

Brocton Paper Chase

Issue 70

February 2024

Invitation

Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday, 24 April 2024 at Brocton Village Hall, at
7.30pm

Why not come along and hear what is happening within your village, we hope to be joined by representatives from Shugborough and Community Speed Watch.

It's an opportunity to meet your Parish Councillors, hear what our speakers have to say and enjoy a cake and a drink (non-alcoholic).

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Paper Chase, which we hope you will enjoy reading.

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Parish Council Update

Parish Precept. During November, December 2023 and January 2024, the Parish Councillors considered the budget for the financial year 2024/25. The Councillors were keen to keep any increase to the Parish Precept as low as possible, however, they recognised the need to maintain a balanced budget, meet increased costs and deliver improvements within the Parish. Therefore, the Councillors made the decision to proceed with an increase to the Precept request for 2024/25, which will mean an increase of £1.34 per annum from last year, based upon an average Band D property.

The Council is planning to improve the fencing in the Parish play park; host community events throughout 2024/25 for the enjoyment of residents and replace the Parish Notice Board on Pool Lane. As advised in the September 2023 edition of the Paper Chase, the Council is developing a Project Plan to fund future improvements to the play park – see page 6 for more details.

Parish Council meeting dates for 2024/25. The following meeting dates have been agreed for the year 2024/25:

Date	Details	Date	Details
3.4.2024	Parish Council meeting	24.4.2024	Annual Parish meeting **
1.5.2024	Annual Council Meeting, followed by Parish Council meeting	5.6.2024	Parish Council meeting
3.7.2024	Parish Council meeting	AUGUST	No meeting
4.9.2024	Parish Council meeting	2.10.2024	Parish Council meeting
6.11.2024	Parish Council meeting	4.12.2024	Parish Council meeting
JANUARY 2025	No meeting arranged	5.2.2025	Parish Council meeting
5.3.2025	Parish Council meeting		

****** The Annual Parish meeting is a meeting that the Parish Council holds for its parishioners and we'd be delighted if you were able to come along – **see Invite on front cover.**

Parish Community News

Civic Amenity Visits (Bin lorry). The dates for the bin lorry visits for 2024 have now been confirmed with Stafford Borough Council and these are shown below. The lorry will park in the layby at the top of Chase Road from 9.00am – 10.00am.

2 March 2024; 18 May 2024; 20 July 2024 and 12 October 2024

Dates for 2025 will be agreed towards the end of this year.

Please don't forget: Stafford Borough Council wish all residents using the bin lorry service to be aware of the following: due to a change in legislation, we will no longer be able to accept sofas or armchairs at the 2024 Civic Amenity Visits. This is due to legislation around Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) which are found in soft furnishings, these items cannot be crushed (as they would be in the collection vehicle) and need to be collected separately either by arrangement with Stafford Borough Council or taken to designated containers at the Household Waste Recycling Centres in Stafford and Stone.

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YOGA classes – please don't forget Yoga in the Village Hall, classes are suitable for all abilities and are on Tuesdays, from 10.30am – 12 noon. The friendly class always welcomes new members, on a 'drop in' basis.

For more details, please contact Diane Ralphs – British Wheel of Yoga Teacher
DIP/PRANAYAMA DIP/BWY MEDITATION DIP. Email: diane.ralphs108@gmail.com
Tel. 01785 660417 / text only mobile 07709 613107

Kitchen Table Art Workshop – these are being offered in the village by a resident and have been running since 1 September 2022 for people in the local community who are interested in learning how to paint. The workshops are led by a qualified artist, who gained a First-Class Honours Degree in Surface Pattern Design from Staffordshire University in 2013, which is an art and design-based degree. She also has a Distinction for HND in Illustration completed at Stafford College in 2002. The workshops are home based in Brocton, around her large kitchen table, hence the name.

Each workshop is for a maximum of 8 people per session, each session has a different theme, and is a step-by-step process to make it easy to follow. All materials are

provided as well as refreshments and cake. The cost of each workshop is £20 payable on the day by cash or bank transfer. Each session lasts for 2.5 hours.

