



Chairman  
Cllr. Frank Colclough  
01782 909582



Clerk to F.P.C.  
Stephen Beck  
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stephen\_beck@btconnect.com

## Parish Council News

### Localism Bill

This bill was introduced to Parliament on 13 December 2010, and was given Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The main measures of the Localism Bill are under four headings:

- new freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- new rights and powers for communities and individuals
- reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally

Greater freedom and flexibilities for local government are vital for achieving the shift in

power the government wants to see. But, on their own, these measures will not be enough. Government alone does not make great places to live, people do. People who look out for their neighbours, who take pride in their street and get involved - from the retired teacher who volunteers in the village shop once a month, to the social entrepreneur who runs the nursery full time.

Right to challenge: In some places, social enterprises deliver public services at high quality and at good value for taxpayers' money. In others, however, they find their bright ideas fall on deaf ears. Social enterprises, volunteers groups, parishes and local residents' groups everywhere will, in future, have the right to insist that the council give their proposal serious consideration through the 'right to challenge'.

May we take this opportunity to wish all parishioners a joyous and peaceful Christmas, and a happy New Year!

The Localism Bill contains proposals to make the planning system clearer, more democratic, and more effective. Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live. The Bill will introduce a new right for communities to draw up a 'neighbourhood development plan'.

Neighbourhood planning will allow communities to come together through a local parish council or neighbourhood forum and say where they think new houses, businesses and shops should go – and what they should look like.

As part of neighbourhood planning, the Bill gives groups of local people the power to deliver the development that their local community want. They may wish to build new homes, businesses, shops, playgrounds or meeting halls. A community organisation, formed by members of the local community, will be able to bring forward development proposals which, providing they meet minimum criteria and can demonstrate local support through a referendum, will be able to go ahead without requiring a separate traditional planning application.

For more information, go to  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)



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Cllr.  
Richard Mycock  
01782 396869

Cllr.  
Mrs. L. McPherson  
01782 397103

Cllr. Kath Brayford  
01782 393157

Cllr. Ellis Bevan  
01782 393140

Cllr. Shirley Wheat  
01782 395133

## Blythe Bridge Ward News

### Speed watch

We would like to ask for more volunteers for the speed watch scheme, to become involved and support the existing volunteers. Please contact the Parish Clerk for details.

### Grass Verges

Please do not park on the grass verges as winter is not far away and the verges get damaged by cars parking on them. There are double yellow lines outside Blythe Lodge in Ridgeway Drive. Would parents not park their cars on them as the police have been asked to monitor those who park irresponsibly!

### Blythe Lodge

Blythe Lodge, Independent Living Scheme, opened its doors to the public following some extensive refurbishment works completed earlier in the summer. People living in Blythe Lodge have benefited from a mixture of external and internal works and they now have an attractive car park surrounded by a welcoming landscape. A seating area has been provided so that the residents are able to enjoy the garden. The residents also have the opportunity to grow their own vegetables,

promoting healthy living. Blythe Lodge has a refurbished communal area where many events are arranged. Sarah Wyke, Head of Independent Living, said that their open day was a huge success with residents showing people around. There is a wonderful sense of community in Blythe Lodge and it is a lovely place to live. Anyone who would like to visit Blythe Lodge and have a look around please contact Stafford Rural Homes on 0800 111 4334.

### Aynsley School

The children of Aynsley School are now at The Learning Centre which was part of the old Longton High School. The children have adapted very well to the change of their environment and are working well in their new classrooms. The new school should be ready for the children to move back into by the summer of 2012.

### Springcroft Primary School.

Mrs Helen Lewis took up her new post as Headteacher and we wish her well for the future. The Autumn Term is always a very busy time in school and this new academic year has been no exception. Many activities go on both during the

day and in the after school clubs, and with visiting workshops and trips out it has certainly been a hectic first term.

The Harvest Festival was celebrated on October 17th with all pupils taking part, and the Harvest gifts were donated to The Salvation Army.

