



BREWOD & COVEN PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2007

Best Kept Village Success 2007

We are delighted to congratulate both Coven and Bishop's Wood on their tremendous success in this year's Best Kept Village Competition. Coven, for a third year in succession, have won the Best Kept Large Village in South Staffordshire and retained the Express and Star Trophy which remains on display at the corner of Brewood Road and Lawn Lane. Congratulations to Yvonne Millward and the rest of the team who work so hard, all year round, to keep Coven to the standard it has attained. The Parish Council also wishes to acknowledge the generous support of Morice Bickford for funding the pansies around the village which will produce a fine display for all to enjoy over the forthcoming months.

New entrants to the competition this year were Bishop's Wood who, after a rushed entry, succeeded in winning the Best Kept Small Village in South Staffordshire. Again our congratulations and thanks to Jeanette Edwards and Tony Sloane who headed-up the Bishop's Wood committee at short notice. Unfortunately Brewood were unable to take the title this year but it certainly wasn't for want of trying. Day after day volunteers could be seen walking the streets of Brewood litter picking and generally tidying but to no avail. Better luck next year but our thanks to everyone who contributed towards this years competition.

Brewood Annual Bonfire and Fireworks Display

The Rotary Club of Brewood and District, in conjunction with the local Scouts and other volunteers, are to hold a Charity Fireworks Spectacular on Sunday 4 November starting at 6pm at Hockerhill Farm, Kiddemore Green (just past the Bridge Inn). David Tipton has kindly offered his farm for the event and there will be some entertainment for children. Hot and cold refreshments will be on sale.

The event has the support of the Parish and District Councils and a professional fireworks company will provide the firework display.

All proceeds will be distributed to local charities. Tickets at a cost of £4 each or £12 per family (up to 2 adults and 2 children) will be available on the night at the gate and discounted advanced tickets will be available from: Framecraft, Sandy Lane, Brewood; Roger Aston, butchers, Coven; any member of Rotary Club. Your support for this event will be very much appreciated - by attending you will also be helping local charities.

New Councillors and Code of Conduct

The Council welcomed two new Parish Councillors, Mr David Evans and Mr George Martin, as Members for Brewood earlier this year following the vacancies that arose when Mr Roger Jones and Mr Peter Wakeham stood down at the May elections. Although George is new to the Council, David is making a return appearance after serving on the Council during the 1970s.

Other Members returning to the Council are Moira Alden-Court representing Coven, following the decision of Mr Peter Sanders to stand-down in May, and Mrs Jan Jeffries and Mr Ian Westwood who, having originally been unable to submit their nomination papers for personal reasons, were co-opted back on to the Council to represent Bishop's Wood. All vacancies, that existed in May, have now been filled.

The Council, as of 10 May 2007, has also adopted the new Model Code of Conduct for Parish Councils pursuant to the Local Authorities Order, 2007.

Your Councillors are:

Bishop's Wood Ward -

Jan Jeffries and Ian Westwood.

Brewood Ward -

Cllr Andrew Ball, David Evans, Ann Holmes, George Martin, Dr Richard Taylor (Vice Chair), Mac Webb.

Coven Ward -

Moira Alden-Court, Janet Carr, Cllr I. Clay, Lena Holmes, Lorna Jones (Chair), Yvonne Millward.

Coven Heath Ward -

Fred Barrett.

District Councillors -

Ivor Clay, Brian Cox, Mike Hampson, Andrew Ball.

County Councillor -

Rex Roberts O.B.E.

For contact information see Parish notice-boards

Council Meetings

Meetings are held at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, 35 Stafford Street, Brewood. The remaining meetings scheduled for 2007 are: October 25, November 8 and 29, December 13.

A Public Participation session is held at all of the above meetings. Dates for 2008 will be published on the Parish notice-boards.

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Web Sites -

www.brewoodparish.org.uk

www.brewoodvillage.org.uk

www.covenvillage.org.uk

www.covenheath.org.uk

www.bishopswood.org.uk

i54 Transport Proposals An exhibition of the proposals, affecting Wobaston Road, Stafford Road and the roundabouts at Brewood Road, is to be held at Fordhouses Cricket Club in Wobaston Road on 24 and 25 October, 10.00am to 8.00pm. Anyone is welcome to attend. Staff representing the proposals will be on hand to answer any questions you may have.