Anyone interested in joining can email Gaynor on gaynorcj@gmail.com details will be provided about availability and dates of the upcoming sessions. She also takes group bookings.

So far, some great feedback has been received: sessions bring people together; atmosphere is relaxing, fun, warm and cosy.

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Litter Pick – October 2023



Thank you to everyone who turned up to support the Parish Litter Pick that took place on Sunday, 8 October 2023. Sadly, another 17 bags of rubbish were collected, which was exactly the same number of bags collected 4 months earlier!!

A quick look back at Halloween and Christmas 2023 in Brocton



Halloween event – 29 October 2023



Halloween 2023 in Brocton, was another well supported event in the village.

Christmas and Carol Singing – 2 December 2023



How fabulous was it to have Santa visit the village – we do hope all the children enjoyed seeing him!!



Such a fabulous turnout!!



We were also privileged to be joined by the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr & Mrs Cooper

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Play Park – Sawpit Lane.

During the Autumn of 2023, the Chairman worked hard to refurbish the football goal posts. This work has now been completed, a new net has been added and it is looking good.

The Cllrs are committed to improving the play park for the benefit of all.

As we are currently looking to develop a 10-year plan to update the park, we are interested to hear from residents about what ideas you have to improve the park. Please let us have your thoughts and ideas, email our Cllr Emma Fauch, emmabroctonparishcouncil@gmail.com

Future Parish Community Events

Will you support Brocton in Bloom - 2024?

Cllr Andrea Pugh wants to say 'Thank You' to all of those who have shown an interest in our Brocton in Bloom initiative. It's great that so many of you have come forward and we are sure, that between us, we will be able to come up with some great ideas to bring some floral displays to the village – which hopefully, the deer won't find too interesting!!

The first meeting of our Brocton in Bloom group was held last Summer with the very enthusiastic attendees coming up with some brilliant ideas about how we can introduce some floral and fauna into the village. Suggestions put forward included developing areas of planting on The Green and the large grass strip parallel to the A34 near Sherbrook Close; organising a plant sale and setting up a gardening club.

The group have already begun to draw up a list of suitable plants that won't be attractive to our resident deer population and we are also seeking advice from neighbouring Parishes who have very successful volunteer gardening groups. We are also investigating opportunities for external funding to help us with our purchases.

Planting has already taken place on The Green and the group will be meeting again in the next few weeks to agree next steps. If you are interested in joining us, you are more than welcome, please contact Andrea via email, andreabroctonparishcouncil@gmail.com; you can commit as much or as little time as you are able but the more volunteers we have, the bigger the difference we will be able to make.

Easter Fun activities

The Annual Parish Easter trail will be taking place over **27 – 30 March** and the trail can be completed any time during these dates. To register your interest in joining in please email the Parish Clerk, clerk@brocton.staffslc.gov.uk, providing your name and address. Easter Bunny will be in the play park (Sawpit Lane) on Saturday, 30 March, from 9.30am.

There will be the chance of winning an Easter Egg hamper!! The hamper has been very kindly donated by John German.

So, get registering asap, details must be received by no later than Friday, 15 March 2024.

D-Day 80th Anniversary

The Parish Council is delighted to say that we will be celebrating this special Anniversary in the village, in a joint venture with the Village Hall. Activities are currently being planned and will be taking place on **Saturday, 8 June 2024**. So, watch out for more details, which will be published around the village, on Facebook and on the website.

We'd love to welcome as many residents as possible to enjoy these celebrations with us.

Halloween 2024

This is rapidly becoming a tradition in the village, which is great. This year, we will be celebrating this occasion on **Sunday, 27 October 2024**. Why not join in and let's see the village lit up for the last week of October?? Save the date in your calendars. More details will follow.

***Christmas 2024 – it's never too early to be thinking about Christmas!!!**

Due to success of our Carol Singing event in 2023, we will be hosting this again, on the Village Green.

***Father Christmas** – rumour has it that he enjoyed his visit so much last year, that he wants to come again. So, we will be doing our best to secure a visit from the man himself.

