Affordable Housing –
Hilderstone Road, Meir Heath

Update - Stafford and Rural Homes (SARH) have now obtained all the necessary planning consents and work begin on the site at the beginning of March.

Parish Council Elections

Most people will be aware that there is a General election due on the 7th May, but are you also aware that parish council elections will also be taking place on the same day?

Parish Councillors are elected by the public and serve four year terms in office; these are unpaid positions, although allowances can be paid at the discretion of individual councils. Fulford Parish Council chooses not to pay allowances.

The roles of a Councillor are many and varied, it is not just about attending meetings, although being a Councillor means you agree to attend all meetings as is reasonably possible. However one of the most important duties is to listen and understand the views of people in the community and to use their skills and local knowledge to advise and assist other public bodies and organisations.

The range of powers now available to Parish Councils continues to change. The Localism Act was introduced in November 2011 with the aim of devolving more decision making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. The main headings contained in the Act are:

- 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 decisions about housing are taken locally.

As can be seen from the above, Parish Councils have many powers, however the basic responsibility remains that of trying to make the lives of their local community more comfortable by representing the whole electorate within the parish, delivering or co-ordinating services to meet local need and striving to improve quality of life in the parish.

If you are interested in becoming a parish councillor then you can get more information, including key deadline dates for the delivery of nomination papers etc. from the parish clerk.

Voluntary Car Scheme

Following a further appeal to help with this scheme a few more people have stepped forward and it is hoped by the time you receive this Newsletter a steering group will be in place.

More volunteers are still needed, so if you are interested in finding out more and/or would like to be involved please contact the Clerk or one of your parish councillors.
Thanks to Borough Councillor Holmes and the Officers for their prompt action in removing the travellers from the spare ground near Springcroft School. This land is used for parking when children are arriving at or leaving school. The travellers arrived on the Tuesday and had left by the Thursday evening.

Children being dropped off at Springcroft School are being put in danger by drivers parking where there are zig-zag lines on the road, on pavements, and by signs asking for no parking - blocking the entrance to the car park and turning in the rear entrance to Blythe Lodge.

Police have been alerted as have the parking wardens. PLEASE keep our children safe.

LITTER in the area has taken a turn for the worse, please use the bins or take litter home,

GRASS VERGES - Please do not park on the grassed areas, it looks a terrible mess in some places, it also will make it difficult to mow when there are deep ruts in it.

ESTATE WALKABOUT - Thursday 26th March 10am Mayfield Drive car park is the starting place.

Blythe Bridge Allotment Site

Throughout spring/summer 2014, Stafford and Rural Homes (SARH) and Stafford Borough Council (SBC) were looking to develop new allotment sites across the Borough. They have been scouring Stafford and rural areas in search of unused, derelict plots of land. Based on the profound success of the Meadow Road Community Allotment Project in Stafford they intend to develop an allotment site, with the aim to be launched in 2015. The local site identified for development is the piece of land behind the garage site off Adamthwaite Drive, Blythe Bridge.
If you would like to find out more about this project please contact the SARH Community Involvement Team on 0800 111 4554 or email cp@sarh.co.uk.

Stallington Road

Speeding is an ongoing problem. Please keep your speed to a reasonable level as school children use this road to walk to school as do cyclists and walkers. A Speedwatch team is active along this route.

Springcroft School

Springcroft children have enjoyed an action packed term. Year 5 has spent a week at Laches Wood and experienced climbing, archery, orienteering, BMX biking as well as the high ropes course. A memory making time that will be the topic of conversation for many months. The ‘Life Education Centre’ delivered courses for all pupils and parents covering a variety of health based topics and we have also had STEM in school for science workshops too – ‘Rockets Away Machines’ and ‘Digger Disaster’ to name but a few. The juniors visited the New Vic Theatre to see The Borrowers and our Early Years class invited their parents into school for some reading activities. We value the support of parents and grandparents and would like to say thank you to the dedicated group who come into school on a regular basis to hear children read and help with sewing activities too.

