

# WHIXALL PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Issue no. 14

Autumn/ Winter 2016



A parish council can play a vital part in representing the community that it serves. Your council has nine members, all of whom are residents of Whixall, they meet at least ten times during the year. As members of the public you are very welcome to attend those meetings. There is an opportunity for **open debate on parish matters at the Annual Parish meeting which will be held in May** but you can raise matters with the Parish Council at any time of the year. If you would like more information about the Parish Council or are interested in standing for election in May 2017 please contact the Clerk or visit the website at [www.whixallparish.org.uk](http://www.whixallparish.org.uk)

## Chairman's Report

Hello,

So much has happened since the last newsletter and there are events on the horizon.

Whixall managed to get on the BBC regional news with the launch of the Meres and Mosses campaign to return the "scrap yard" back to moss and to provide a visitor centre. Now that ownership of the fields on Moss Lane has been acquired works have commenced to clear the drainage ditches. Shropshire Council is pursuing the owners of the rest of the drainage network to ensure the whole system is working correctly. This has taken a long time but hopefully we will see results this year.

The social centre is continuing to provide a pub, albeit on an ad hoc basis and I would like to thank all for their time and effort.

This year Remembrance Sunday falls on the 13<sup>th</sup> November and the service will be at Welsh End Chapel, at 10:45am, followed by laying of the wreath at the war memorial. All are invited to attend and it would be great to see you there. I would like to thank Mr Rob Cadman of Cadstones for his help in replenishing the gravel around the memorial.

Moving on to December we have the ever popular senior citizens' Christmas party on 2<sup>nd</sup> December at the social centre. This year we are asking everyone to let us know if they are attending as last year was so popular we almost ran out of tables, chairs and food.

Finally the current parish council finishes its 4 year stint in May 2017 and there will be local elections. I would like to thank the current councillors, and those who have recently left, for all their hard work and time in trying to represent the best interests of Whixall.

*Chairman Cllr Ian Mercer*



**Whixall Parish Council invites all Senior Citizens of Whixall to come along to this year's**

## **SENIOR CITIZENS' CHRISTMAS PARTY**

*Eve Whitmore is back to get us into the festive spirit on*

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2016**

**6:30 for 7:00pm at**

**THE SOCIAL CENTRE, WHIXALL**

Whixall Primary School children will kick start the evening with carols and festive songs and then enjoy supper, a Christmas tippie and a good old sing-along, all for free!

**It was a brilliant turn out last year and we were close to capacity, so this year we ask that you contact our clerk, Katie, if you intend to come along, or just tell your local councillor- it would help tremendously.**

As always, we are happy to assist with transport.  
Many thanks. See you there!

Telephone Katie on 01948 880851 or email: [clerk.whixallpc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clerk.whixallpc@hotmail.co.uk)

## *Get your COMMUNITY NEWS*

This 'almost monthly magazine' is delivered to your door and tells you what's on in Whixall and surrounding areas; it also advertises local businesses and services and has contact details for councillors, village halls, clubs and churches.

Price: 70p per single issue; £7.00 per year

To subscribe or advertise contact Madeline Harris: 01948 880494 Email: [mad@madstevieharris.co.uk](mailto:mad@madstevieharris.co.uk)

## The Big Conversation...

In response to the financial pressures facing it, Shropshire Council has been exploring ways of delivering services and transferring assets to be operated at a more local level - principally by Parish & Town Councils.

This process is not without its challenges as in most instances it results in the costs falling solely on the particular local community and if we are honest will result in local people (principally in the towns) paying more in Council Tax.

On the positive side, of course if a particular service or facility is valued by a community - it is saved. It gives local control and a say on how and to what extent a service is provided. It can also enable the costs of a service or facility to be reviewed to see if they can be reduced.

The services being talked of through this process are local services such as libraries, leisure centres, swimming pools, local play facilities and open spaces. Principally these are based in the market towns of the county such as Wem and Whitchurch. In the context of Wem, public toilets and local play facilities are already operated by the Town Council and both the swimming pool and Town Hall are successfully operated by local community based Trusts - though they are supported financially by the Town Council. The main discussion in Wem therefore is around the future of Wem library. Obviously residents from Whixall may use these local facilities based in Wem so how will you be affected?

At this stage, residents will continue to benefit from these services irrespective of who provides them. Whether at some future date the Parish Council will be asked to contribute to the cost of running these services remains to be seen.

Decisions by local communities on whether to operate any of these local facilities need to be made by September 2017 with transfer actually taking place from April 2018. There are a lot of discussions to take place and whilst a local service maybe valued by the community it is all going to depend on how much it will cost, what are the liabilities and what will be the impact on local Council Taxpayers!