***Dates to be confirmed, details will be included in a future edition of the Paper Chase**

All residents are welcome to come along and join in with the Christmas spirit. We are still planning this event and hope to invite everyone to come along to the village hall to enjoy some sweet treats, courtesy of the Parsh Council, after the singing.

We hope to see you there.

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Brocton Village Hall

Brocton Village Hall Committee wishes residents a very Happy New Year!

Below are details of the current planned events for the year. Further details will follow on Facebook and using posters in the village (please note: dates and events are subject to change).

Why not pop the dates below in your diary now or pull out this page of the Paper Chase and keep it safe!

- **16 February – Quiz.** 7pm for a 7.30pm start. Get a team together to test your knowledge and enjoy supporting Brocton Village Hall! A light supper is provided and the bar will be open. £20 for a team of 4 and forms are available from Brocton Post Office or by emailing info@broctonvillagehall.org.uk
- **24 February** - Afternoon Tea and Glass Fusing
- **23 March** – Easter Bingo
- **27 April** – Rummage Sale
- **25 May** – Silent Disco - TBC
- **8 June** – D Day Celebration - TBC
- **27 July** – BBQ
- **14 September** – Last Night of the Proms
- **21 September** – Rummage Sale
- **12 October** – Quiz
- **16 November** – Christmas Bazaar
- **7 December** – Christmas Meal

The Committee are hoping to set up a Friends of Brocton Village Hall group who are able to support the Committee with the running of events and maintaining the Village Hall. If you would be interested in joining (there is no requirement to attend meetings or become a Trustee) then please email info@broctonvillagehall.org.uk

The Hall is also available to hire for private functions and can be used for meetings, lectures, classes etc. Please contact 01785 662868 or email info@broctonvillagehall.org.uk for further information on booking the Hall or on any of the events.

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Information from Staffordshire County Council

Staffordshire's roads will be getting a welcome funding boost over the next few years.

Highways bosses at Staffordshire County Council have welcomed a government announcement that £8.3 billion will be invested into England's roads over the next 11 years. A total of £2.2 billion will be invested in the West and East Midlands alone, with more than £186 million coming to Staffordshire over the 11-year period.

The funding is part of the Government's Network North plan to spend the money saved by cancelling HS2 north of Birmingham.

An initial £3.188 million has been made available in-year, which is in addition to the £20 million the authority has already invested in the repair and maintenance of highways over the past 12 months. With more than 6,000km of roads, the county council has undertaken a comprehensive programme of repair and resurfacing.

This latest fund will be allocated to maintaining, repairing and improving the county's roads.

More than 16,000 pothole repair jobs have been completed this year so far.

A 'job' is, on average, two or three potholes at a time – meaning the number of potholes filled across the county is likely to be double or even triple that figure. In 2022, Staffordshire Highways filled 16,039 carriageway potholes, significantly exceeding the national Local Authority average of 11,229. With 16,308 already completed so far, this year has already seen crews surpass their 2022 total.



2023 has also seen the county council invest in groundbreaking AI technology that identifies and categorises potholes as well as innovative machinery, like the JCB Pothole Pro, to repair defects. Two million pounds from the pothole fund has enabled county councillors to prioritise non-urgent nuisance potholes reported locally.

Residents can report potholes on the county council's website, using the 'Report It' function. Repairs are then prioritised depending on the severity and dangerousness of the defect.

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Information from Stafford Borough Council:

Litter louts to be hit in pocket as fines more than double for fly tipping in Stafford.

Councillors are looking to impose £1,000 fines for those dumping rubbish illegally in Stafford Borough.

Nationally, fly-tipping has been on the rise and the cost to the Borough – and its residents – of clearing it up was around £30,000 last year. As part of its Anti-social Behaviour Actions Plan, the Government wants Councils to take a tougher approach to environmental crimes and has set out new upper limits for FPN's. it means that:

- Fly Tipping FPN's increase from £400 to £1,000
- Litter and Graffiti FPN's will rise from £100 to £500
- Breach of Household Waste duty of care penalties go from £200 to £600

Many offenders claim to have paid a 'white van man' to get rid of their rubbish. But the Borough Council say residents should only use registered waste carriers or could find themselves facing punishment if rubbish is discarded illegally.