At Springcroft we believe in helping others so World Book Day enabled us to enjoy dressing up as our favourite book characters at the same time raising funds for our friends in Malawi so that we can send some books to them. We are also helping the Rotary Club with their emergency boxes that are sent to regions in crisis around the world.

The PSCOs are continuing to monitor parking with our Year 6 children and we thank all those who park with consideration to our neighbours on a daily basis.
Planning

The objections raised to an application submitted for the removal of condition 2 of the permission granted on appeal dated 10th December 2009 to limit site occupation by gypsy caravans to 5 years at Woodfield, Hilderstone Road, Spot Acre, resulted in the application being refused. The application would have allowed the permanent occupation of the site which would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Post Box

Royal Mail has altered the collection time for the box by the village green. The mail from this low-use box is to be moved to ‘collection on delivery’ with the postman or woman emptying the box on their round, rather than providing a dedicated collection by van. A later collection from the box on Fulford Road in the late afternoon will still occur.

Dog Mess

Baulk Lane is the worst area abused in terms of dog mess, but other areas such as Tudor Hollow have been abused.

BUS SERVICE 4 - use it or lose it!

The Bennetts Service 4 through Fulford, Saverley Green and Stallington operates between Longton and Stone via Meir Heath and Oulton gives 2 or 4 hours shopping time in Longton or Stone each day.

Superfast Broadband

The availability in Fulford, Saverley Green and Stallington under the Staffordshire Superfast Broadband project has “Rollout in progress – expected delivery by June 2015”. The new cabinets are already in place and electricity connected.

An interactive map shows where fibre broadband is being rolled out as part of the project. It enables you to do a postcode search to find out when and where fibre-based broadband is likely to become available in your area.

http://www.superfaststaffordshire.co.uk/where-and-when
BKV

Villagers are preparing for the Best Kept Village competition with several initiatives to ensure that at least “Highly Commended” is again achieved. The roadside approach to St Nicholas Church was identified as in need of attention, and with the support from Streetscene at the Borough Council, the Parish Council has adopted this area and now has it on its regular programme of grass cutting.

Fulford 1066 or 2012

A local publication recently had a picture as opposite for an article “What’s in a Name”. It is of course, the sign for Fulford, near York!

A more appropriate sign would have been that commissioned by the Fulford Village Group with financial support from the Parish Council to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. Erected on the Village Green, it overlooks the location for the annual FULFEST music festival, this year to be held on Saturday 11th July.
Rough Close Post Office Branch

The Post Office is proposing to move the P.O. branch from its present position in Grindley Lane to the newsagents [Martin McColls] in Sandon Road.

In connection with this, the Post Office started a public consultation process at the beginning of February to hear your views on this proposal.

If the P.O. moves to the newsagents, post office services will be offered from a till on the retail counter in a modern open plan.

The majority of the post office products and services will still be available but not all of those offered currently. Additionally, there will longer opening hours.

The Council accepts, generally, the commercial case put forward, by the Post Office, but has some concerns about the effects on the community.

These are:-

[a.] The difficulty that some residents would face crossing the busy A520 main road to get to the newsagents.

[b.] The increased traffic in and out of the car park at the newsagents on the A520 cross roads.

By the time that this newsletter reaches you, the Post Office should have made their decision whether to make the move or not.

Dog Bins on “Smith’s Alley”

At the time of writing we are awaiting the placing of a bin at each end of the alley, by request, so that there should be no excuse for what is a particularly bad area for dog fouling!
Parking in Hilderstone Road

Presently, at times, there is a problem caused to traffic and pedestrians because of inconsiderate parking in the area outside the shops and cottages opposite Windmill Inn.

The Council is, therefore, asking the SCC Highways Department to study the problem and make recommendations to improve the situation.

We will, of course, consider their findings and report back to you accordingly.