Y5 pupils have recently taken part in an educational workshop provided by Theartbay Gallery in Fenton, Stoke on Trent. They were among a group of 400 schoolchildren from Stoke on Trent to enter the International Children's' Exhibition of Fine Art which is held in Lidice, a small village in the Czech Republic, and annually attracts more than 25,000 entries. Lidice, formerly a mining town, was completely destroyed by German forces during WWII, no trace of the former village could be found and survivors were sent to prisoner of war camps. News soon reached mining communities in Britain, and in Stoke on Trent in particular, thanks to Dr Barnett Stross, a former Shelton GP and Hanley MP who initiated the "Lidice Shall Live" campaign, money was raised by North Staffs. miners and other workers in Staffordshire to help the community of Lidice rebuild their village in 1947. This inspirational story will hopefully be the beginning of Springcroft forging links to other primary schools in the Lidice area.

Nativities and Carol Services now loom large in schools - there is never a dull moment!

### **Stafford and Rural Homes**

The next estate walkabout will be on the 9th of February 2012. This will be at 10 o'clock meeting at the car park in Mayfield Drive. All residents are welcome to join in, your comments and ideas are always appreciated. Stafford Rural

Homes Staff will be available to answer any of your queries.

### **A50**

We are sorry to say that we have nothing to report on the noise levels on the A50 at the moment, but we are still trying to find a solution.

### **Litter and Dog Fouling**

In most parts of Blythe Bridge this has improved, but there are still some areas where people do not clean up their mess.





Cllr. Martin Oxby  
01782 397629

Cllr. Frank Colclough  
01782 909582  
Chairman

Cllr. Tony Holmes  
01782 395250

Vacancy

## Fulford Ward News

### Police information

Residents should make sure they check that their homes, outbuildings and vehicles are secure before leaving them or retiring for the night. Please ensure that keys, wallets and purses are not left on window shelves of homes and no valuables are on display in vehicles.

It is also important that residents call the police, using the new non emergency number 101, whenever they see any suspicious persons or vehicles in their area.

Anyone witnessing a crime taking place should call 999.

### Dog Fouling

This is still an issue around Fulford, such a pity particularly with the efforts that many residents are putting into the BKV initiatives.

### Fulford Road

Parking outside the Primary School is a perennial problem. The car park at the Village Hall is available as an alternative where a “walking bus” has been introduced and a “20 is Plenty” campaign and signage has been requested of the County Council.

### Fulford Village Green

The Borough Council is now considering the

proposal from our Parish Council that it takes over the grass cutting. Further attention by the “Fulford Village Group” and local residents has also continued to address this area which is central to the village.

### Baulk Lane / Vicarage Lane

Car drivers should be aware that this is an “Access Only” road – it has been noted that drivers are using it as a through route, and at inappropriate speeds. The police should be informed of any offending vehicle such that they can take action. Additional signage has now been provided by the County Council to warn of pedestrians in the road.

### Broadband

Residents will be aware that their connection speed is poor compared to other areas due to our distance from the Blythe Bridge exchange. Staffordshire County Council is taking surveys from local residents which have been extended to 31st December 2011. You are urged to complete the survey which can be accessed at [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/broadbandconsultation](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/broadbandconsultation) which will then highlight our area as one with a poor experience.

### BKV

The Fulford Village Group achieved third place for Fulford in the Best Kept Village competition.

Available on the Fulford Village website are the judges' feedback – check this out on [www.fulfordvillage.com](http://www.fulfordvillage.com). It concludes with: "There is clear evidence of community spirit and involvement, good BKV awareness and publicity, children's posters, excellent recycling and dog fouling awareness, telephone, bus shelter and children's play area, very well kept churchyard, open spaces and private gardens. The surrounds of the Shoulder of Mutton could be improved and to some degree the map. Nevertheless, Fulford had worked very hard at BKV this year and achieved a very good Third Place in the Small Village Category in Stafford District (where competition was very close indeed)."

Whilst many local residents have taken up the BKV challenge and attended to their own areas, there are still some parts which could be addressed, such as overgrowing hedges in Highview Road and along Meadow Lane.

