



BREWOD & COVEN PARISH COUNCIL

with Bishops Wood and Coven Heath

PARISH NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2008



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The season of goodwill is upon us and another year has flown by. The Christmas Lights events, as organised by the Lighting Committees, are well underway with Brewod and Coven already lit up and Bishops Wood and Coven Heath to follow on the 12 and 6 December respectively.

The Parish Council is extremely grateful to the committees of the four villages who work so hard to create a festive atmosphere at this time of year. 2008 has seen a new committee take on the lights in Coven and their enthusiasm for creating a Christmas to remember is to be admired. Fundraising has been ongoing throughout the year and new displays have been introduced around the village.

The Rotary Club of Brewod and District, who took over responsibility for the lights at short notice in 2007, have had more time this year to organise their plans and after initial concerns have managed to provide a display that once again lives up to the high expectations set in previous years.

Bishops Wood have also managed to draw new volunteers on to their committee and it is good to know that, as elsewhere, people are willing to give their time rather than the work falling on just the same few each year. This year will see the Bishops Wood Christmas Lights event being hosted at St John's Church which will no doubt provide an ideal setting for their celebrations.

Although Coven Heath choose to have a comparatively modest display each year they are well known for their memorable and well supported lights events where the true spirit of the residents of Coven Heath comes to the fore. This year Diane Drury, our previous Clerk, has been invited to switch the lights on.

Brewod and Coven Parish Council take this opportunity to thank the committees for all their efforts and to wish everyone, across the Parish, a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

The Friends of

Barnfield Sandbeds South Staffordshire Council are encouraging the creation of a 'Friends Group' to aid them in managing the Barnfield Sandbeds in Brewod. The Friends Group will help to forge a strong link between the Council and the local community and they will assist with day-to-day tasks in relation to the way the site will be managed. Over the coming months, the Council is looking to improve access through the site, undertake essential but minimal tree works and clear fly tipping and industrial waste. South Staffordshire Council would like to reassure the public that all work carried out will be sensitive to the existing character of the site. Anyone wishing to become involved with a Friends Group should contact Howard Medicott on 01902 696406.

The Bront The support of the local community is also being sought in Coven through the Friends of The Bront. We are looking for volunteers who will take a special interest in The Bront, under the guidance of the Parish Council, and work with us to develop and maintain the area whilst retaining the natural open environment that so many local residents already enjoy. We are extremely grateful to Howard Medicott of South Staffordshire Council and David Knowles of the Forest of Mercia for the support and guidance they are providing. If you are interested in being a Friend of The Bront please contact the Parish Council on 01902 850809.

Your Councillors are:

Bishops Wood Ward -

Jan Jeffries and Ian Westwood.

Brewod Ward -

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

Coven Ward -

Moirs Alden-Court, Janet Carr, Cllr Ivor Clay, Lena Holmes, Lorna Jones, Yvonne Millward.

Coven Heath - Fred Barrett.

District Councillors -

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

County Councillor -

Rex Roberts O.B.E.

Contact details - see Parish notice-boards

Council Meetings

Meetings are held at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, 35 Stafford Street, Brewod. The last meeting for 2008 will be held on December 11 with meetings in 2009 on January 8 and 29, February 12 and 26, March 12 and 26, April 9 and 30. Annual Parish meeting 16 April. The remaining meeting dates will be published on the Parish notice-boards shortly. A Public Participation session is held at the start of all of the above meetings.

Office Contacts -

Tel: 01902 850809

Email: brewodparish@btconnect.com

Clerk: Sue Groom

Assistant Clerks:

Valerie Turner, Deborah Poole

Car Scheme: Caroline Cumming
01902 851786

Web Sites -

www.brewodparish.org.uk

www.brewodvillage.org.uk

www.covenvillage.org.uk

www.covenheath.org.uk

www.bishopswood.org.uk

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Capital Projects

Coven Changing Rooms - The building of new changing rooms at the School Lane playing field in Coven is now underway. Although the idea first appeared in a newsletter nearly four years ago, the award of a grant for up to £134,971 from the Football Foundation has made it all possible. The Football Foundation is dedicated to revitalising the grass roots of the game, constructing modern football facilities, developing football as a force for social cohesion and as a vehicle for education in communities throughout the country. Funded by the Premier League, The Football Association and the Government, the Football Foundation is the nation's largest sports charity with a £40m budget going straight into the heart of football.