Recent Improvements in the Area

Hilderstone Road

Some patching of the road surface was done in late January. Although the work had to be suspended due to gritting requirements, the surface has been improved between Golborn Avenue and the Blacklake crossroads.

The footpath off Hilderstone Road leading through the fields towards Knenhall, and Rough Close, has been resurfaced, the hedge has been cut back where necessary, and the stream alongside has been cleared, giving walkers a much more pleasant start (or end) to their journey.

Two waste bins have been provided along the road at the request of members of the public, one at Woodlands Close, the other nearer to Golborn Ave. They are now being well used, and dog walkers can drop their waste bags in them and not have to wait until they arrive home.

Blacklake Drive

After a long wait, the flooding problem on Blacklake Drive has been attended to. The job took two weeks to complete as it involved deep digging and the installation of special concrete guttering to alleviate the dip in the surface at that part of the street. All we need now is a heavy rain downfall to judge its effectiveness. Fingers crossed.
Parking

A number of local residents have voiced their concerns to Parish Councillors over parking along Stone Road. As the area is very close to a junction and bollards are present at the top, it is very dangerous to leave vehicles parked there. Please park safely and with consideration for other road users.

Dog walkers

As the winter has progressed it appears that an ever increasing amount of dog mess has appeared on Windmill Hill and West View. We know that most dog walkers are responsible and clean up after their pets; but clearly not all. The amount of mess currently befouling our paths is a disgrace. It is an offence to leave dog waste on public footpaths. Free “poo-bags” can be obtained from the supermarket, the Newsagent and the Parish Office. Really - there is no excuse!

Searching for lost treasure

Holes and bottles have been appearing on Rough Close Common for some weeks now. These appear to be the work of metal detectorists who have unearthed bottle tops in their searches and then, inconsiderately, leave both bottle and hole for people to stumble over. Apart from the issues of littering and the obvious issue of the potential for injury, this practice is illegal on the Common as it is a nature reserve. The Bio-diversity officer for Stafford Borough Council, when consulted on this matter, advised Councillors to report all future incidents and culprits to the police.

Fly tipping

As the weather begins to improve and our minds turn to spring cleaning and home improvements, recent years have shown that the fly-tipper emerges from his slumbers.
A new sign, designed by Meir Heath Primary pupil, Devon Burnett, will be erected on one of the worst hit sites to try to deter offenders. Please take your rubbish to Borough tips or make use of the local visiting amenities. For dates of when these are in our area please either see this publication or call the Parish Clerk. Don’t fly-tip in our village.

Common Event

A Spring Litter Pick Event is to take place on the Common on Sunday 29th March 10am - 12pm. All volunteers are asked to gather on the car park opposite St. Matthew’s Primary School. Wear sturdy footwear and you may also like to don gloves. Litter picking tools will be provided.

These events have proved a lot of fun in the past, with members of the community working together for a couple of hours, walking, talking and enjoying the outdoors while at the same time achieving a shared goal and helping our local environment. Come along and bring the children too.

Common News

New information boards are soon to be sited on both the top and bottom common. These are being provided by funds, obtained by the Parish Clerk, from the Community Footpaths Initiative. The boards will hold pictorial and written information about the flora and fauna of the locality. You may be surprised just how much there is to see out there.
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Report from County Councillor

Please contact me if you need help with any local problems or issues involving the County Council

lan.parry@staffordshire.gov.uk

You can also get latest news by following my Twitter posts

twitter.com/ianparrycc

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
Contact via the Clerk
stephen_beck@btconnect.com
Stafford Borough Walkwise

Free regular walks led by a volunteer walker are available on a regular basis across the Borough (leaflets available at the Parish Office and http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/walkwise-calendar) including a Meir Heath Walk that will take place on the last Friday of every month at 2.00pm, meeting on the Windmill Pub car park. Contact Gareth on 07411592408 for further information.

Learning Something New - A First Step to a Better You!