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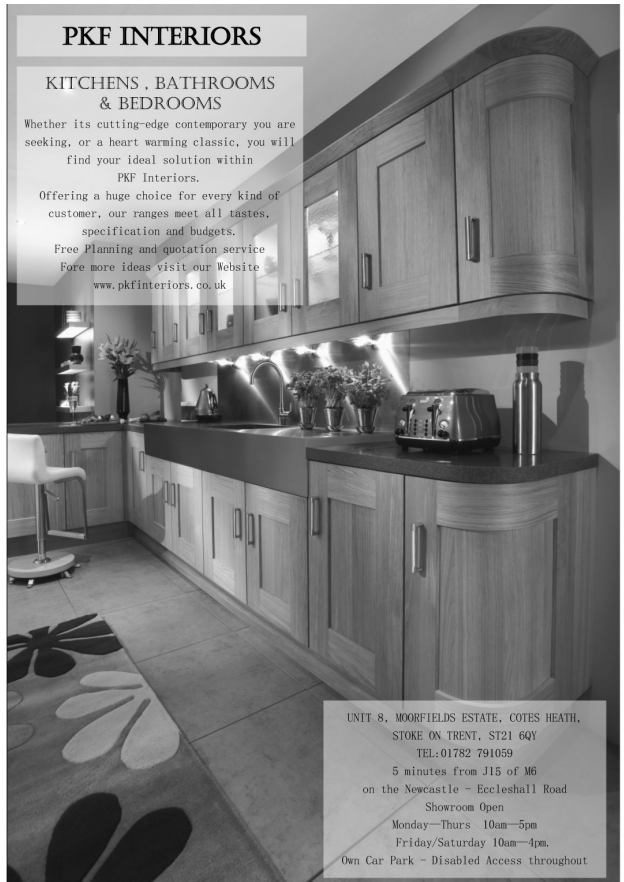
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Cllr. Denise  
Ellerman  
01782 393680

Cllr. Sarahjane  
Cuncannon  
07526 880665

## Meir Heath Ward News

We are delighted to welcome to the Ward our new councillor, Sarahjane Cuncannon. It is particularly good that in Sarahjane we have a young councillor with a strong local background, and a particular interest in grassroots affairs. We look forward to her contribution to the Ward and the Parish in the future.

### Grindley Park Adventure Playground

Since it's opening in September, this facility has been, generally, well received by residents and apart from a few teething problems it has met expectations.

The Council is planning and hoping, in the near future, to proceed to the next phase which is to provide facilities for younger children.

Again, we shall be seeking grant aid for the funding of this project and we hope to report further on this in our Spring newsletter.

### Car Wash at Grindley Lane Crossroads.

At the time of writing, we understand that SBC will be taking enforcement action for the removal of some of the signs currently displayed.

There is no progress to report with regard to the discharge of waste water from the car wash. We are still awaiting a decision from SBC on what action is to be taken. When we know we will report back to you.

### Vermin

In our last newsletter we reported on this problem - sightings of rats in gardens - and since then we have received further similar reports. Vermin can be attracted by food put out for birds and / or other animals such as rabbits, chickens, horses etc.

SBC have informed us that a licence is not required to keep animals in a garden area unless it is considered to be a 'dangerous' animal.

However, we ask you to report the sighting of rats in gardens to SBC in order that the appropriate action can be taken. Also, we ask those who keep such animals to minimise as far as possible the risk of attracting vermin to the area.

### Thanks

We are aware that there are individuals within our community who carry out, voluntarily, little jobs to help to keep our area attractive, clean and tidy. They seek no reward for their efforts, other than self satisfaction, but we wish to record our thanks to them and our appreciation of their community spirit.

### Meir Heath & Rough Close Village Hall - Appeal

Please see the request for support under the Bulletin Board later in this newsletter.

The above organisation also has a website, [www.meirheathandroughclosevillagehall.co.uk](http://www.meirheathandroughclosevillagehall.co.uk)

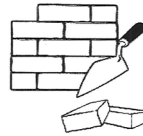
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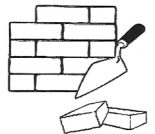
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Cllr.  
Andrew Lovatt

Cllr. Joy Bennett  
01782 398345

Cllr. Mrs. Wendy  
Jennings  
01782 398784

## Rough Close Ward News

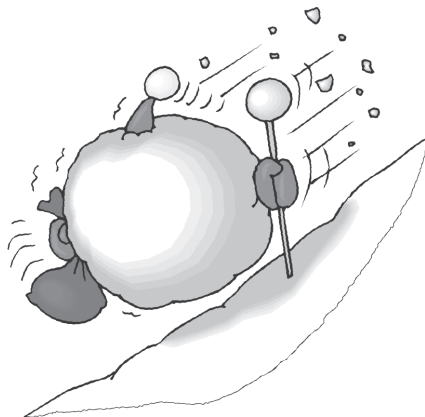
The mellow goldenness of autumn has brought a further level of beauty to our village. This could only be enhanced by the cessation of littering by the few who continue to dispose of newspapers, cans and wrappers in our countryside and at the road side. Littering on Windmill Hill has become a real problem in recent months, with newspaper blowing down as far as Leadendale Lane and Stone Road. This is not producing a good impression of Rough Close on anyone entering from the Stone direction and it is both disgusting and depressing for villagers to live with. Please, please dispose of all litter responsibly. It has also been noticed that drivers are stopping on the site of The George & Dragon to empty vehicle ashtrays and dispose of litter. Anyone seen doing this will have their registration number given to our local police.