### Clerk to Parish Council

Katie Hatton: [clerk.whixallpc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clerk.whixallpc@hotmail.co.uk)

### Shropshire Councillors

Pauline Dee and Chris Mellings:

[pauline.dee@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.dee@shropshire.gov.uk)

[chris.mellings@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.mellings@shropshire.gov.uk)

[www.whixallparish.org.uk](http://www.whixallparish.org.uk)



Would you like to be more involved in looking after some of our special wildlife sites and preserving them for the future enjoyment of the community and our visitors?

There is a little gem of a wildlife site at the Whixall Marl Allotment ("The Marlot"), which has a mixture of wildflower meadows, woodland and small ponds. Its location between the canal and the Mosses Nature Reserve (at Roundthorn Bridge) helps to attract a wide variety of wildlife species. Dragonflies and damselflies, butterflies and moths, birds, small mammals and amphibians, wildflowers, grasses, sedges and reeds – it has the lot, some of which are rare.

The Marlot is common land and in the past has suffered from people dumping all kinds of rubbish. Whixall Parish Council has taken ownership of the site and has been working closely with specialist advisers, task groups and teams of volunteers to restore the area and to gain Local Wildlife Site status. Careful management is needed to ensure that the wildlife continues to thrive.

Currently, a very small band of local people has formed the Marlot Conservation Group and is striving to maintain the site for the benefit of the wildlife and the enjoyment of those who wish to visit it for its peace and tranquillity.

We need more people to help our ageing team of volunteers. Enthusiasm is the key asset, but if you also have practical skills or knowledge to assist with habitat management, then we would love to hear from you. There may also be practical training opportunities for those who want to get involved.

If you think that you may be able to help or have any questions about the Marlot, please contact the parish clerk in the first instance – Katie Hatton, contact details are overleaf.

*Many thanks.*

## Shropshire Wildlife Trust comes to Moss Lane.

Most of you will now be well aware of the 'Restoring the Marches Mosses' project, part of the Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership Scheme which has seen a wide variety of events and activities taking place since 2013 with the aim of engaging communities and encouraging people to access this area of countryside. Particularly relevant to Whixall is Shropshire Wildlife Trust's purchase of the old scrap yard and fields in Moss lane. Shropshire Wildlife Trust is awaiting a decision from Shropshire Council on their outline application for new visitor facilities including cafe facilities, to serve boaters and birdwatchers, retail area, WCs, a 10m-high viewing tower, boardwalk access, playscape and 40 space car park at Furber's former breakers yard, Roving Bridge. The Trust has been granted permission for an outline application for the erection of a wooden bird hide and formation of a car park (all matters reserved) at land to the east of Roving Bridge. The details of these applications can be viewed by anyone at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk) and more information can easily be found online about the general area and specific projects. Visit Shropshire Wildlife Trust's website or search 'Shropshire Scrapyard Challenge' for information about the scrap yard project.

### ££ Financial Report ££

A breakdown of income and expenditure for the year ending 2015/16 (rounded up to nearest £) is detailed below. All financial information is available on the website.

Income	£
Precept (from Council Tax)	6,500
VAT Claim (back dated 3 yrs)	592
Donations (towards Senior Citizen's party)	75
Interest/rent	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 7,171</b>

Expenditure	£
Staff Costs	3,503
Donations (to local services)	850
Grounds Maintenance	804
Administration	709
Senior Citizens' Xmas Party	460
Subscriptions	325
Insurance	160
Training	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 6,911</b>

*The Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) for the council.*

### Flooding Update

As referred to in the Chairman's report, Shropshire Council has sent out all relevant notices to land owners who have a responsibility to maintain clear ditches. A lot of these land owners have responded and meetings are taking place to discuss the extents of works that are required which is really positive.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust has contracted the clearance of the ditches which they now own at Moss Lane which was the area of most concern.

Hopefully we will see water being able to drain away more effectively this year and the properties in Moss Lane will not be under threat of flooding.

## North Salop Wheelers The Community Bus

We can get you to or from Whitchurch, Wem, Market Drayton, Princess Royal Hospital, Wellington and Woore. You do need to book your seat, so please book yours early to avoid disappointment. You can also book to be dropped off for connections via National rail and bus services. **Buses leave our Whixall base daily.**

Go to [www.northsalopwheelers.co.uk](http://www.northsalopwheelers.co.uk) or ring 01948 880037 for more information.

North Salop Wheelers is a voluntary organisation supported by local fundraising and by donations from town and parish councils, including Whixall Parish Council. **We are always on the lookout for volunteer drivers so if you can spare just a few hours now and then you could help us to provide this vital service.**