

# *Whitmore Parish Council*

# **NEWSLETTER**

## *April 2015*



### ***From the Chairman***

As this is to be my last Newsletter as your Chairman, (elections are due in May and I will not be standing for re-election), I will use it to express my grave concerns for the future of our parish.

The Gateway Housing Appeal involved several members of both Whitmore Parish Council and Baldwins Gate Action Group (WPC and BGAG) in an enormous amount of work in preparing our presentations of objection. It started on 6th November and lasted six whole days. The decision went against us and the Appeal was allowed (see details on the Planning Inspectorate website – reference number is 2218530) so that outline Planning permission now exists for up to 113 houses to be built in the field at the end of Gateway Avenue.

The situation that we find ourselves in today is frightening. It is all too clear that, until such time that the Borough Council meets its required housing build performance the 'door' is now well and truly open for pretty much any significant development proposed within the Borough (except presumably for Green Belt areas). In particular, Baldwins Gate is now a 'sitting duck' for housing land speculators.

The reason why the Borough Council has got itself, and us, into this ghastly mess, is that it has fallen well short of its target for new housing. The Government's plan for 2006-26 requires that the Borough define a target for the number of new dwellings to be provided in the Borough during the 20-year period. The target currently stands at a total of 5,700 units (ie an average rate of 285 per year) of which only up to 900 in the Rural areas. It has to demonstrate that it has met this target cumulatively year on year. It also has to maintain a list of available and deliverable development sites, updated annually, capable of providing the required number of new dwellings over the following 5 years (ie "a valid 5 year site list"). At the present time the Borough has only met its annual quota in 2 of the 8 years, is currently more than one year (some 300 dwellings) in arrears of its cumulative target, and does not possess a 'valid 5 year site list'. In failing to meet these responsibilities the Borough Council has totally let down not only itself but also the residents of the entire Borough.

The consequences of this failure to produce enough new housing etc are made very clear in the Inspector's Appeal decision report. I leave it to you to read this yourselves and to form your own opinions... The Borough's main defence was for their representatives to argue that the Council did, in fact, possess sufficient sites to construct a "valid 5 year site list" – despite regularly having admitted that it doesn't. Unsurprisingly this argument was not accepted. As a result, all other arguments advanced by both the Borough Council and WPC + BGAG were accorded greatly reduced weight and the Appeal was duly 'Allowed'. This is quite breath-taking when one remembers the objections and concerns raised against the planning Application, for example:-

- over 750 written objections
- a Public Meeting's unanimous vote to reject the development
- the Parish Council's very strong and specific objections
- the extensive evidence of the harm that this development would cause to Baldwins Gate village produced by the Parish Council but mainly by Baldwins Gate Action Group

The above had led, following a site visit, to the unanimous and vociferous rejection of the development by the Borough Council's elected members (Borough Councillors) despite the fact that their Chief Planning Officer had strongly recommended that it be Permitted...(??)

I would have thought that, given that the elected members of the Council had so comprehensively rejected the Development, they would have been able to count on their Officer's support. But alas, none of it. In fact, after an initial brief introductory meeting with the Consultants, the Parish Council asked for further meetings with them and with the Barrister, we were refused; our local Councillor, David Loades, requested a meeting on our behalf – also turned down. So why didn't the Planning Officer want us to meet the consultants and Barrister? A very depressing lack of co-operation.

Currently, the Borough Council is at last updating both its 2006-2026 Target and its "5 year site list" with results expected in (initially January, then February, then March and now..)May. It really is to be hoped that there will be a "valid 5 year site list" and that the "gaping door" will be closed – but I'm afraid I'm not holding my breath...

I am not prepared to face the fall-out from this disaster. My health has already been badly affected and the time has come to look after my own. I have personally done my best to support our communities , even to the detriment of my own health, so I am standing aside to look after my own family problems.

Thank you for all your support over the years and God bless and Good luck for the future.

