



The Civil Parish of

Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe

Welcome to the annual report issued by Leek Wootton and Guy's Cliffe Parish Council to keep you, the Parish residents, informed about the work of the Parish Council.

Chairman's Annual Report for 2015/16
Cllr Colin Smith

My report for last year set out the preparatory work carried out by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, following the formal designation obtained in November 2014. This process was presented to the community at a public meeting held on 23 June 2015, with the expectation that we would move forward relatively quickly to the formal submission and consultation stages of the plan.

However, two factors forced a change to our proposed timetable and have necessitated a great deal more work by the Steering Group to bring the draft to a conclusion.

Firstly, the suspension of the WDC Local Plan submission by the Government's Planning Inspector, made it clear that the projected new housing numbers contained in the original document would need to be revisited. Secondly, the announcement by Warwickshire Police that they proposed to vacate the Woodcote site completely and sell the land for development has changed the parameters for our Neighbourhood Development Plan.

As reported last year, the original proposals for expansion of Leek Wootton were based upon an increase in the number of dwellings

by 26. This was considered to be relatively modest in the overall scheme for the District and followed a successful lobby and representation from the Parish Council alongside English Heritage (now part of Historic England).

Using grant-aided support from a firm of planning advisors (AECOM), the Steering Group had begun work on conceptual layouts for the various designated sites in the Parish, mainly at Woodcote.

As a result of a call for more potential development land from WDC, the Police put forward the entire Woodcote site, including the area currently occupied by offices and workshops, as well as the listed manor house, suggesting a potential for development of up to 120 properties.

This clearly changed the dimensions for our own Neighbourhood Development Plan, necessitating a rework of the AECOM concepts with specific focus on Woodcote.

It should be noted that the

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neighbourhood planning process cannot ignore what is happening within the development of the Local Plan, because any proposals must be “in conformity” with the wider Local Plan, otherwise the Neighbourhood Development Plan will not be accepted – and cannot be “made” as the terminology goes.

In the event, the proposed amendments to the Local Plan have suggested potential for 115 new dwellings on the Woodcote site plus 5 on the informal car park at the entrance to The Warwickshire Golf and Country Club. This provides the frame of reference for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Parish Council has therefore had to revise its own proposals and now foresees the possibility for 86 new dwellings at Woodcote, including a mix of 2, 3 and 4-bedroom houses, as well as bungalows and some apartments. This would be supplemented by up to 15 additional apartments and houses on The Warwickshire site. At the time of writing, this is still a matter for discussion with the various interested parties.

What is clear is that all proposals can only be considered as a guide. Final numbers will only be determined at the stage of submission of a full ‘Outline Planning Application’ by a prospective developer. This would need to take account of far more detailed criteria concerning housing mix, the need to satisfy the requirement for inclusion of “affordable homes” and, of course, the associated infrastructure.

The Parish Council needs to work alongside WDC and the professional representatives of the Police to ensure that it can continue to influence decisions, even if this does sometimes seem fruitless. We have received many comments and individual representations regarding the future planning of our parish – most recently following a further public meeting held at the beginning of March. We will therefore modify the content of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, where necessary, but most importantly, we will

continue to “argue our corner” with the planners.

The more we are able to achieve a mutually agreed basis for planning in the future, the stronger the WDC position in opposing any destructive development proposals based solely upon economics.

We have thus started the new fiscal year with more work to be done in finalising the Neighbourhood Development Plan, whilst at the same time maintaining the Council’s influence.

Although planning has been something of a preoccupation we continue to work on all other aspects of preserving the Parish as a self-sustaining and vibrant community, albeit surrounded by three, larger towns, all with their own agenda. Leisure, sporting and social facilities will continue to be an important element of the Parish Council’s work.

During the last year we have also seen some changes in the composition of the Council. Our Parish Clerk, Eileen Clayton, retired at the beginning of 2016, having contributed enormously to the efficient workings of the Council over many years. We are pleased to welcome her successor, Helen Eldridge, to the role.

More recently we have co-opted Jim Kirkwood to the Council, filling the vacant position and, as a professional engineer, bringing many years of valuable experience to the group.

The role of Parish Councils is promoted by the Government as an important mechanism for devolving power to the local level. The realities of how this works in practice are often more mundane. We can expect that the burden of maintenance and protection of our local environment will gradually shift to the level of the Parish as higher local authorities face increasing budgetary constraints. We will look to take advantage of all services that are available but it is clear that voluntary efforts – even if only organisational – will become more the order of the day if we are to preserve the benefits of the place that we live in.

Unfortunately this voluntary effort is often taken for granted.

It therefore remains for me to personally thank all members of the Council for their

efforts and support in what is an increasingly complicated environment for a group of volunteers to contemplate.