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Christmas Lights Around the Parish

Bishop's Wood – after the success of the Best Kept Village competition, plans are progressing for a new committee to come together to ensure the continuation this year of Bishop's Wood Christmas Lights. A Christmas Lights event is scheduled for Friday 30 November at Bishop's Wood Village Hall. As well as the usual Christmas Cheer, a Senses Evening has been organised to excite and challenge your five senses – come along and find out what it's all about. John Pegg, who has organised the Christmas Lights in Bishop's Wood for many years, is now handing his step-ladders over to others in the village and, on behalf of the residents in Bishop's Wood, the Parish Council would like to thank John for all of his hard work over the years.

Brewood – we are delighted to report that this year Brewood and District Rotary Club have taken over the organisation of the Brewood Christmas Lights with the support of local organisations and the previous lights committee. The Christmas Lights event is scheduled to take place in Market Place, Brewood on Sunday 25 November, from 3.30pm onwards where entertainment will be provided by local school children singing, with refreshments and further entertainment available around the Market Place.

Coven – in the absence of a Christmas Lights Committee this year the Parish Council will be making arrangements for the lights to be erected in Coven. This will be funded by the grant the Parish Council makes available to the four villages for Christmas Lights each year and the remaining funds raised by previous Coven Christmas Lights Committees. Unfortunately this year's lights will see the committee funds run out so if lights are to be erected in forthcoming years it is imperative that volunteers come forward to organise fundraising and future lights events. Two volunteers have already come forward and are willing to take the project on, so if you are interested in lending your support and would like any more information phone the Parish Council on 01902 850809.

Coven Heath – once again residents of Coven Heath are planning to start off the season in style on Saturday 1 December at 6.30pm when the Christmas Lights will be switched on. Seasonal refreshments, including mince pies, will also be available to complement the event.

The Parish Council is extremely grateful to the volunteers who come forward every year to make the Festive Season such a special time throughout the parish. Like many things the work involved takes place for more than just a few weeks at Christmas and the support shown by the community is greatly appreciated. It may seem a little early but the shops are already setting up for the Christmas rush and Christmas will soon be upon us. Brewood and Coven Parish Council, with Bishop's Wood and Coven Heath would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Traffic Congestion

Traffic in Brewood, particularly in the mornings and afternoons during the "school run", continues to cause problems with the traffic becoming grid-locked around the Market Place, School Road and Church Road circuit. Further concerns have been expressed to the Council regarding the problems pedestrians and car drivers encounter in Dean Street and Sandy Lane. Parked cars in both cases restrict access and invariably cause vehicles to be driven on to the pavement to pass each other. The Council, fully aware of the different views that exist on how this matter should be addressed, will be meeting with representatives of Staffordshire County Council to discuss the matter further.

Vacancy - Clerk to the Council

Due to the pending retirement of the Clerk, applications are invited for the post of Clerk to the Council. The part time post is office based and initially will be 18 hours to be worked flexibly with additional hours by negotiation. Most meetings of the Council take place in the evening.

The post-holder will be the Council's Legal and Responsible Financial Officer and should have experience of accounts, PAYE, minute-taking and correspondence. The successful applicant will be computer literate, will ideally have previous local government experience and will be expected to have, or be willing to work towards, qualifications to enable the Council to retain Quality Status. First class communication, initiative and interpersonal skills are required. A job description, person specification and further details of how to apply can be obtained by telephoning the Clerk to the Council on 01902 850809 or by email: brewoodparish@btconnect.com. Closing date for applications is 30 November 2007.

Community Funding

Applications for grants are currently being sought by the Community Council of Staffordshire for projects based in Staffordshire that work within rural communities.

A grant of up to £1,000 is available to registered charities, constituted community groups and constituted activity groups to tackle environmental, social or economic issues such as improvements to a local community centre, equipment for community use or to enhance community facilities. The minimum grant that may be applied for is £100 and 50% of the project costs must be funded by the applicant (minimum 5% in cash and up to 45% in kind).

Funding is available until 31 March 2008. If you would like further details about this Community Chest Scheme phone Charlotte Green on 01785 242525.



Christmas Dance

Coven Memorial Hall - December 8th

Dancing to Midnight Hour

Raffle and Light Supper available

Tickets £6 each from

Yvonne Millward on 01902 798098

Proceeds to Coven Christmas Lights and Coven Best Kept Village

Christmas Fayre

Coven Memorial Hall

Pig Roast and a Pint

Saturday 17 November 12 noon to 3.00pm

All welcome



Capital Projects - Update

Coven Old Changing Rooms – plans have been prepared to convert the building into a sun-shelter with a store-room for use by the Parish Council handy-man. The work has now gone out to tender and, once a contractor has been appointed, hopefully the work can be carried out early next year.