**Thank you, Alan and all best wishes for a quieter future**

On behalf of Whitmore Parish Council, I would like to thank Alan for all the effort that he has put into the activities of the Council during his time on it, and, of course, most particularly during his tenure as Chairman. His enthusiasm and boundless energy have been an inspiration to us all and I personally have found it a real pleasure to have worked alongside him. A good friend, he will be sorely missed, but his reasons for standing down at this time are fully understandable and we wish him a long and much more relaxed future ahead.

*Ian Webb, Vice Chairman.*

***'Letters to the Editor'***

Please raise any issues concerning Whitmore Parish that you feel are important by contacting the Clerk (wendy.kinson@tiscali.co.uk. Tel **01782 680613**) or any of the Councillors. More details on the back page.

---

## **PARISH ELECTIONS - Your Council needs YOU and YOUR vote.**

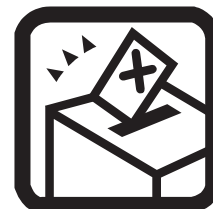
**Thursday May 7th** is not only the date of the General Election, it is also the date for local elections to Town and Parish Councils.

All of the 180 Parish Councils across Staffordshire will need re-electing and all current Parish Councillors will need to complete nomination forms, if they intend to stand again.

**Parish Councils are the voice for the community.**

**Councillors tackle a variety of issues that matter in their local areas. These issues may include:**

- Planning
- Parish Appearance
- Community events
- Provision of leisure facilities
- Youth work
- Highways and Transport matters.



Parish Council Meetings are generally held once a month. With a few exceptions, the proceedings at all meetings are open to the public. Attending a Parish Council meeting is the best way of getting a flavour of what Parish Councils do, if you are interested in standing.

**WHITMORE PARISH COUNCIL MEETS ON the 1st WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH at 7pm in WHITMORE VILLAGE HALL. ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND. WE NEED OUR PARISH COUNCILS!**

**Could YOU think of becoming a Parish Councillor?**

Nomination packs are available online at [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk) or from Council Offices. The Parish Clerk also has copies (see details below). Candidates need to be over 18 and on the Register of Electors. Nomination forms need to be returned by **9th April 2015**.

Whitmore has **eight** Parish Councillors to be elected and we know that not all of the current eight will be standing for re-election (see Chairman's Report, page 1). So we need some new blood....

Do speak to the Parish Clerk or any of the existing Councillors to find out more – and do vote on May 7th, for your Parliamentary, Borough and Parish representatives. This is your chance to participate in the democratic process.

**Whitmore Parish Clerk:**

Wendy Kinson, The Old Laundry, Maer. ST5 5EF. Tel: 01782 680613. email:wendy.kinson@tiscali.co.uk.

# Community News

## Are you sitting comfortably? In Whitmore Village Hall, you will be!

### PLEASE SPONSOR A CHAIR FOR WHITMORE VILLAGE HALL

Following completion of the extension to your village hall, further improvements continue at a pace. Plans are afoot to enhance security and we are shortly to start work replacing the entire roof of the original building.

Our website [www.whitmorevillagehall.org.uk](http://www.whitmorevillagehall.org.uk) has been very successful in attracting new hirers who must feel reassured to see that our hall is assessed at Hall Mark Level 3, the highest national quality standard for village halls achievable in the UK. Most of the above would not have been possible without sponsorship and donations from organisations and individuals alike and we are enormously grateful to those who have contributed.

The vast majority of existing and new hirers are complimentary about the facilities provided within the hall with one notable exception, the seating arrangements. Those of us have sat for any length of time on cold unyielding plastic chairs can only sympathise.

A decision has been made to purchase 120 new upholstered chairs at a total cost of £2,988.36, just short of £25 each. The old chairs will still have a use but we feel the new chairs will encourage parties such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, musical evenings, etc which form a part of existing hirers and will hopefully help to persuade new ones.

We would like to feel confident that your next visit will not be followed by numbness to any part of your anatomy and to this end we are asking you to kindly consider sponsoring or making a donation towards the cost of a chair.

If you are a UK taxpayer we can reclaim the tax on your donation so that every £10 contributed would be worth £12.80 and forms are available from Claud Rowley, Chairman, 01782 680801, Don Lawton, Secretary, 01782 680371, David Platt, Treasure, 0182 680615.

Cheques payable to Whitmore Village Hall.

