



Clent Parish Council

You are invited to the Annual Parish Meeting
on Monday 20th April at 7.00pm in Clent Parish Hall

Starting with a presentation on the 'Smartwater' kit that identifies valuable items, guarding against loss through theft.

The Parish Council Monthly Meeting will follow at 8.00pm.

Introduction

Welcome to our Annual Newsletter. We hope that you will be able to attend our annual Parish Meeting on 20th April and the monthly Parish Council Meeting that follows.

Two issues have continued to dominate our monthly meetings. Both have generated considerable debate at our meetings and through correspondence. There has also been widespread press coverage. The first, the various planning applications along Western Road is covered in the next article.

The second concerns allocation of funds from the New Homes Bonus to local communities. Briefly any new homes built generate additional income equal to the council tax on each home for a period of 6 years. This income is divided between Bromsgrove District Council (80%) and Worcestershire County Council (20%). Government guidance is that a proportion should be allocated to the local communities where housing development occurs, to improve facilities and meet the extra demands placed upon them. From available funds, Bromsgrove District Council have allocated only £87,000 to local communities across the District. Your Parish Council is disappointed that our recommendations, expressed in several letters to them, have not been followed.

At this time we are not privy to Bromsgrove District Council's continuing review of Community Governance. Our understanding is that there will be a further period for submission of comments before a final recommendation is made.

Our April meeting will be the last undertaken by the current members of the Parish Council as our four year term of office comes to an end. Election of the new Parish Council along with District Council and Government takes place on Thursday 7 May. The Parish Council wishes to thank those of you who have attended our meetings and corresponded with our Clerk Ruth Mullett. Your comments and observations have been very helpful.

Housing developments, Clent West.

During the year we have had to deal with five applications affecting Western Road. CALA submitted an application to build 70 houses on land at Strathearn; Billingham and Kite applied for 28 houses to be built on the site of the old coal yard adjacent to Algoa; Framptons recently applied to demolish Strathearn House and replace it with 7 houses. Your Council objected to all these proposals, on the grounds there was inadequate infrastructure to cope with another influx of houses. Unfortunately our objections were not upheld.

Sadly, we had no grounds for objecting to the demolition of the two Victorian gardeners' cottages. Our one significant successful objection however, was against Cala's proposal to build a link road connecting their Wychbury Fields site to their Strathearn site. This resulted in a refusal by the planners and its subsequent withdrawal, to be replaced by a pedestrian and cycle link.

Other Planning Matters.

Apart from the above issues, your Parish Council has considered the usual number of individual applications around the Parish. We have no legal powers to determine whether or not an application should be granted. However it is our right to be officially consulted by Bromsgrove District Council, because of our knowledge of the Parish and our role as a barometer of local opinion. Parishioners have to live with the consequences of the planners' decisions. Nevertheless the professional planning team at Bromsgrove District Council did not always follow our recommendations.

Regrettably Bromsgrove Planning Enforcement team reacts very slowly to perceived planning anomalies drawn to their attention by us.

Some Positives from Developments

We have been fortunate to secure some 'site specific' development funds (section 106). This has provided considerable sums for local GP Surgeries, and for improvements to the Parish Hall when required. And for the splendid Outdoor Gym!



Community Bus – Dial a Ride Now up and running!

This is open to all residents of Clent and Hagley so please take advantage of it. It is designed to be flexible and meet the needs of the community.

If you have not yet registered for the service, or you need more information, please call **0121 453 9682** during normal office hours.

For Clent residents the service responds to requests for trips to Stourbridge, Merry Hill, Halesowen or Kidderminster. There are currently no fixed times.

For Hagley residents it runs three days a week;- return trips to Stourbridge on Monday, Merry Hill on Wednesday, Kidderminster or Halesowen on Friday. Currently there are two trips a day with pick up at either 9.45 – return 12.15, or 10.45 – return 13.15.

In the future, times and destinations may change in response to demand.

The charge is £4 return, or £2 return for holders of a Concessionary Bus Pass.

Clent Cricket Club

The Club enjoyed a mainly successful 2014 season with more wins than losses, with the odd nail biting draw thrown in. 26 fixtures were arranged and only a few lost to bad weather. The tour matches to North Somerset were hotly contested affairs.

The highlight of the season was the magnificent "Hat Trick" against our arch rivals Belbroughton taken by our premier bowler Kev Smith. A feat worthy of any club's record books ! We are hopeful of more such memorable moments in the forthcoming season.

The Club prides itself on being a friendly non-league club and welcomes anyone with an interest in the game, even if only for four or five matches in a season. Please contact our Membership Secretary Richard Perks on **07735 450946**.

The Great War

With the kind permission of the Church authorities, the Parish Council will shortly erect a plaque to commemorate the Centenary of the First World War, at the lych-gate of St Leonard's Church.



Centenary Field Management

As part of our Management Plan we have now prepared the ground between the Cricket Pavilion and the South boundary fence, prior to sowing of a 'Wildflower mix', during this spring.

Temporary protective fencing will be required until the meadow is established; please respect this.

We will ultimately have a beautiful meadow and haven for wildlife.

Another Willow on the pond island has been judiciously pollarded.

Following further weed clearance the new hedge along Holy Cross is growing on well.