Stafford Borough Council's bio-diversity officer, Bill Waller, responsible for, amongst other things, the welfare of our common, recently initiated a programme for the regrowth of heather there. Along with Parish Council representation from Rough Close, he was joined, on a very breezy Sunday morning, by volunteers from Meir Heath; Parish Councillors (Vice Chairman) Barry Shaw

and Cllr. Roy Taylor and by Stafford Borough Councillor Tony Holmes. We were very happy to welcome the members of the public that came along to help us. May we express our sincere thanks to all who helped us with this important project. The common is a rare natural heathland and we must do all we can to protect and maintain it. Special thanks are extended to Mr Bill Waller.

### Meir Heath & Rough Close Village Hall - Appeal

Please see the request for support under the Bulletin Board later in this newsletter.



# Report from County Councillor

## Staffordshire — 3-Year Zero Tax Rise Zone

Staffordshire County Council is freezing council tax for another two years – making the council a tax rise free zone for three years in a row.

I am pleased to say that we have really made an impact on the council's finances. Staffordshire was the first large authorities in the U.K. to commit to a council tax freeze last year and is setting the pace again.

The Staffordshire approach to finances is pragmatic, carefully managed and highly targeted. We are delivering what we do and why we do it, to deliver improved services and maximum value for the tax payer. Staffordshire has the 3rd lowest county council tax in the country and the programme is still on track to save £120 million.

## '20 is Plenty' outside our Schools

I have submitted our three schools, Fulford Primary, Meir Heath and Springcroft for inclusion in the 20-is-Plenty scheme. This is part of a continuing development of speed reduction initiatives to support road safety particularly around schools.

## Street Lighting Up-Grade

Street lights are being up-graded over the next few months in parts of Blythe Bridge and Meir Heath, specifically; Blythe Close, Greenacres Ave,

Heath Grove, High View, Hilltop Cres, Hollies Drive, Bernard Grove. Street lighting is upgraded on a rolling programme and will mean old, poor lighting will be replaced.



More information will be sent to residents prior to work starting. Footpaths are also due to be repaired shortly in Blythe Avenue and Marsh View. Again this work is carried out on a maintenance programme.

## Baulk Lane – Fulford

New, 'pedestrians in the carriageway' signs have been installed along this narrow lane which is used as a thoroughfare for local residents and school children. This narrow lane has been a problem for some time and we have looked at various solutions to improve safety.

## Health and Social Care Consultation

We need to know your views on proposals to transform the way concerns about health and social care are handled.

Health and social care services include services which you may have accessed through your GP, dentist or hospital and we are keen to hear what you think.



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Winter 2011  
Issue 37

You can access the survey on-line at [www.staffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk)

If you require a hard copy of the survey or if you would like it in another language or format e.g. large text, please contact (01785) 276820

The deadline for all survey responses is Monday 16 January 2012.

### Ice Busters – ready for winter

Ice Busters is a new County Council initiative supporting self help groups by providing advice and grit/brine to treat locally important footways and pedestrian routes during the winter months keeping them clear of snow and ice. The initiative is aimed at Parish Councils and

residents associations who are able to arrange volunteers to treat the footways during periods of prolonged cold weather and clear snow over the winter. The treatment options include the application of grit or a brine solution which will be provided by Staffordshire's Highway Teams.

The initiative allows groups to extend the self help to other, non-highway areas by supplementing the highway resources.

Community groups can become involved by contacting the Community Highway Liaison team on 0300 111 8000.

Please contact me if you need help with any local problems or issues involving the County Council - [ian.parry@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.parry@staffordshire.gov.uk)

## Bulletin Board

### Delivering Key Information Quickly

**EVERY MONDAY, TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY (EXCEPT BANK HOLIDAYS)**, the Clerk of the Parish Council will be present at the annexe to the MEIR HEATH & ROUGH CLOSE VILLAGE HALL, GRANGE ROAD, MEIR HEATH between **9.30AM and 12.30PM** to discuss any problems or issues which the Parish Council may be able to help with. The contact telephone number is 01782 385187 where you can also leave a message.