The project, forecast to cost in the region of £180,000 including VAT will be further funded by an interest free loan from South Staffordshire Council's Capital Grant fund of £20,000, the outstanding balance on the same Capital Grant fund of £8,290, a further £10,000 from the Parish Council's precept and a loan, at a preferential rate to Local Authorities, from the Public Works Loan Board repayable over 10 years for the balance. The project is scheduled to be completed by June 2009 and is under the supervision of Project Manager Leon Beards who chairs monthly project meetings with Council representatives.

Perimeter Fencing Brewood and Coven Playing Fields - Further consideration will be given to replacing the perimeter fencing at the Brewood and Coven playing fields when Members meet to set the precept for 2009/2010. The fencing is in serious need of repair in a number of places and replacement may prove to be the most cost effective solution.

Playing Fields

An order has been placed to construct a path from the entrance to Bishops Wood playing field across to the children's play-area which will hopefully provide improved access over what is all too often very muddy ground. The basket ball post, generously donated by Trevor and Debbie Foster, will soon be erected by Adrian Holt of Ace Kind who has also offered his time free of charge to undertake the work. The Council is extremely grateful for these offers which have saved the tax payer in the region of £1,000. Work is also scheduled to rebuild the mound under the aerial runway at Coven which has been out of action awaiting repair for the last few weeks.

Brewood Bowling Club

Although the bowling season has closed for now, work continues towards the provision of a bowling green and, in time, a club house and store. The proposed development, at the far end of Engleton Lane Playing Field, is supported by the Parish Council. Arrangements are underway to provide the club and its Trustees with a 28 year lease, a requirement of any grant funding they will need to apply for. The club is now working to provide drawings and develop a business plan to support the applications.

Dog Fouling - South Staffordshire Council Enforcement Officers will be making spot checks around the Parish with a view to enforcing the Dog Fouling of Land Act 1996. Owners found not clearing up after their dog will face an on the spot £50 fine, failure to pay can lead to an appearance before a Magistrate and a fine of up to £1,000. If you know of someone who is breaking the law in this manner then you can forward their name and address to South Staffordshire Council (01902 696203) who will then follow the matter up. Please be more considerate, otherwise it may prove costly.

Coneybere Gardens

Following what seemed to be a very promising site visit late last year this Council was pleased to learn at the time that the much needed road maintenance of Coneybere Gardens would be undertaken by South Staffordshire Housing Association.

Members are extremely disappointed to now find that over 12 months later still no progress has been made. Throughout the year the Parish Council has endeavoured to obtain confirmation from the Association as to when the work will be undertaken but unfortunately as yet there is still no news.

The Council is still very aware of the need for this work to be carried out and will continue to pursue a satisfactory solution.

Community Unsung Heroes

Following a suggestion from Margaret Wootton of Coven the Council is seeking nominations to celebrate Unsung Heroes in the Parish.



We all know volunteers amongst us in the community who give their time freely and willingly to help others either through the local services they provide, clubs they run or just the day to day things that they do without expecting any recognition.

These people are key to the success and development of our rural communities where services can often be limited and sometimes non-existent. All too often such Unsung Heroes step in to meet local needs. So have a think. Who do you know who makes a difference to life for people in this Parish? They may provide an invaluable service to just a few people but it makes the world of difference to them.

Nominate your Unsung Hero now and lets celebrate our local volunteers. Contact the Clerk, Sue Groom on 01902 850809 or write using the postal or email address that can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Bus Shelter Provision

A new bus shelter has now been erected in front of The Parade on Brewood Road in Coven. This is a particularly well used bus stop which until now offered no shelter against the elements. Foreseeing that locals would no longer be able to make use of the near-by wall, which provided a most satisfactory resting place for anyone waiting for a bus, a row of seats was included in the design. To date we are delighted to say the shelter has been well received.