Your Council will nonetheless persevere.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Update

*The Neighbourhood Development Plan is now entering the formal stages of consultation. The latest draft of the NDP (available to view on-line) has been submitted to WDC prior to a formal consultation, which we plan to commence on Friday 9th September and will run for a period of six weeks, ending on Friday 21st October 2016. During this consultation, the NDP is sent to all statutory consultees, as well as other interested parties in the Parish. Members of the public can also make comments and **formal** representations at this stage. Many of the*

comments made at earlier public sessions have already been incorporated in the draft, but following this formal phase, the NDP will then be brought to a final submission to WDC, which will then arrange a public referendum to determine acceptance.

These final stages of the NDP process coincide with the formal "public inspection" of the WDC Local Plan. It is therefore important that our own efforts are in 'conformity' with the basic principles of the Local Plan, as we move forward.

Financial Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2016

Helen Eldridge, Clerk

The total income the Parish Council received for 2015/16 was £37,990. This included £21,299.60 from WREN (being the second tranche of our grant of £42,599.20 for the playground renewal) and a grant of £5,400 from the Community Development Foundation towards the Neighbourhood Plan expenses and this has produced a distorted income figure for 2015/16. Excluding these grants, the total income was £11,290.40

Although £7,587.36 was brought forward into the 2016/17 financial year, more than half of this is Neighbourhood Plan grant money, meaning in real terms, the sum of £3,501.21 was brought forward for the 2016/17 year. There were unexpected expenses of £450 for a fallen tree and fence repairs, for which the Council is seeking reimbursement, because the tree was on Warwickshire County Council land. We also contributed to the Leek Wootton History Group, production of Leek Wootton Link, Royal British Legion, plus the usual grants we award to the PCC for churchyard maintenance and to the Sports

Club.

Of the £5,400 Community Development Foundation grant, only £3,639.75 was spent. We were unable to complete the Neighbourhood Plan within the time period of the grant, due to delays that were out of our control. £1,760.25 will therefore be returned to the Community Development Foundation and a new grant will be applied for, in order to complete the Neighbourhood Plan.

The precept for 2016/17 has been increased slightly to £8,010, a 3% increase of £103, total income for 2016/17 amounts to £10,710. The Parish Council manages a very small budget to the best of its ability, being unable to obtain extra income due to restrictions on increases in the precept, and endeavours to give value for money at all times.

This year's Annual Audit return for 2015/16 has been completed and returned to the auditors. Notices informing the public of their rights to view the accounts were displayed as instructed.

Parish Profile

Parliamentary Constituency: Kenilworth and Southam
County Council Ward: Leek Wootton
District Council Ward: Arden

Description of the Parish

The Parish includes the village of Leek Wootton and the communities at Hill Wootton, Chesford Grange, Guy's Cliffe, North Woodloes, plus outlying properties. The boundary extends from the River Avon in the east to the outskirts of Warwick and Kenilworth to south and north and the Wedgnock and Goodrest areas to the west. There is a total population of approximately 1,100, occupying some 400 properties.

Parish Electorate

794 names appear on the Register of Electors for 2016.

Parish Councillors

There are eight Parish Councillors who are elected every four years, and are volunteers. The Councillors for 2016/17 are:

Chairman Cllr Colin Smith	1 Home Farm	512815	colin.smith@laceysmith.co.uk
Vice Chairman Cllr Richard Coates	Westside Hill Wootton Rd	856223	coatesrich@hotmail.com
Cllr Dennis Eassom	42 Tidmarsh Road	854208	d.eassom27@btinternet.com
Cllr Paul Eldridge	30 Hill Wootton Road	854347	paul@eldridgeuk.org
Cllr Jim Kirkwood	34 Woodcote Lane	852444	jp.kirkwood@btinternet.com
Cllr Keith Knott	4 The Meadows	859725	knottallen@onetel.com
Cllr Alan Moore	Hill Wootton Farm	852603	
Cllr Peter Tunkle	85 Warwick Road	511879	petertunkle@ymail.com
Clerk Helen Eldridge	1 Anchor Cottages Warwick Road	853841	clerk@leekwootton.org.uk
County Councillor Cllr José Compton	20 Welsh Close Warwick	402936	CllrCompton@warwickshire.gov.uk
District Councillor Cllr Susan Gallagher	Apple Tree Cottage Haseley Knob	484654	susan.gallagher@warwickdc.gov.uk
District Councillor Cllr Peter Whiting	5 Moss Grove Kenilworth	07802 796436	Peter.Whiting@warwickdc.gov.uk

Meetings

The Parish Council meets on the second Tuesday of each month, except in August and December, in the Committee Room at the Village Hall. Dates and agendas are posted on notice boards, and published on the website.

The public are welcome to attend and an opportunity to put forward any matters of concern is provided.

For further information about the work of the Parish Council, please see our website:

www.leekwootton.org.uk