We look forward to hearing from you.

**Claud Rowley**  
**Chairman**

*The Parish Council supported the above by approving £570 of Community Chest money to be given to this project.*

## Stay and Play

The Village Hall Committee were very pleased to be able to provide a little money for the new 'Stay and Play' group for families with young children that has just started meeting on Wednesday mornings in the Village Hall from 9.30 – 11.30 am.

*More details: Rebecca Coops (01782 751139)*

## CAMEO (Come And Meet Every One) Coffee Morning

An informal Coffee Morning held from 10 am – 12 noon at Whitmore Village Hall, on the second Wednesday of the month. Next meetings (to which ALL are welcome):

Wednesday 8th April

Wednesday 13th May

Wednesday 10th June

*More details: Audrey Pedley (01782 680985)*

## Women's Institute

Maer and District WI meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month (Maer Village Hall, March – September, Whitmore Village Hall, October – February).

On **Wednesday 27th May**, the WI is holding an Open Meeting when Matthew Ellis, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire will be present. All are welcome (men too!) to attend and hear Matthew.

**Tickets £2 (to include light refreshments). More details: Pat Cawthorn (01782 614847)**

### RURAL POLICE SURGERIES

(In partnership with the mobile library)

Surgeries will be held on the following dates during 2015

15th Jan, 26th Feb, 19th March, 30th April, 21st May, 11th June,  
2nd July, 13th Aug, 24th Sept, 15th Oct, 26th Nov, 17th Dec.

	<u>Location</u>	
<b>Butterton</b>	Village	09:30-9.45
<b>Acton</b>	Village	09:50-10:05
<b>Whitmore /Baldwins Gate</b>	Sheet Anchor	10:30-12:00
<b>Maer</b>	Village	12:10-12:30
<b>Chapel Chorlton</b>	Village	12:40-12:55

Your Rural Neighbourhood Police Team

**PC NEIL COWARD    PCSO COLIN HODGKINSON    PCSO SUE DURBER**

## Scouts, Cubs and.....Beavers??

The Whitmore Scout and Cub groups are up and running, with boys and girls enjoying Scouting activities of all sorts on Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

The Scout organization would very much like to start a Beavers group as well, for younger children (8 and under) but LEADERS are NEEDED. In fact, volunteers are needed for all the groups.

The Scout organization provides training and this is a chance to learn new skills and get involved with the younger members of our community.

**Cllr Graham Wheildon (681035)** has been the driving force behind getting the Scout groups organized (well done, Graham) and if you are interested in volunteering, particularly for the younger age group, contact him.



## Blue plaque for Whitmore Church?

As a result of an idea from another of Whitmore's Councillors (well done, Bill), it is hoped that Whitmore Church will soon be the recipient of 'Blue Plaque' from Newcastle Civic Society, to commemorate Samuel John Stone, a 19th Century clergyman who wrote many hymns, notably 'The Church's One Foundation.' Samuel Stone was baptized in Whitmore Church in 1839 where his father was Rector.

## Wayside Nativity

Christmas may seem a long way away but the Parish Council, in conjunction with local Church groups, are already thinking about Christmas 2015.

We are considering a Nativity Scene (at least half life size) to stand on 'Chapel Green' – the grassed space opposite the Methodist Chapel, at the western end of Baldwins Gate. The original idea had been for a second Christmas tree in this space, to join the existing tree at the 'Sheet Anchor', but the idea of a Nativity tableau (Christchild in manger, Mary and Joseph, Shepherds and Kings) has been raised.



***What do YOU think? Is this something you would like to see in our Parish?  
Let the Parish Clerk (680613. wendy.kinson@tiscali.co.uk) know.***

Christmas is once a year – now on to two perennial items!

## Parking at the School

The area around Baldwins Gate School (Tollgate Avenue) gets very congested at drop-off and pick-up times making life difficult for residents of Tollgate Ave and the Meadow Way estate.

**PLEASE** will car-drivers collecting/dropping off children at the School ensure that the road is not blocked and that the pavements are not obstructed.



