contributed to its use. The handyman's solution to birds perching on the bucket swings thus soiling them has now been adopted for other pieces of equipment thus making them more usable.

We have lost the full-size goalposts, one through irreparable damage and the other to make way for the new bowling green. We have installed seven, long awaited, pieces of adult exercise equipment which has been generally well received by the majority and they are being used well. There has been additions to the skatepark as well during the year.

Brewood Bowling Club is about to open its gates as the green has recently been turfed. They have overcome a few problems along the way not least the wet winter not allowing work to continue as planned, in fact the boundary fence has been replaced on the north east corner as it was erected in waterlogged ground. The bowling club is going ahead without a clubhouse at the moment because of a shortfall in grants.

Brewood Tennis Club continues to flourish with league games on three nights of the week and Sunday mornings, tennis training for all ages on other days. Plans to move the courts through 90 degrees have been put on hold for now.

Finance has been set aside for the Parish Council to consider landscaping parts of the park to make it more of a park rather than a playing field.

Finally, on behalf of the Council, I would like to express our appreciation for the work and commitment of the Council's caretaker, Mrs Elaine Gleed and the Council's handyman Mr Martin Smith, whose efforts have been so important in keeping the Jubilee Park looking so good and in turn so well used.
Parish Councillor David Evans.

Coven

The playing field has been very well supported over the past year in the play area for smaller children. The tennis/basketball court has also been renewed and now looks very smart, however the playing surface is in need of remedial works.

The skateboard park has been greatly improved with repairs carried out to the damaged gate and the damaged piece of apparatus which now look very smart. The football pitch unfortunately has not been used as much as in previous years, mainly due to football clubs folding as they could not raise a team. We are still experiencing minor damage to the rainwater down pipes and guttering due to the ongoing problem with balls being kicked against the changing room walls and roof. There is still a lot of litter thrown on the ground despite litter bins in the offending areas. The W.C. door is now opened during the daytime despite damage being caused in the early part of the trial period. Our thanks must go to the caretaker, Matt Orgill for keeping the changing rooms and the playing field in a tidy and respectable condition. We must now look forward to the imminent upgrade to the equipment for the older children after a lot of hard work and enthusiasm by the Playing Fields committee.

Parish Councillor Richard Dakin.

Allotments Reports:

Coven Heath

During the 2016/2017 seasons the plots have been productive and a pleasure to see. One or two plots have changed tenant and their new occupiers have begun their cultivation with gusto, however it must be said that one or two have fallen by the wayside.

The Assistant Clerk maintains close surveillance over the vacancies and lettings to ensure the waiting list remains short. Any vacancies are advertised in the Parish Council Newsletter, notice boards and Facebook, and there is a plan to write an editorial for the 'Village News' publication.

The Coven Heath Allotments Association has held meetings during the year and is working with the Parish Council to maintain the entrance gate and to improve the car turning circle at the north end of the path.

On a negative note, horses from a paddock adjoining the allotments at the north end entered the allotments on two occasions during March but apart from some trampling did not cause a great deal of damage. The fence has now been repaired and strengthened by the paddock owner. However, on a positive note, other local horse owners are continuing to supply horse manure and a tree surgeon has been delivering wood chippings for tenants to improve paths and standing areas.

Recently the Allotments Association has arranged for a scrap metal dealer to visit again to collect unwanted scrap metal items.

At the last Allotments Association meeting there were some suggestions to publicise the cost of plots and to include details of the Association with annual renewal notices to encourage membership.

Coven

Chambley Green allotments are well tended to by local residents, with all plots currently occupied. With the exception of some weed invasion, no problems have been reported by allotment holders.

Parish Councillor Linda Tomkins.