Stafford and Rural Homes are delighted to introduce the 2015 Community Learning Programme (CLP).

After listening to the results of our Customer Feedback Survey we have developed lots of new and exciting courses for our customers and members of the local community to enjoy, alongside repeating popular sessions from 2014.

This year the programme will follow 6 essential key themes: My Future; Get Qualified; Health and Wellbeing; Getting Money Smart; I’m Online; and Hobbies and Interests.

The wide range of over 75 FREE courses and workshops offer a way to develop new skills, increase employment opportunities, gain recognised qualifications, improve health and wellbeing, increase confidence and make new friends!

The CLP gives community members the opportunity to learn in a relaxed, friendly and informal setting. The wide selection of courses available means that there is something to suit everyone!

If you want to know more please contact the SARH Community Involvement Team on 0800 111 4554 or email cp@sarh.co.uk.

The Meir Heath Windmill Preservation Group

With spring looming the Windmill will be opening its doors once again to the public. The World War Memorabilia will be on display and more artefacts have been added to this including some Trench Art (very interesting).

Well worth coming along and having a look. Future events for raising funds for the Windmill are – A Race Night and plans are in place for a 40s themed evening which will include 40s themed fancy dress, music and food. For updates on future events, times of opening and general information please visit and like our Facebook page The Meir Heath Windmill Preservation Group. Gareth Brunt the Preservation Groups project leader can be contacted on 07411592408.
St Francis Church
Celebrating 75 years
at the heart of the community

St Francis Church, Meir Heath is celebrating 75 years at the heart of the local community with a series of exciting activities and events throughout the year. The whole community can get involved and celebrate local heritage. The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded the church a grant of £9,900 to trace and share local history: mining, ceramics, WWII aerodrome, shopping, fashion, games, transport, and more.

Churchwarden Arthur Barnard said, “We are delighted to have received a grant from The Heritage Lottery Fund. The St Francis Church’s Bid was up against stiff competition, but we met the goals of community engagement, sharing heritage and having a lasting impact on young and old alike through the professional production of a video based on memories from local residents. St Francis Church was originally established as the ‘Children’s Church’, so our activities and events will provide plenty of fun for children”.

Highlights of the year-long celebration will include a specially written and produced war time drama, “Stoke, Smoke and Sandbags” by member of the congregation Shelley Brooker and starring local people, young and old. The Community Weekend in July will feature heritage games, toys and vehicles alongside a ‘through the decades’ flower festival.

Arthur Barnard added, “More mature members of the community will have plenty to interest them too, with a series of talks, visits to the National Mining Museum, Imperial War Museum, concerts and themed suppers to name but a few of the activities planned”. There is also a special touring exhibition of the Turin Shroud along with special family services.

Vicar Father David McHardy is particularly excited about the anniversary. “This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the history of our local community and the role of St Francis over the years. I look forward to welcoming as many people as possible to participate, learn more about the local area and its heritage, find peace and fellowship and enjoy the fun with drama, concerts, trips and a host of other activities”.

For full details of events:

- Check the website www.mhandn.org
- Call the Parish Office: 01782 393189

101 for Non-emergency Police Calls

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.

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.

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

111 for medical help fast

NHS 111 is the service introduced to make it easier for you to access local NHS healthcare services. You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it’s not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it’s not a life-threatening situation. 111 will get you through to a team of highly-trained advisers, who are supported by experienced nurses. They will assess your symptoms and guide you to the right local service.

Mental Health

Mental health is about how we think, feel and behave and problems can affect anyone. Without support and treatment, mental health problems can have a serious effect on the individual and those around them. It can impact on your daily life, relationships and even physical health.

Mental health problems take many different forms. Schizophrenia, depression and personality disorders are all types of mental health problems.

We all need some emotional support at times, for example during the breakdown of a relationship or after the death of a loved one. However help is at hand and there are plenty of places to go to get advice, support and information.

Any adult who appears to need local authority social care services is entitled to have an assessment of their needs.