## Dogs

Unfortunately, the same area of Whitmore Parish is worst hit for 'the dog poo problem'. Can we remind residents (again..) that Dog owners must follow the local Dog Control Orders or face a £75 fixed penalty or a fine of £1,000 on conviction.

All owners **MUST** 'clean up' and remove the waste when their dog fouls in **ANY** public place. Fouling must be removed immediately from pavements, grass verges, car parks, playing fields, churchyards, landscaped areas around houses.

Use the dog waste bins (available at various locations across the Parish) or take it home.

## Parish Appearance

The smart new planters are now in place on 'Chapel Green' and may be blooming by the time you read this.

The Parish Appearance Team are moving forward with plans to make all of Whitmore Parish an attractive place not only to live but also to drive through. If you have recently received (and started paying) your Council Tax demand for 2015/16, you may notice a small increase in the Whitmore Parish line contained within the statement. Bearing in mind the plans that the Parish Council has to improve your local area, it was decided to request an increase in the Precept (the amount given by the Borough Council to the Parish Council to run Parish Council matters). The figure requested sits comfortably within all other Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Parish Precepts and the Parish Council hopes that you, as residents, consider that we are delivering value for money.

## Friends of Jubilee Gardens

There are two entrances to Jubilee Gardens, one at the end of the railway bridge on the A53, the other is located off Fairgreen Rd near the BT exchange. The Parish Council has recently re-surfaced the entrance from the A53. With your help and support, it might be possible to bring about further improvements over time.

To make sure any changes are relevant to our local community, the Parish Council would like to set up a 'Friends of Jubilee Gardens' group. This group of local people would be able to work with the Parish Council to develop a long term plan of improvements. These improvements might just be planting schemes or layout of paths or improved manicuring of the gardens or children's planting areas or better seating or local edible plant areas. The group might also want to get involved in working on the gardens or fund raising for projects or organizing small social events. The aim will be to make this valuable outdoor space relevant to the wants and needs of local people.



***If you're interested, please get in touch with me,  
Councillor Carl Evans on 07775 77470 or email [carl@carlevans.co.uk](mailto:carl@carlevans.co.uk)***

## Health Matters -

### Healthwatch Staffordshire Experience Exchange

Have you used any Health or Social Care Services in Staffordshire recently? Been to your local Hospital or GP surgery, attended the Dentist or Pharmacy or used a care Home or other Community Service? If so, Healthwatch Staffordshire would really like to hear from you.

By accessing Healthwatch Staffordshire's Experience Exchange, you will be able to leave feedback and share your recent experiences of any health or social care provision across Staffordshire.

***You can access the Experience Exchange by going to [www.x2.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk](http://www.x2.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk) or ringing the Freephone number 0800 051 8371.***

## Aging Well

Aging well exercise groups, run by Age UK North Staffordshire, promote better health for the 50+ in Newcastle and the Staffordshire Moorlands. Regular group sessions aim to improve the quality of your life, providing enjoyable activities that will help the over 50s stay healthy and independent.

Designed specifically to improve the health and fitness of older people, the exercises strengthen muscles, improve co-ordination, balance and flexibility, and lead to an improved sense of wellbeing.

Gentle exercise groups are available across the area: the nearest to Whitmore at the moment are in Clayton and at the Library in Newcastle.

***For more details, ring 01782 200739.***

# Madeley and District Community Association

## What we do:

Our Volunteer drivers are available to offer lifts to people who are unable to get to doctors, hospital and any medical related appointments

The Transport scheme has been going for over 10 years and has helped thousands of people with transport, all our volunteers have excellent references and are fully insured.

## Who can use our service:

The service is available to any one living in the local rural area-- ie Aston, Baldwins Gate, Betley, Chapel Chorlton, Hill Chorlton, Keele, Madeley, Maer, Onneley, Whitmore, Woore and Loggerheads

## How much will it cost?:

The cost, will of course depend on the miles you travel, - It is very competitive and much cheaper than a taxi! - please ask for details.

## Can I volunteer?:

We are always looking for volunteer drivers and volunteers to help in the community cafe, if you have a few hours to spare each month and would like to know more please contact the Project Coordinator.

Volunteer driver transport costs are paid at 45p per mile to cover mileage and car usage.