Staffordshire County Council are also investigating the feasibility of erecting a shelter on the A449 near Coven following requests from local residents. A decision is expected shortly.

Coven Heath Celebrates the Park and Ride Decision

The decision made by the Secretary of State to refuse planning permission for the development of land that included the provision of a Bus / Rail based Park and Ride facility at Brinsford has come as a massive relief to residents. Coven Heath Community Association have fought a long drawn out campaign to resist this development and have worked very closely with Featherstone Parish Council who themselves spear-headed opposition to massive housing developments, which would have 'swamped' their village, and provided finance towards fighting the Park and Ride. There is no news yet as to whether the matter will go to appeal. Another large development also near to Coven Heath has recently been put on hold with Advantage West Midlands stating that due to several major factors there will be no more activity on the i54 site for at least 18 months.

Vacancy - Assistant Clerk

Applications are invited for the part-time post of Assistant Clerk to Brewood and Coven Parish Council following the resignation of Mrs Debbie Poole due to a change in personal circumstances. The Council are extremely sorry to lose Debbie but appreciate her desire to commit more time to her family.

The ideal applicant will have excellent verbal and written communication skills with an aptitude for working with numbers, preferably with proven experience of maintaining accounts, PAYE and producing financial, budget and audit reports. First-rate organisational skills and the ability to be self-motivated as well as working well within a team are also key to this post. As well as carrying out the financial procedures of the Council the role will also involve responding to correspondence, preparing agendas, writing minutes, dealing with enquiries from the public and assisting the Clerk in the day to day running of the Council.

The position will be for 18 hours per week, Monday to Friday, with a requirement to cover the core hours of 9.30 to 12.30, plus evening meetings which are generally twice per month. Salary £8.23 to £9.46 per hour depending on experience.

Interested candidates should contact Sue Groom, the Clerk to the Council for an application form - contact details: phone number, address and email address are to be found at the end of this newsletter. Closing date 30 January.

Film Night on Your Door Step

This year has seen a string of successful film nights hosted by the Brewood Village Community Council at the Jubilee Hall in Brewood. These extremely well supported film shows have brought local villagers such films as Mama Mia - so good it came back a second time with the sing-along version - The Duchess and Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull.

Films are scheduled once a month on a Saturday evening and full details can be found on notice-boards throughout the Parish as well as from the Parish Council Office. Future films include Brideshead Revisited and James Bond - Quantum of Solace.

Housing Needs Survey

The Housing Needs Survey, sent to every household in the Parish, has now been received by Council. This survey was instigated by the Council following Members disappointment at the limited nature of the 'Affordable Housing' at the Engleton Lane development. More details as to the content of the report will be made available in the spring newsletter.

The information collated from the survey will be used to provide the evidence necessary to determine future affordable housing needs in the parish. Further to this and in support of trying to meet local needs the Council is also seeking a definitive statement and common understanding of all parties involved as to the interpretation of 'Local Connection' and the criteria that are applied.

Youth Provision

Work continues to investigate the options and their feasibility to support the provision in the Parish of a Youth Club and facilities for both general community use and for the Scouts with their associated groups.

The Steering Group continues to bring together experience from Staffordshire County Council's Youth team, South Staffordshire Council Planners and Conservation Officers, the Parish Council and community representatives as appropriate. Mr Graham Bott of Staffordshire County Council is in the process of carrying out a feasibility study of a number of options that have been considered with a view to identifying a solution in the interim and the longer term. We will keep you updated as more news becomes available.

New Health Trainer Service

Most of us want to keep ourselves fit and healthy. It helps if we've got accurate and up-to-date information about the major lifestyle risks to health. Some of us need help or guidance and support to make better lifestyle choices in order to improve our health. The Health Trainer Service can provide all of this.

