

Parish Council Annual Report 2023

Welcome to the Annual Parish Council report with a summary and update of activities that have happened during the last year. This has been my first year as Chair of the Parish Council and I would like to thank all the Councillors and the Clerk for their support during this year. This year has been the first year where we have seen a slight change to the way we allocate activities within the PC and each councillor has taken a lead on certain areas of responsibility within the village, thereby ensuring a more evenly distributed workload amongst our small team of busy, dedicated volunteers.

This annual report will update on activities carried out using the areas of accountability that each councillor has.

HIGHWAYS – This was looked after at the beginning of the year by Cllr Edmonds and more recently by Cllr Shermer since her welcome return to the Parish Council.

It has been a great year for activity in the Highways area with Cllr Edmonds, Russ Whitehurst and our Parish Clerk Julie working very hard to procure 2 x Speed Indication Devices (SIDS) that have now been installed in Stubwood to help reduce the speed of traffic through this area of the Village. JCB kindly donated £5000 towards the cost of this project and for this we thank them. I am sure you have seen the SIDs and will agree they are a great addition.

Along with this major development we are also working together with Staffs Highways. A feasibility study has been performed in our village assessing options to reduce congestion, speed and improve traffic flow, particularly along College Road, more news on this as we continue this work with SCC.

PLANNING – This area is owned by me and again its been a busy year with us working hard with our subcommittee the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group (NPMG) to ensure that all planning applications comply with the policies within the neighbourhood plan (NP). This work is very involved and most time consuming but is also of great importance to our Village.

Our NP is now 6 years old and was due to be reviewed at 5 years, but sadly due predominantly to COVID this was a little delayed and we are in the process of review now. The NPMG applied for and were allocated a substantial grant to perform this activity and have supported the PC through this process. The new draft plan is currently in for screening with ESBC and will shortly be available for public consultation, residents will receive leaflets inviting them to view the draft plan and comment.

COLLEGE LIAISON– Cllr Edmonds and Cllr Shermer have been regularly attending meeting with Lotte Tulloch, the Head of Denstone College. The team from Denstone College have been most helpful this year with several activities including cutting the hedgerow around the children’s play area and cutting back the hedgerow at the bottom of Narrow Lane to improve visibility. We are also looking forward with the College to a very successful 150 Year Birthday celebration on Sat 24 June 2023.

PLAY AREA – Cllr Flower looks after this area for us and again it has been a busy year in this space. Cllr Flower has devised a new inspection format and reporting process, and the play area is now inspected on a weekly basis. Alongside this we have also approved and sourced a company to install new fencing all around the children’s play area and will include new Euro Standard safety gates for entry and exit points to the playground. The work has not

yet been completed but money is assigned to this, we are looking to combine the work with the work that the Tom Boden Sports Trust are completing on the Pavilion.

Cllr Lillestone who with regret has resigned from the Parish Council at the end of this year, has also been instrumental in the support of this area.

GREEN SPACES – Another busy area this year for Cllr Wright who has been working with SCC on the re-routing of the Staffordshire Way to ensure a safer route for ramblers, as well as ensuring the maintenance of some of the beautiful walkways through our village with the reporting of the damage to the culvert and the installation of the new bridge on the path to the fields at the back of The Westlands and the replacement of the styles on the footpaths around the College area.

You may also have seen the replacement bench that has been installed at the junction of Marlpit Lane and Alton Road where many of our residents pause to take in the beautiful views of the Weaver Hills.

The whole Parish Council would also like to thank Russ Whitehurst who has for the last 3½ years has supported the village doing an excellent job as our Lengthsman. Russ has now left the role; however, he and Cllr Wright have supported the process to find and induct our new lengthsman as we welcome Andrew Hillman.

VILLAGE LIAISON Cllr Stratton is our lead liaison with the Village Hall Committee, we were proud to support the Village Hall this year with a substantial financial contribution to their Cladding Fundraising effort. The Village Hall is a fantastic facility to our Village and one which the Parish Council are happy to support.

Cllr Mountney is our liaison with All Saints school and Alton Towers. We continue to work closely with Alton Towers to offer feedback from our Parishioners as matters arise. Councillor Wright and other local PCs have been involved in meetings with the Resort, as they have advised us of their plans to reduce speed limits on surrounding roads. Alton Towers also kindly donated £500 towards the late Queens Platinum Jubilee event in June.

Cllr Ratcliffe is our liaison with JCB and continues to help us with our strong relationship with JCB. Along with this Cllr Ratcliffe and Cllr Flower acts as our Finance Lead person and contributes to the auditing of our account each year. Some great news in this space, we as a PC have now moved into the 21st Century and have now moved onto Online Banking.

Along with all this structured activity, as always there have been several other great things that the Parish Council have achieved on behalf of residents this year including: The relaying of pavements and the cutting of the grass verges, which I am sure you will agree was a great improvement. Supporting the Church with the maintenance of the Church Yard and of course supporting the great Denstone Country Show, which is an event that we all look forward to every year.

I would finally like to thank not only my fellow councillors but also our Parish Clerk – Julie Sadler, who ensures that we all keep co-ordinated she keeps things moving and organised for us all, without Julie none of this would work as smoothly as it does today.

Regards,

Jess Turner – Chair Denstone Parish Council, May 2023