You should access primary mental health services through your GP. In cases where an individual has high levels of risk and particularly complex needs, they may be referred to one of the Community Mental Health Teams for assessment, treatment or support. There are teams across Staffordshire made up of a mix of workers including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, community psychiatric
nurses, occupational therapists and support workers.

If you want to call someone about how you feel or how you deal with someone else’s behaviour, you could Call 111 as above. Or alternatively:

**The Samaritans** offer a 24-hour confidential telephone helpline on 08457 90 90 90

**Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline** on 0808 800 2234

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**Blue Bin Recycling Service**

In the Inner Caddy: Newspapers, magazines, brochures, catalogues, junk mail, yellow pages, shredded paper.

In the Bin: Cardboard (flattened); Aerosols - e.g. shaving gel, polish, deodorant; Plastic bags - must be empty; Wrappers - food, cellophane and clingfilm; Foil - food trays and tin foil; Cans - food and drink; Glass - bottles and jars; Plastic bottles – e.g. milk, soft drink, yoghurt pots, margarine tubes and household cleaning fluid bottles - shampoo, bleach etc; Waxed cartons - food and drink [Tetra Pak] e.g. juice, soup and milk cartons.

All items must be clean, empty and have the tops removed.

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.

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**Townswomen’s 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.

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**Finance and General Purposes Committee**

Cllrs. Mrs. Brayford, Colclough, Holmes, Mrs. Jennings, Lovatt, Shaw, Taylor & Mrs. Wheat, Chairman and Vice-Chairman ex-officio

**Planning Committee**

Cllrs. Mrs. Brayford, Colclough, Evans, Mrs. Jennings, Lovatt, Mrs. McPherson, Mycock, Miss Noblett, Shaw, Chairman and Vice-Chairman ex-officio

**Representatives to Outside Bodies**

Portland School & Specialist College (formerly Aynsley Special School)
Governor: Cllr. Mrs. Brayford

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

**Fulford Village Hall:**
Cllr. Tony Holmes
Meir Heath Primary School Governor:  
Cllr. Mrs. Jennings

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

Staffordshire County Council -  
Stone Rural Councillor:  
Ian Parry 01785 279015

Stafford Borough Council  
Fulford Ward Councillors:  
Michael Dodson 01782 399855  
Tony Holmes 01782 395250  
Peter Roycroft 01889 505240

Dates for 2015 Parish Council Meetings

Thursday 9th April  
Meir Heath & Rough Close Village Hall

Thursday 14th May  
Fulford Village Hall

Thursday 11th June  
Meir Heath & Rough Close Village Hall

Note: All meetings start at 7.15 pm 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 allowed to join the debate. Alternatively, write to the Clerk such that the matter can be raised.

Civic Amenity Visits:

A REFUSE LORRY will next be available on a Saturday morning for the collection of household items in the spring at Fulford Village Hall; Mayfield Drive, Blythe Bridge; Common Lane, Rough Close; and additionally a visit to Stallington. Check the noticeboards and/or the website for the dates.

Household Recycling Centres

At recycling centres in Staffordshire there are facilities to recycle paper, magazines, telephone directories, cardboard, glass bottles and jars, cans, plastic bottles, waxed cartons cooking oil, 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 the new 101 number service (replaces the 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 and PCSO 8849 Becky Powell. You can speak to your local officer by calling them direct on 0300 123 2345. Follow the simple instructions and enter the officer’s personal collar number. Or call 101 and speak to the operator.

Call Crimestoppers -
Telephone 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.

Staffordshire County Council
General Enquiries Tel: 0300 111 8000
This phone number is charged at local rate.
http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/

Highways Hotline
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 or on-line via http://apps.staffordshire.gov.uk/reportfault/

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

Stafford Borough Council
Customer Contact Centre
Open 8.30 am - 5.00 pm
Monday - Friday
Tel: (01785) 619000
or http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk

Planning queries
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