Income and Expenditure Report:

Income and Expenditure Report 2016-17			
Income 2015-16			Income 2016-17
£	1,710.52	General Admin	£ 6,033.43
£	3,203.31	Rent/lease agreements	£ 2,106.79
£	4,379.85	Provision of facilities	£ 3,095.73
£	7,200.00	Grants inc Roseclaim	£ 41,670.77
£	691.12	Reimbursements	£ -
£	137.55	Bank interest	£ 403.88
£	138,483.00	Precept	£ 139,880.00
£	6,840.16	VAT refunded	£ 10,654.20
£	162,645.51		£ 203,844.80
Expenditure 2015-16			Expenditure 2016-17
£	71,678.68	Staffing	£ 81,346.48
£	11,736.44	Admin/overheads	£ 9,414.32
£	2,655.06	Incidental expenses	£ 3,760.05
£	1,022.00	CLLr and employee training	£ 922.00
£	1,809.00	Leasing agreements	£ 1,809.00
£	988.00	Subscriptions	£ 1,106.00
£	468.90	debit card transactions	£ 398.70
£	4,934.88	Coven playing field	£ 6,612.31
£	3,852.19	Brewood playing field	£ 3,314.93
£	1,268.71	Sandy Lane WCs	£ 1,647.25
£	8,921.99	Other maintenance	£ 11,901.16
£	1,707.00	Projects	£ 20,718.90
£	4,709.40	Village hall grants	£ 14,678.00
£	4,952.91	Christmas lights grants	£ 5,859.95
£	13,295.22	Misc grants	£ 20,617.19
£	4,675.80	Capital items	£ 25,637.50
£	11,952.79	Loan repayments	£ 11,644.26
		s137 payments	£ 530.00
£	5,964.03	VAT	£ 13,930.90
£	156,593.00		£ 235,848.90

Income to 31 March 16	£ 162,645.51		£ 203,844.80	Income to 31 Mar 17
Expend to 31 March 16	£ 156,124.10		£ 235,848.90	Expnd to 31 March 17
Income over expnd	£ 6,521.41		£ 32,004.10	Expnd over income
Funds held at 1 Apr 16	£ 238,974.61		£ 213,391.73	Funds held at 1 Apr 17
Investments	2015-2016		Investments	2016-17
Cash/bank	£ 245,745.75		Cash/bank	£ 211,876.50
Debtors	£ 501.00		Debtors	£ 44.40
VAT	£ 1,341.13		VAT	£ 4,617.83
Prepayments	£ -		Prepayments	£ 1,443.26
	£ 247,587.88			£ 217,981.99
Less:			Less:	
Creditors	£ 1,730.68		Creditors	£ 210.00
Receipts in advance	£ 563.50		Receipts in advance	£ 1,205.69
	£ 2,294.18			£ 1,415.69
	£ 238,974.61			£ 216,566.30
Balance Sheet			Balance Sheet	
Current assets at 31 Mar 16			Current assets as at 31 March 2017	
Pre payment	£ -		Pre payment	£ 1,443.26
Sundry debtors	£ 1,842.13		Sundry debtors	£ 1,487.66
Cash in hand	£ 245,745.75		Cash in hand	£ 211,876.50
	£ 247,587.88			£ 214,807.42
less:			less:	
Current liabilities at 31 Mar 16	£ -		Current liabilities as at 31 March 2017	
Receipts in advance	£ 563.50		Receipts in advance	£ 1,205.69
Creditors	£ 1,730.68		Creditors	£ 210.00
New assets	£ -		New assets	£ -
Fund balances	£ 238,974.61		Fund balances	£ 213,391.73

Parish Councillors' Telephone Numbers:

Bishop's Wood:

Jan Jeffries 01902 851831
Mary Sambrook
01785 841398

Brewood:

David Evans 01902 851326
Anne Holmes (Vice Chair) 01902 850611
Kevin Kearney 01902 850336
Wendy Sutton 01902 851682
Richard Taylor 01902 850594
Mac Webb MBE 01902 850671

Coven:

Moira Alden-Court
01902 703528
Janis Bradshaw 01902 791435
Janet Carr 01902 791443
Richard Dakin (Chairman) 01902 850938
Antonio Pupino
07857 061 128
Glen Sibley 01902 790059

Coven Heath:

Linda Tomkins 01902 786008

District Councillors:

Joyce Bolton 01902 851079
Brian Cox 01785 840482
Anne Holmes 01902 850611
Wendy Sutton 01902 851682

County Councillor:

Mark Sutton 01902 851682

Clerk to the Council: Maggie Birtles

Parish Council Offices 01902 850809
9.30am until 12.30pm Monday to Friday

The scheduled meetings of the Parish Council for this quarter are:

29 June 13 & 27 July and 10 August. Council meetings are held at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, 35 Stafford Street, Brewood, ST19 9DX and include a 15 minute public participation session at the start of each meeting. Members of the public are encouraged to attend.