

Stapeley & District Parish Council

Annual Report 2015-2016



Clerk: Carol Jones

Tel: 01270 812065 – e-mail: carol.jones@stapeleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.stapeleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to the Annual Report, full of information about the Council's activities on your behalf, that you will find useful. Thank you to my fellow Parish Councillors for electing me as Chairman in May 2016 and for the excellent work undertaken by Sandy Gwinn-Freemantle throughout her 5 years as Chairman of the Council. Thank you to all Parish Councillors for their support and hard work throughout the year just concluded. I look forward to working with them over the coming year.

Across more than two years, a team comprising both volunteers from our community and Parish Councillors has been working hard towards the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for our area. As I am sure you recall, the Plan sets out what our community wants as the future evolution of where we live, work and relax. It gives all of us a voice in planning decisions, so your support across the various consultations and meetings has been greatly appreciated by everyone on the Steering Group. The Neighbourhood Plan has now reached an important milestone; completion of the first statutory consultation (known as Regulation 14 Consultation). This milestone is important as the Plan now has increasing weight in planning decisions that impact Stapeley and Batherton parishes.

Thanks are due to Johnsons of Nantwich for printing the Parish Newsletter and Neighbourhood Plan documents to its usual very high standard. I am sure my fellow Councillors will join me in extending thanks and appreciation to Carol Jones for her dedicated and professional support to the Council. I look forward to working with her during my term of office. And finally, my thanks to you, the electors and residents of Stapeley and Batherton, for your continued support and interest in the well-being of our parish.

RETIRING CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Having been Chairman of the Council for the last five years, I decided that it was time for me to stand down and at the Annual Council meeting in May 2016 I was pleased to be able to nominate Matthew Theobald for Chairman. He was elected unanimously and I am sure that he will find it a most interesting and rewarding role.

I take this opportunity to thank my Council colleagues for their support during my years as Chairman and look forward to continuing to work with them.

COMMUNITY HALL

The community hall goes from strength-to-strength. We now have perimeter fencing around the hall and there is evidence that vandalism has reduced.

We also have a sign 'Community Hall' and this gives a clear identity to the building.

The hire rate has been £12 per hour with no concessions for about two years and each client has a free half hour set-up before their event, and a free half hour clear-down time at the conclusion.

For the first time since the Parish Council began leasing the hall from Cheshire East Council (November 2012), we are 'in the black'. The operating costs for the year were £8,500 and the income was £8,800. We spent £8,500 on perimeter fencing and the Community Hall sign (net of VAT) but this has been treated as capital expenditure and not applied to the operating costs of the hall.

The guttering is due to be replaced during the summer and we are planning to install a new notice-board to the left of the gates. Space permitting, this will allow the regular clients to publicise their activities in the hall. We are also seeking quotations for inside decoration as it is now starting to look a little 'tired'.

These are the current regular user activities and there are new activities planned to start in early September.

Mon	9.30 am – 2.00 pm 6.00 – 9.00 pm 7.30 – 10.00 pm	Baby Sensory Italian Experience (except for third Monday in month) Parish Council Meeting (third Monday in month)
Tues	7.30 – 8.30 pm	Intensive workout (Metafit)
Wed	10.00 – 11.00 am	Intensive workout (Metafit)
Thurs	10.00 – 11.00 am 6.00 – 8.00 pm	Children's music and movement. Scouts
Fri	9.15 – 10.15 am 10.30 am - 12.30 pm 7.30 – 8.30 pm	Intensive workout (Metafit) Exercise with babies Intensive workout (Metafit)
Sat	1.00 – 4.00 pm	Young Embroiderers (once a month)
Sun		

Phone 01270 812065 to book, or e-mail: hallbookings@stapeleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

Our partnership with Cheshire East Council continues via the two Borough Councillors, Peter

Groves and Andrew Martin (representing Nantwich South and Stapeley). Peter Groves is also a parish councillor and can sometimes bring a different perspective to Council discussions.

COMMUNICATION (NEWSLETTERS)

Although we aim to publish a newsletter four times a year, our focus during this last year has been the Neighbourhood Plan and we issued special editions to give publicity to the process and to encourage residents to become involved.

In March 2016 we held an open day event at the community hall to encourage people to come along to express their views about the Neighbourhood Plan, or to ask for more information and we were pleased to be able to talk face-to-face with residents.

As we entered the new financial year (1 April 2016) we were able to start Regulation 14 consultation process (as referenced in the Chairman's report) and hope to be able to go to referendum stage later in the year.

Website

The Parish Council's website contains agendas, financial and other reports, newsletters, Freedom of Information Publication Scheme etc. The agenda is published at least three clear days before each meeting. We also used to display it on the notice-board outside the Co-Operative store on the Cronkinson shopping parade; however, the notice-board had become unsafe and the store has removed it, with the intention of installing its own board.