Fulford Parish Council has a website which is run and updated by the Newsletter Committee of the Parish Council. Please log on to see and find the latest information!

[www.fulford-parish-council.org](http://www.fulford-parish-council.org)  
Contact via the Clerk  
[stephen\\_beck@btconnect.com](mailto:stephen_beck@btconnect.com)

### Meir Heath & Rough Close Village Hall - Appeal

The Village Hall has been open since 1995 providing a venue for a wide range of community activities. It is run by a management committee

which today is mainly comprised of members who were involved with fund raising prior to the hall being built and have subsequently remained involved with this community facility.

In years gone by, there was a strong committee made up of elected members and representatives from local voluntary organisations. Sadly, only Fulford Parish Council now provide a representative and the number of elected members has fallen drastically to eight, which is less than half of what it used to be.

We have striven constantly, without success, to find new and younger committee members because a continuing reduction in the strength of the committee can lead only to its eventual collapse and possible closure of the village hall. That is why we are appealing, once again, to the residents of Meir Heath and Rough Close, to offer themselves for election / co-option to the VH committee. The task of the committee is, quite simply, to manage the hall on behalf of the community. The hall is self-funding and, consequently, there is a need to ensure that bookings, both for activities and private hire, raise sufficient funds to run and maintain the hall to the highest of standards.

It is a credit to the committee that this has been maintained for the past sixteen years.

**If you feel that you would like to join us and help to maintain this important community facility, please contact the committee Chairman, Barry Shaw. [Tel. 394922]**

### **101 for Non-emergency Police Calls**

From Tuesday 8 November communities across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent have access to **101**, the national non-emergency telephone number for the police service in England and Wales. The introduction of the **101** number will help communities to keep their neighbourhoods safe by giving them one easy way to contact their local police force to report non-emergency crime and disorder.

Calls to **101** will cost 15 pence per call, no matter how long you are on the phone - this applies to both landlines and mobile phones. In an emergency, the public should continue to call 999, such as when a crime is in progress, when there is danger to life or when violence is being used or threatened. The Staffordshire Police current number (0300 123 4455) will remain in place while our communities become familiar with **101**.

People should call **101** to report less urgent crime and disorder or to speak to their local officers.

For example, you should call **101** if your car has been stolen, your property has been damaged or you suspect drug use or dealing in your neighbourhood.

You can also use 101 to report a minor traffic collision, give the police information about crime in your area or speak to the police about a general enquiry.

### **Blue Bin Recycling Service**

Stafford Borough Council collects recyclables which now include waxed cartons (e.g. Tetrapak), foil, aerosols, empty plastic bags and cellophane. No longer must textiles be put in the blue bin as it has been found that textiles have become contaminated with broken glass etc., which means that they cannot be re-used.

### **Townswomens Guild**

Meets at Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 2.00pm. There is a speaker each month followed by tea and biscuits. The group would welcome new members or visitors. For further information contact 01782 393846.

### **Meir Heath Windmill Preservation Group**

Windmill Grade 11 Listed building 1775

The group held their AGM in October at the Windmill - Anthony Swift continuing as chairman, Gill Swift as Secretary/ Project manager, D Bestwick as Treasurer, and a committee of 15 people. A number of waterproof boards showing the history of the mill and artefacts placed in the mill have added to the interest. Local Brownies came to visit and enjoyed looking round and gave a donation. If any groups wish to come to the mill daytime or evening, the committee would be pleased to show the visitors round.

Help the windmill project by doing shopping on line using the GIVING MACHINE - Just type in the GIVING MACHINE and follow the links to the main shops - the windmill project receives a donation from the shops you buy from, it costs you nothing. Make sure the beneficiary is the Meir Heath Windmill Project. The group wish to have aluminium guttering fixed onto the mill and so all money raised goes towards that.