Coven New Changing Rooms – after a great deal of hard work to meet the extremely demanding criteria as defined by the Football Association, the plans have now been finalised, a planning application made to South Staffordshire Council and a grant submitted to the Football Association. The Parish Council are extremely grateful for the invaluable support provided by Andy Weston of the Football Foundation and South Staffordshire Council's Mark Jenkinson and Katie White. A decision as to the success of the grant application is due to be made before the end of December.

Council Offices, Brewwood – unfortunately the application for a Lottery Grant, to further investigate the feasibility of redeveloping the Council Offices in Brewwood, has proved to be unsuccessful. The programme was heavily over-subscribed receiving applications for £588 million from a budget of only £50 million. The reasons for considering redevelopment still stand – these in part being to provide access for the disabled, extend storage capacity and to address maintenance issues affecting the current building. The Parish Council will be meeting with a Conservation Area Officer and an architect from South Staffordshire Council to explore the options available to the Council. Our thanks to PC Maurice Annette for his assistance in completing the Lottery application.

Spring Bulbs – Once again we are extremely grateful to South Staffordshire Council for providing Spring Bulbs for planting in and around the parish. A supply of mixed daffodils, 2,000 winter flowering crocus, 2,000 spring flowering crocus and 1,000 snowdrops will be planted out by the Parish Council Handyman over the next few weeks.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Protection Act 2005

Dog fouling in public places continues to be a problem, particularly at Coven Playing Fields and in Rainbow Alley, Coven. Appropriate signs will be displayed where this continues to be a problem but please make sure you clean up any mess after your dog – to not do so is not only against the law but is particularly dangerous in a children's playing field.

The dropping of litter and the dumping of garden rubbish also continues around the parish. New bins are to be placed in Light Ash Close and alongside the new Trim-trail at The Bront. Environmental Health Officers at South Staffordshire Council have been notified of the garden refuse that continues to be dumped in the bridle-way that runs from Old Weston Road to Whiteoaks Drive in Bishop's Wood.

Many residents put in a lot of effort, day after day, to keep our villages pleasant and enjoyable places to live in. If necessary the Council will work with other local enforcement agencies to ensure their efforts are not wasted. Please do what you can to look after our villages.

One final reminder - motorised vehicles are not allowed to use Rainbow Alley. Signage to this effect will be erected to remind locals of the restriction; please don't ignore it.

Interested in Playing Bowls on a Natural Green?

A number of residents in the parish have expressed their interest in utilising an outdoor, natural green, bowling facility.

Although the parish no longer has a bowling green, if it becomes apparent that sufficient interest exists in the parish to make good use of such a facility, then it may be possible to pursue the project further.

Bowls is a national game enjoyed by people of all ages. If you would be interested in joining a bowls club please contact the Parish Council on 01902 850809 to enable the Council to gauge the level of interest.

Footpaths

Brewwood - Fencing has now been erected along the open stretches of hedgerow that run along the footpath, bordering the churchyard, above Jacob's Ladder. This area has been a matter of concern for sometime as the land falls away steeply and poses a health and safety risk. A satisfactory solution to the problem proved difficult to find as much of the land that required fencing off was deemed to be "no-mans land" since the developers went out of business some years ago. Following a joint venture involving this Council, South Staffordshire Council, Staffordshire County Council and the nearby Doctors, the necessary funding has been raised and the work completed. Staffordshire County Council are now assessing the work required to get the footpath, that runs alongside, into a good state of repair.

Bishop's Wood - The footpath to Bishop's Wood Playing Field was damaged earlier this year by contractors working on site. Staffordshire County Council are continuing to pursue the matter with contractors to re-lay and repair the surface. Whilst there is no question that the work needs to be done, the County Council continue to strive to obtain a date when the contractor will carry out the outstanding work.

South Staffordshire Council Concessionary Travel Scheme – those residents who currently have a bus pass will, by now, have received a letter from South Staffordshire Council advising them of the new All England Travel Pass. We understand that residents who currently use tokens will be contacted in the spring with the opportunity to either transfer to the bus pass scheme or receive tokens for the forthcoming year.

Local Authority Governor Vacancy

Have you considered supporting your local community by becoming a School Governor? A vacancy has arisen at St John's CE First School in Bishop's Wood, recognised as "outstanding" in every category by Ofsted earlier this year, for a Local Authority Governor - that is, a vacancy where the Parish Council has an opportunity to nominate a candidate. If you are interested in applying or would like more information please contact the Parish Council on 01902 850809.