## Office Opening Hours

We are based in The Madeley Centre, New Road Madeley CW39DN

Monday 9-2

Tuesday 9-1

Wednesday 9-1 Coordinator will be at the Madeley Methodist Church  
please leave a message or call 07977561989

Thursday available via mobile 07977561989 or email

*For more info please contact Debbie Burns -Project Coordinator*

*tel number 01782 751164 – please leave a message. Mobile 07977561989 Email mdcahub@gmail.com*

## NEWS:

We are pleased to say we have been awarded a grant of £1500 from the Sentinel Cash Give Away, Thank you to every one who voted for us.

The community Café which runs on a Wednesday from 11am – 1pm at the Madeley Methodist Church is going really well , people come along for a light lunch and a chat , every one is welcome so please feel free to pop in and see us OR if you would like to volunteer once a month for a couple of hours ,the ladies in the Kitchen need help with food prep, service and of course washing up!

If you can help we would love to hear from you call Debbie on 01782 751164

We are very grateful to Madeley Parish Council who have given us a grant to purchase a folding wheel chair which will be available to Volunteer drivers to assist people with mobility problems.

We are also arranging training for Volunteers Drivers in assisting wheel chair users safely .

The M&DCA is a registered charity who relies on donations and grants to keep it's services going – We are always grateful for any donations towards the charity.

We have a band of dedicated volunteers who are able to offer lifts to people who are unable to get to their Medical related [ Hospital, Doctors etc] appointments . If you require help with transport please feel free to contact us.

*If you would like more information about using our services or about how you can volunteer for this very worthwhile project please contact Debbie Burns , Project Coordinator on 01782 751164 or Mobile 07977561989. Office Email mdcahub@gmail.com Personal Email debbieburns123@hotmail.co.uk*

# What's On at the Village Hall

<b>Sundays</b>	Tai Chi	6 pm
<b>Last Sunday of the Month</b>	CAR BOOT SALE	8 am
<b>Mondays</b>	Yoga & Tai Chi	9.45 am 5.30 pm 6 pm
<b>Tuesdays</b>	Karate	7 pm
<b>Wednesdays</b>	Indoor Bowls	2 pm (Winter)
<b>1st Wednesday of the Month</b>	Parish Council	7 pm
<b>2nd Wednesday of the Month</b>	Women's Institute	(September to February)
<b>Thursdays</b>	Art Group Cubs	9.30 am 6.30 pm
<b>1st Thursday of the Month</b>	Village Hall Committee Meeting	7.30 pm
<b>Fridays</b>	Indoor Bowls Dance Club	2 pm 8 pm

More details or to book the Hall: Kris Holbrook (tel 01782 680481)

<b>COUNCILLOR CONTACT DETAILS</b>	
<b>Chairman: Cllr Alan J Wilkinson</b> 'Ravenswood', Snape Hall Rd, Whitmore Heath ST5 5HS.	01782 680820
<b>Vice-Chairman: Cllr Ian Webb</b> 'Evergreens', Acton ST5 4EF.	01782 680522
<b>Cllr Geoff Corbett</b> 'New House', Newcastle Rd, Baldwins Gate, ST5 5DA.	01782 680645
<b>Cllr Carl Evans</b> 'Sanacryn', Eastwood Rise, Madeley Park Wood ST5 5EX.	0775774740
<b>Cllr David Alcock</b> 15 Heronpool Drive, Baldwins Gate ST5 5LJ.	01782 680178
<b>Cllr Bill Murray</b> 'Windermere', Birch Tree Lane, Whitmore Heath ST5 5HE.	01782 680252
<b>Cllr Audrey Pedley</b> 'Sixes and Sevens', Station Cottages, Baldwins Gate ST5 5BY	01782 680985
<b>Cllr Graham Wheildon</b> Wheildon, 6 Pasture Close, Baldwins Gate ST5 5DQ.	01782 681035
<b>Clerk to the Council:</b> <b>Mrs Wendy Kinson</b> The Old Laundry, Maer, ST5 5EF.	Tel: 01782 680613. email:wendy.kinson@tiscali.co.uk