As noted earlier, the Parish Council is currently considering quotations for a notice-board to be placed outside the community hall.

FINANCIAL REPORT

During 2015-2016, the Parish Council agreed its budget for the financial year 2016-2017 and agreed a precept of £49,000. This is significantly more than the financial year 2015-2016 which was only £18,000.

What is a precept?

A local council receives the majority of its funding from an annual charge, called the **precept**, and this is requested from the Borough Council and then re-charged to local electors through their Council Tax bill. The Parish Council also receives income from community hall lettings and this income is factored into the financial projections.

Recent precept requests:

2013-2014	£25,800
2014-2015	£35,000
2015-2016	£18,000
2016-2017	£49,000

The Council adopts a combination of zero-based budgeting with some incremental changes to recurring budget expenditure year-on-year.

If you wish to view the detailed items or inspect the accounts, please contact the Clerk to make an appointment, or visit the website.

The key areas of spend for the forward year are:

Item	£
Clerk's gross salary The Council has one employee: The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer who also manages the Community Hall	11,320.00
Employer's NI contribution	300.00
Administration (eg, payroll service)	800.00
Printing/delivery of newsletters	1,600.00
Insurance/Audit/Subscriptions	1,800.00
Cheshire Association of Local Councils – affiliation fee	780.00
Neighbourhood Plan	7,000.00
Street Lighting (for Parish Council-owned street lights)	1,100.00
Parish Councillors' expenses	470.00
Grounds maintenance (includes land at Talbot Way which is owned by the Parish Council)	1,500.00
Grants	2,000.00
New notice-board	1,000.00
Speed Watch – downloading of data and movement of units around the parish.	2,250.00
Repairs to equipment	700.00
Community Hall – overheads including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance • Cleaning • Energy costs (gas and electricity) 	19,300.00
Shelter – to be located adjacent to MUGA	8,000.00
Miscellaneous	300.00
Unallocated reserves	3,000
TOTAL	63,220.00

GRANTS

The Parish Council allocates a sum each year to enable local groups to apply for grants; for example, in 2014-2015 a grant of £622 was made to Stapeley Beaver Scouts to enable the purchase of equipment to provide a better camping experience for the children in the Scout Group.

A grants application form is available on the Parish Council's website, together with guidance on who can apply and the criteria taken into consideration.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The Parish Council owns two parcels of land on Talbot Way; a lawned area and a conservation area. Greenspaces South Cheshire carries out the work on the conservation area, and Jof's Mowing maintains the lawned area. Jof's Mowing also undertakes other maintenance work within the parish, as and when required.

MEETINGS

The Parish Council meets monthly, on the third Monday. Meetings are held in Stapeley Community Hall and commence at 7.30 pm.

At each meeting, members of the public have an opportunity either to ask a question or address the Council during Public Question Time. This can be in respect of any item on the agenda, or any other Parish Council business.

The Calendar for 2016-2017 is as follows:

16 May	Annual PARISH Meeting; and Annual COUNCIL Meeting
20 June	
18 July	
15 August	
19 September	
17 October	Budget Meeting for 2017-2018
21 November	16 May
19 December	Budget to be agreed.
16 January 2017	
20 February	
20 March	
10 April	
15 May	Annual Meetings

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Parish Council is making good progress on the Neighbourhood Plan. Regulation 14 consultation concluded on 1 June 2016. This was the consultation which allowed members of the public and various statutory consultees the opportunity to comment on the Plan.

The Steering Group, along with the planning consultant, is now analysing the comments which have been received and, if necessary, will make amendments to the Draft Plan.

At its meeting on 25 August 2016 (changed from 15 August), the Parish Council will give a formal response to the revised plan.

The next stage will be to submit this to Cheshire East Council for scrutiny. This is known as Regulation 15 consultation. The Borough Council will assess it and ensure that it complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other relevant regulations.

The Draft Plan will be published for a six-week period by CEC which will also notify all statutory consultees. This is a further opportunity for anyone who either lives, works or carries on a business in the area to comment.

At its meeting on 17 October, the Parish Council will consider the outcome of the publication period.

The final stages are examination by an independent examiner, and if he/she approves it, a referendum is held to ensure that the electorate is in favour (anything over 50% carries the vote). The Plan then becomes 'made' which means that it has the same statutory basis as the Local Plan.

Please visit the website to keep up-to-date.

PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Councils and Parish Meetings work towards improving community well-being. The Parish Council plays a vital role in representing local issues and helping to improve the quality of life for residents. It provides the opportunity for people to influence decisions which touch their lives.

