

Benches



One of our Councillors has suggested it would be nice to have some more benches around the parish. If you have any suggestions on where a bench might be placed please contact our Clerk (see below) and let us know. Please bear in mind that we are not able to put benches on footpaths so please think about verges, etc where it would be useful to be able to have a rest.

Hollybush Coppice

You may be aware of our small areas of woodland next to Hollybush Playing Fields, known as Hollybush Coppice. We are currently working with Berkswich Primary School on a potential grant application which would allow the school to access the larger area much more easily and encourage native species within the coppice.

Chair—Cllr Alan Taylor

01785 664473
Village Gardens

Vice-Chair—Cllr Caroline Pearson

01785 661113
Village Gardens

Cllr Vicky Campbell

01785 600411
Village Gardens

Cllr Sue Francis

01785 665490
Main Road

Cllr Bob Gilson

01785 660010
Porlock Avenue

Cllr Beverley Hughes

01785 663358
Old Croft Road

Cllr Tim Luker

07960 043412
The Rise

Cllr Ann Millichap

01785 664036
Village Gardens

Cllr Malcolm Millichap

01785 664036
Village Gardens

Cllr Michael Norris

01785 662263
Honeysuckle Rise

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

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Cllr John Francis
01785 665490

Stafford Borough Councillor

Cllr Peter Edgeller
07803 276431



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Berkswich Parish Council NEWSLETTER

Christmas 2023



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Welcome to our newsletter for Christmas 2023. Over the Summer we have had our phone box and some of our noticeboards refurbished. We objected to the planning application for dwellings on land off Old Croft Road and many members of the public attended our meeting on 10 October to share their own objections.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our residents a **Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year 2024.**

Walton Coppice

We have been busy over the Summer and into Autumn working on a grant application for more improvements at Walton Coppice. Our plan is to thin out some of the trees closer to the houses on Bluebell Hollow and plant more native trees in open areas. While a tree surgeon will deal with the larger trees, we will be seeking volunteers to help remove smaller trees and do the planting. We are also planning to plant a hedgerow around the smaller section of the Coppice following the planting around the larger section earlier this year. If anyone would like to volunteer to help with this project or knows of any groups who would like to be involved please contact our Clerk using the contact details on the last page.

Precept for 2024/25

Over the last few years Berkswich Parish Council's Earmarked Funds (money saved for specific purposes) have been decreasing because we have resisted the option to increase the precept while increasing expenditure on maintenance and enhancing local amenities. The Council needs to increase the precept for financial year 2024/25 to ensure financial resilience. This will bring us more in line with other Local Councils of a similar size. A final decision on the uplift will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 2 January 2023. The current recommendation is for an increase of £16.15 pa for Band D properties (equivalent to 40p per week over the 10-month Council tax period). It is hoped that in future years the precept will only need to increase in line with inflation whilst building funds annually for example for the replacement of play equipment at Hollybush Playing Fields. Holding sufficient reserves will also protect the Council from facing financial challenges in the future.

Garden Hedges

Many homes in the Parish have hedges and whilst many are well maintained, we receive complaints about others because they encroach onto footpaths and roads. Could we ask that everyone keeps their hedge within their own property boundary and to cut it back if necessary for the safety of everyone please. In particular wheelchair users and people with prams and push-chairs can struggle to get past overgrown hedges. Please be considerate of other people needing to use the footpaths and roads.

Parish Events

The Council would like to be involved in more Parish events to bring our community together. Have you noticed events in other Parishes that you would like to see here? A scarecrow competition has been suggested, can you think of anything else? We are hoping to hold an event for the D-Day 80th Anniversary next June - what sort of event would you like it to be? An afternoon tea? An indoor family event which can't be spoilt by the weather? Please let us know your thoughts by contacting our Clerk using the contact details on the back page.



Council Services - Who Does What?

Services in the parish are managed by three Councils: Berkswich Parish Council at a local level; Stafford Borough Council; and Staffordshire County Council. The main services for each can be found below.

Berkswich Parish Council

- Maintenance of the Parish area including cutting grass verges, footpaths and hedges;
- Ownership and maintenance of Walton and Hollybush Coppices;
- Ownership and maintenance of the War Memorial at Weeping Cross;
- Ownership and maintenance of Hollybush Playing Fields including the play equipment;
- Community events—we hope to organise an event for the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings in June 2024;
- Commenting on planning applications affecting the Parish as consultees;
- Ownership and maintenance of the telephone box book exchange on Milford Road;
- Ownership and maintenance of two speed indication devices.

Stafford Borough Council

- Planning applications and advice;
- Household waste and recycling bin emptying;
- Manage most local parks and play areas including Victoria Park;
- Street cleansing including public waste bin emptying;
- Housing including council houses and housing benefit;
- Environmental Health;
- Manage elections and voting in the Borough.

Staffordshire County Council

- Care for children and vulnerable adults;
- Education including schools and adult learning;
- Environment such as Cannock Chase AONB;
- Highways including potholes and road closures;
- Libraries;
- Registration of births, deaths and marriages;
- Heritage and archives.