Playing Fields

Following concerns raised by the residents of Sunset Close, work has been carried out to erect fencing between the Coven Playing Fields and the adjoining side of Sunset Close. Funded by the Parish Council and South Staffordshire Housing Association, this has assisted in improving the local environment for the residents with minimal visual impact. The Council is delighted to have been able to meet the needs of the local residents with the support of the Housing Association. The Parish Council have also erected fencing in Engleton Lane playing field, again to reduce the impact of ball games for those members of the community who live next to our playing fields.

Spring Concert Series 2008 Venues are being sought once again in the parish to host the now well established Spring Concerts in 2008, following on from the success of the concerts this year. This initiative, sponsored by South Staffordshire Council and South Staffordshire Housing Association, in conjunction with Live Music Now, offers concerts throughout the Spring to parishes within the District. Venues, groups and individuals within the community are required to come forward to host and promote a concert. If you are interested in hosting such an event and would like more details then contact Samantha O'Toole of South Staffordshire Council on 01902 696451.

The Darby & Joan Club, having met in the hut in Sandy Lane, Brewood for the last 54 years, is now being accommodated in the Jubilee Hall in Brewood on Thursdays, 2.00pm to 4.00pm. New members always welcome.

Inter Parish Games

Our Parish of Brewood and Coven, with Bishop's Wood and Coven Heath were narrowly beaten into 2nd place in this year's Games by Wombourne, who have won for the first time in 20 years. At 174 points to 171, we were very unlucky not to have made it 3 wins in a row, especially as we were the only Parish to have competed in every single event. Particular thanks to the Team Captains without whom many would not have had the opportunity to compete and enjoy the Games. The Parish Council are also extremely grateful to Paul Guest, games co-ordinator, for his continued support of the competition.

We now look forward to the 2008 competition which will comprise of 19 events taking place between February and July. New competitors, of any age, are always welcome especially in the events where it proves difficult to complete a team – currently table tennis, squash and netball. Other events include darts, cribbage, indoor and crown green bowls, cross country running, dominoes, badminton, chess, rifle shooting, sports quiz, swimming, tennis, 5-a-side football, target golf, skittles and angling. If you would like to find out more information contact Codsall Leisure Services on 01902 696519 or Paul Guest on 01902 790709.

Tree Warden Required

The Parish Council is seeking a member of the community to take on the role of Tree Warden for the Parish. The Tree Warden will be the main point of contact for the Tree Warden Co-ordinator, Steve Dore, at South Staffordshire Council. As tree warden you may be asked to gather information to support the conservation of local trees, be a point of contact for the community, report incidents of vandalism and look out for any signs of ill health or dangerous decay. If you are interested and would like more information please contact the Parish Council on 01902 850809. The Council would like to thank Mr Peter Butler for his services as Tree Warden over the past years.

Accounts, having been audited by the our Internal Auditor, the Annual return is currently in the hands of the External Auditor. The accounts were publicised as available for inspection earlier this year as required by the Auditors.

Boxing Day Walk – Once again this year a Boxing Day walk has been organised in the parish starting at 10.30am from the New Inns, Kiddemore Green. The Council is extremely grateful to Bob Short for organising what is a traditional event in the parish, the first walk being organised in 1974 by then Parish Councillor, and recently returned, David Evans. The Council would like to also thank the New Inns for their support and Glen Sibley for his work organising the monthly parish walks and the local walk for the South Staffordshire Council Walks Festival. His commitment to maintaining an interesting schedule of walks, now supported by around 20 walkers each month, is greatly appreciated.

Grass Cutting - A449 at Coven Heath

Fred Barrett, Member for Coven Heath, has been working with the Parish Council to try to improve the grass cutting schedule for the A449 at Coven Heath. Much concern has been expressed during the summer months over the frequency and quality of the grass cutting provided.

The A449 grass is maintained by Amey Mouchel under contract to Area Highways but the schedule of cuts to date seems to be far from adequate in view of what seems to now be a much extended growing season. Work continues to try to get matters improved to this major gateway to South Staffordshire.

Play Equipment - sources of funding are currently being explored to further develop the toddlers play equipment in Engleton Lane. Members of the local Toddler Group have been advising on suitable equipment and we are grateful to the SSCVA for the guidance they have provided on funding.



Clarence

is the one-stop problem report service run by Staffordshire County Council for reporting problems with any of the following:

Street lights and signs, roads and pavements, pedestrian crossings and traffic lights, blocked drains on roads. Clarence can be contacted between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday free of charge alternatively you can email:

clarence@staffordshire.gov.uk