Following the elections on 7 May 2015, we were left with one vacant place and this was filled at the November 2015 meeting when Elizabeth Boughey was co-opted. Elizabeth lives on the Cronkinson estate and is very keen on environmental issues.

Other parish councillors have special interests and have taken the initiative to lead on certain projects;

for example, Mike Docker and Keith Nord (Speed Watch); Jo Hillman (Website), Elizabeth Boughey, (Environment).

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has continued, with Councillors John Davenport, Peter Groves, Jo Hillman, Martin Malbon and Matthew Theobald being re-appointed.

PARISH COUNCILLOR PHONE NUMBERS
(Prefixed 01270 unless otherwise indicated)

Matthew Theobald Chairman	07941 495 786
Jo Hillman Vice-Chairman	07766 652 011
Elizabeth Boughey	07738 086 964
Shaun Clough	629987
John Davenport	618971
Mike Docker	619855
Peter Groves	07597 978 831
Sandy Gwinn-Freemantle	619505
Martin Malbon	07714 764 558
Keith Nord	618534

Parish Councillors can also be contacted by e-mail using the style:
firstname.surname@stapeleyparishcouncil.gov.uk.

BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES

For information and help regarding the following services please call the appropriate department. These numbers are accurate at the time of publication.

Cheshire East Borough Council
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk
Main Switchboard No. 0300 123 5500

Buses and Bus Passes	0300 123 5020
Buses and train times (Traveline)	0871 200 2233
Council tax, business rates and housing benefits	0300 123 5013
Electoral registration	0300 123 5016
Environmental Health and Trading Standards	0300 123 5015
Planning and Building Control	0300 123 5014

Planning Enforcement	0300 123 5014
Planning Applications	01270 685893
Pot-holes and other highway maintenance	0300 123 5020
Waste and Recycling Local number	0300 123 5011 01270 215818

SCHOOLS

Pear Tree Primary	685155
Stapeley Broad Lane Academy	685020
Brine Leas Academy	625633

PARTNERSHIPS

The Parish Council works in partnership with Cheshire East Council, the local Police through the Police Cluster meetings and local PCSOs, Stapeley Parish Action Group (SPAG) and the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC).

Each year, the Council appoints representatives to attend the Police Cluster and the ChALC meetings and also renews the appointment of representatives to SPAG.

The Police Cluster meetings hear from the parishes about their various concerns and priorities, and the Police report on their own priorities.

ChALC is an independent body serving the needs of Parish and Town Councils (*Local Councils*) and representing their interests across Cheshire, providing advice, representation, networking opportunities and support to member councils.

PLANNING

One of the main consultative roles of parish councils, and of great importance, is to comment on local planning applications which may have a positive or detrimental impact on the community.

The Parish Council usually receives about 21 days' notice of planning applications and, for the most part, these fit in well with meetings. Generally, all development applications are subject to some form of mandatory notification or advertising for 21 days.

In some cases, it is possible to be granted an extension to allow the Parish Council to comment, but extensions of time are usually only allowed to an applicant, rather than consultees. If necessary, the Parish Council can call an extra-ordinary meeting to consider an application.

This is the topic which is of most interest to residents as it can impact either positively or negatively on the environment in which they live.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a requirement for developers to consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain developments. The developers must then demonstrate how they have consulted and how they considered any responses received before making a final submission to the Local Planning Authority (Cheshire East Borough Council).

The Parish Council gives careful consideration to all planning applications and ensures that observations are based on material planning considerations as these are the only comments which will carry weight.

The broad aim of the Parish Council, in terms of planning is to keep Stapeley and Batherton a pleasant place to live, avoiding inappropriate development and, of course, the Neighbourhood Plan will be of great benefit in achieving this aim.

POLICE

Although crime is relatively low in Stapeley parish, PCSO Nick Jarvis offers general advice to people to be vigilant and take whatever steps are necessary to prevent crime. Simple things like checking the door is locked, not leaving windows open, especially

If you see something out of place, you can either telephone the emergency line (999) if it is a genuine emergency, or telephone 101.

Nick can be contacted by voice-mail at 0845 458 5378, or by e-mail Nicholas.jarvis@cheshire.pnn.police.uk

CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

I urge everyone in the parish to become involved in the development of our community. Whether you have ideas to improve parish life, or concerns that we may be able to help with, talk with me or other Parish Councillors. We will work together with you to seek a resolution.

Our community continues to pull together in the creation of our Neighbourhood Plan. Please continue your support for the final, important stages as they occur in the coming months.

Come along to our meetings when you have the opportunity. There's lots to find out about even when there aren't controversial items (such as planning applications) on the agenda. The meetings are also a very good way to stay up to date with what is happening in our parishes.

Matthew Theobald

Chairman