A programme of fundraising is planned for 2012  
Details from G Swift 01782 317521

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Mrs. Jennings, Taylor & Mrs. Wheat  
Chairman and Vice-Chairman ex-officio

### Planning Committee

Cllrs. Mrs. Brayford, Ms. Ellerman, Holmes,  
Mrs. McPherson, Mycock,  
Chairman and Vice-Chairman ex-officio

### Representatives to Outside Bodies

Fulford Primary LEA Governor:  
Frank Colclough

Meir Heath Primary School:  
Cllr. Mrs. Jennings

Aynsley Special School Governors  
Cllrs. Bevan & Mrs. Brayford

Meir Heath & Rough Close Village Hall:  
Cllr. Mrs. Jennings

Fulford Village Hall:  
Cllr. Tony Holmes

Springcroft Primary School LEA Governor:  
Cllr. Kath Brayford, Cllr. Richard Mycock  
Cllr. Linda McPherson

Staffordshire Parish Councils Association:  
Cllrs. Mrs. Brayford, Holmes  
and Mrs. McPherson

Sustainability Committee:  
Cllr. Ms. Ellerman

### Staffordshire County Council -

#### Stone Rural Councillor:

Ian Parry 01782 398338

### Stafford Borough Council -

#### Fulford Ward Councillors:

Michael Dodson 01782 399855

Tony Holmes 01782 395250

Peter Roycroft 01889 505240

## Dates for 2012

### Parish Council Meetings

Thursday 12th January

Location:  
Meir Heath & Rough Close Village Hall

Thursday 9th February

Location: Fulford Village Hall

Thursday 8th March

Location:  
Meir Heath & Rough Close Village Hall

Note: All meetings start at 7.15pm with an opportunity for any local government elector from the Parish to ask questions of the Parish Council relating to any Parish issue. At the formal meeting, which follows at 7:30 pm, these matters will then be considered; the public may also attend but are not usually invited to join the debate. Alternatively, write to the Clerk such that the matter can be raised.

## SHELLTECH SERVICES

*The complete support team*

Electrical, Plumbing,  
Joinery, Landscaping,  
Drains, Roof work,  
General Maintenance.

Kitchen, Bedroom &  
Bathroom installations.

Alarm Systems

Appliance Repairs.

See [www.ShellTech.co.uk](http://www.ShellTech.co.uk) for more details or call

Tel: 01782 398693 Mobile: 07768 307482

Big jobs, Small jobs, Odd jobs – We do them all.



### Household Recycling Centres

At recycling centres in Staffordshire there are facilities to recycle newspapers, magazines, telephone directories, glass bottles, jars, fridges, freezers, scrap metal, car batteries and oil.

**Stone** - The recycling centre is on Beacon Road, Stone Business Park, off the A34 Stafford Road at the roundabout with the A51 Butterhill Bank Road - about 1 mile from Stone Town Centre. This centre is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

**Cheadle** - This centre is on New Haden Road, Cheadle, off the road to Draycott, and is closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

### Police Contact numbers

In an emergency, where life is in danger or a crime is in progress, call 999.

For non-emergency calls and general enquiries contact us on 0300 123 4455.

Based at Stone Police Station are the Community Beat Officers and Police Community Support Officers for our area, PC 5506 David Perry, PC 4884 Gareth Hilditch, PCSO 8849 Becky Powell and PCSO 6643 Emma Kempson.

### Call Crimestoppers - Tel 0800-555-111

This telephone number can be used to pass specific information about crime or criminals without fear of reprisals or direct contact with the police. Calls are **FREE** from land lines and most mobile phones. The service is anonymous and rewards of up to £1,000 are available for information which leads to an arrest and charge.

### Stafford Borough Council

Customer Contact Centre

Open 8.30 am - 5.00 pm Monday - Friday

Tel: (01785) 619000 or [www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk)

Planning queries: 01785 619337

[planning@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@staffordbc.gov.uk)

### Staffordshire County Council

General Enquiries Tel: 0300 111 8000

This is a new number replacing the former switchboard number of 01785 223121.

The new phone number is charged at local rate. [www.staffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk)

### Highways Hotline (formerly CLARENCE)

Safety Defects, such as potholes, ice, flooding and broken street lights should be reported directly to the Highways Hotline on 0300 111 8000 email to [highways@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:highways@staffordshire.gov.uk) or on-line via **Report Faults Online**

### STREETscene

ONE phone call, one solution – The special hotline means that a wide range of environmental issues, such as littering, graffiti, dog mess, sharps, fly tipping and problems with children's play areas, can all be reported with just one phone call.

You can contact the Streetscene team in the following ways:

Phone the contact centre on 01785 619000

Text in with your problem on 07781 471023

Email [contactcentre@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:contactcentre@staffordbc.gov.uk)