Sheila Jukes is the new Health Trainer based at Brewood Surgery. If you need advice or help to eat healthier, stop smoking, be more active or reduce your alcohol intake, pick up a card from the surgery in Sandy Lane and make an appointment to meet Sheila.

COVEN MEMORIAL HALL

NEW YEAR'S EVE

FAMILY PARTY

8.00pm - 12.45am

Doors open 7.30pm

Adults: £8.00 Children: £4.00

Bar - Tombola - b.y.o. Supper

Contact: Margaret Wootton 01902 790936



Youth Consultation

Earlier this month the Council were interested to receive an email from Jamie Porter a local 16 year old with an interest in working with the Parish Council and, judging by his enthusiasm, a prospective Parish Councillor once he reaches the age of 18.

It is hoped Jamie will be able to liaise between the Parish Council and the youth of the parish, through the Youth Forum who currently meet at the Youth Club in Brewwood, to provide an even more informed understanding of the concerns and needs of the youth of the parish and assist the Parish Council in identifying and pursuing new opportunities with their active support.

Best Kept Village Competition 2009

It may only be December with the Christmas and New Year celebrations all still to come, but Coven Heath residents are already planning to 'steal a march' on other entrants for the 2009 Best Kept Village competition. Coven Heath Community Association Committee have been organising 'Litter Pick Sundays' which take place on the last Sunday of each month - these have made a massive improvement to the litter problem generated in the lay-byes on the A449 and in Ball Lane.

Local Parish Councillor Fred Barrett says that the logical next step is to join the other three wards in the parish and enter the competition. As well as seeking support and sponsorship from local organisations and community representatives the committee have produced a map dividing Coven Heath into small manageable areas, some of which local residents have already pledged to 'keep up to scratch'. Copies will be circulated to all households during January and Mr Barrett is appealing to all residents to support the campaign by signing up to maintain one of these small areas in the community.

The Council wishes each of the four villages, who are now likely to enter the competition in 2009, the best of luck although judging by the amount of work that is now undertaken all year round luck may not come into it.

Police Matters

Your local Police representatives PC Matt Smith and PCSO Adrian Price have asked us to remind you of the importance of taking particular care to avoid suffering a theft from your motor vehicle. They recommend checking your vehicle last thing at night, ensuring it is secure at all times and that no valuables are left on view.

Please note that the new non-emergency contact number for the Police is 0300 123 4455

Boxing Day Walk - The Boxing Day Parish Walk is scheduled to take place again this year under the experienced supervision of Bob Short. Walkers need to meet at The New Inns, Kiddemore Green at 10.30am on 26 December for a walk of 2 to 2.5 hours covering 5 miles on easy, level ground.

Our thanks to Bob for continuing this tradition, to the New Inns for permitting walkers to use their car park and to Glen Sibley for maintaining a regular monthly schedule of walks throughout the year.

Spring Bulbs - The Parish Council is extremely grateful to South Staffordshire Council for the free Spring Bulbs - snowdrops, daffodils and spring & winter crocus - that they have given to the Parish once again this year.

David Barker the Council handyman has beaten the frosts and already planted them out so a fine display is awaited in the Spring.

Local Authority Governor Vacancy St John's CE First School

Have you considered supporting your local community by becoming a School Governor?

Unfortunately due to a change in the personal circumstances of one of their present Governors a vacancy has arisen at St John's CE First School in Bishop's Wood.

St John's was recognised as "outstanding" in every category by Ofsted at its last inspection and is well known for its warm and welcoming atmosphere. The vacancy, for a Local Authority Governor, represents an opportunity for the Parish Council to nominate a candidate.

If you are interested in being nominated or would like more information please contact the Clerk, Sue Groom at the Parish Council on 01902 850809.

Council Accounts to 31 March 2008

The External Auditor has now returned the Council's Annual Return which is available for inspection at the Council Offices in Stafford Street. As required by the Audit Commission the three key sections of the Annual Return - Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the External Auditor's Certificate and Opinion - have also been copied and published on the Parish notice-boards in each village.

The Auditor confirmed that the Annual return was in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements and no matters had come to their attention to give concern.



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