For details of the management plan please refer to www.clentparishcouncil.gov.uk

Trees

Our Parish is blessed with many beautiful trees, mostly in fine health and undamaged. At present there is no sign of the feared Ash Die Back disease, but we ask everyone to read up on this so that you can spot symptoms and alert the Council. Thank you.

Maintenance and the Lengthsman

Clent is a rural Parish with a lot of road and path-side verges, hedges and drains. Philip Dunkley, our Lengthsman is doing a good job keeping these in order. The Council has agreed to a monitored, flexible increase in his hours to cope with increased demands. Philip tells us that he collects 50kg of roadside rubbish each day, and Steve Bubb our Maintenance Man confirms that the playing fields accumulate quantities of rubbish and dog poo, despite the presence of conveniently situated bins.

Streetlights

The Parish Council has transferred streetlight maintenance and power supply to Worcestershire County Council lighting division. Residents may have seen their teams of lighting engineers working around the Parish. Our old lights were mostly powered by Mercury bulbs (which are going out of production), and are being replaced by L.E.D lights. These give a whiter light using only 20% of the power of older bulbs and also direct light down and out to the road and footpath, reducing light pollution. The change should pay for itself in a few years and keep the Parish in line with Central Government recommendations.

Finance

The Council's total income for 2014/15 up till end of February 2015 was £80,361.37. Of this, £78,550.00 came from the Parish precept with the other major elements coming from a Bromsgrove District Council Tax Support Grant. Spending in 2014/15 amounted to £58,226.25, again up till end of February 2015. The Parish Council have **RESOLVED** not to increase the precept for 2015/16. The table below indicates the main areas of spending.

INCOME	2013/14 Audited	Feb.2014/15 Unaudited	2014/15 Budget
Precept	76880.00	78550.00	78500.00
Bank Interest	908.54	5.34	1700.00
Charity/Rent etc	442.01	651.03	400.00
Grants	3,011.20	1155.00	1700.00
Total INCOME	81241.75	80361.37	82300.00
EXPENDITURE			
Administration	34083.82	29028.63	34400.00
Open spaces	24362.18	11697.64	13500.00
Highways	4644.20	487.15	5700.00
Public Lighting	11099.34	15192.83	20000.00
Grants	2528.00	1020.00	4950.00
Equipment	0.00	800.00	0.00
TOTAL SPEND	76717.54	58226.25	78550.00

Ruth Mullett
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

Parish Neighbourhood Watch

The Parish scheme continues to be a success. Several calls have been made to the Police, alerting them to suspicious activity. We benefit from a strong working relationship with our local community policing team. Thanks are due to the several volunteer coordinators around Clent.

However we still do not have any volunteers from the Hagley side of the Parish. If you are interested in becoming a representative in your road, or have any concerns with NHW issues, please contact the Clerk.



Clent Parish Youth Council



The Youth Council consists of nine young Clent people representing our parish youth. They meet once a month in conjunction with our full Council. They discuss what can be done for children in the Parish and put their ideas to the PC.

This year we have added a new basket ball area alongside the skatepark. This awaits tarmac and paint markings.

The young children's play area in Holy Cross has had a makeover with five more pieces of play equipment being installed.

We have carried out two 'litter pick' days, the most recent on the 'National Community Clear Up Day', a Government initiative.

Any young people having ideas for the Youth Council, should please contact our Clerk, Ruth at clent.parish@btconnect.com

Newsletter & Parish Website

Our thanks are due to the youngsters and adults who assist us with distribution of our Newsletters. Notice of our monthly meetings appear in Clent Parish Magazine and Hagley Village News, and of course on our attractive Website,

www.clentparishcouncil.gov.uk

The website has up to date notice of all Parish Council business and of many other parish activities.

Our Webmaster carried out an analysis of Website 'hits' last year. There were 3,017 unique visitors up until September, and he projected around 5,000 for the whole year. So it's worthwhile for local societies and small businesses to contact Ruth at;

clent.parish@btconnect.com

to display your logos and links on the site.

Parish Council Contacts

Parish Clerk
Ruth Mullett Tel. **01562 710255**
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Hunnington,
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clent.parish@btconnect.com

Current Parish Councillors

Nick Sugden (Chairman)
Alan Hess Ed Sheppard
Kevin Smith Stan Bloxham
Caroline Howard Neill Robb
Margaret Sherrey

District Councillors

Margaret Sherrey Janice Boswell

Worcestershire County Councillor

Rachel Jenkins

Parish Council monthly meetings start at 7.0pm.
Most are held in Clent Parish Hall
Actual dates and locations will shortly be published on the website.

Reminders

The '30' Speed signs supplied by the Council are well placed on 'Wheelie Bins' throughout the Parish. If you haven't used yours yet, please do so. Every sign displayed on collection day helps remind motorists to reduce their speed. And if anyone who hasn't got one feels the need, please contact us. We have some spares!

PLEASE put your litter and your dog's poo in the nearest bin!

Potholes, broken pavements and fly-tipping should be reported to Highways Dept. at Worcester C.C.

We're still looking for a volunteer **Footpath Warden**.
If you are interested;-
Please contact Ruth at;- clent.parish@btconnect.com