People should check credentials of those offering to take rubbish

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>

and ask where they are going to dispose of the waste and always get a receipt.

To contact the Council in confidence email: grimewatch@staffordbc.gov.uk

or call 01785 619000. There is a dedicated webpage www.staffordbc.gov.uk/grimewatch

to highlight some illegal rubbish dumps and how residents can get in touch with information.

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General Information

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty renamed National Landscapes

On 22 November 2023, all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales become known as National Landscapes, including Cannock Chase. The new name reflects their national importance; the vital contribution they make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis, whilst also creating greater understanding and awareness for the work that they do.

This is a significant milestone for the UK and the next step in fully realising the National Landscapes' vision to be the leading exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for nature in the UK: restoring ecosystems, providing food, storing carbon to mitigate the effects of climate change, safeguarding against drought and flooding, whilst also nurturing people's health and wellbeing.

National Landscape teams have been at the forefront of delivering natural solutions to the main challenges facing the nation for many years. The new brand underscores commitment to redoubling efforts and engaging with a wider audience. In 2019, teams set themselves the most ambitious targets for nature in the sector and continue to work to meet them.

Become an AONB Advisor

Could you make a difference to one of England's finest landscapes? The Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership is looking to invite new advisors to its governing body – the Joint Committee.

As a non-voting partner, your voluntary role will be to advise and influence policies and actions to ensure that the natural beauty of Cannock Chase is conserved and enhanced, and that the designated landscape continues to benefit local residents, businesses and visitors.

We want to be a more diverse and inclusive partnership. We are keen to hear from individuals or organisations who feel that they can represent and speak for a range of people in different sectors and interests in the area including black and ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ groups, young people and education, the arts, health and wellbeing, climate change. For more details visit: <https://www.cannock-chase.co.uk> or email ian.marshall@staffordshire.gov.uk to express your interest.

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Advance Notice of Cycling Event – Glorious Gravel, 16 and 17 March 2024

2024 Glorious Gravel Cannock cycle ride is scheduled to take place on Saturday, 16 and Sunday, 17 March and is a repeat of the event that took place in 2022 and 2023. We have been advised that the route being used this year will be different and will be a mixed terrain ride using a combination of public roads, byways and bridleways in the local area where cycling is permitted. No road closures or restrictions on access for other users are being requested as part of this event. Visit the Parish Council website where you will find a map of the route for this event, in the News section, <https://broctonpc.co.uk>

For more details you can also contact Dan Millar, dan@gloriousgravel.com

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What's On in Libraries this February in the Cannock Chase area

Cannock Library's Warm Welcome this Winter

Join us at Cannock Library this Winter, for extra coffee mornings and afternoon tea. We have board games, dominoes, cards, mindfulness colouring books and jigsaws, so come along with friends and family or pop in and make new friends. We can also point you in the direction of other activities and chances to meet new people in the area, just ask.

Coffee mornings/afternoon tea:

- Every Tuesday 2pm-4pm
- Every Thursday 2pm – 4pm
- Every Friday between 10am and 12 Noon.

Monthly craft sessions (January-March) – learn something new, have fun, meet new people.

Our February craft session will be a candle decorating craft on Friday 23rd February 10-11am– It is a FREE drop-in. Ask at the library for details.

These additional activities have been made possible by Know Your Neighbourhood funding – look out for more information on this scheme, including volunteering opportunities with libraries soon.

Contact us on 01543 334525 or email cannock.library@staffordshire.gov.uk for more information.

Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation displays at Brereton Community Library and Hednesford Community Library this Winter.

Why not pop along to Cannock or Rugeley this February and March and explore the latest information from the organisation. There are also puzzle booklets and stickers

Kinga Niedzinska, Cannock Chase SAC Engagement Officer says:

“ The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Partnership is excited to share the new information material with the community. The materials include information about protecting Cannock Chase and help us to engage with the public.”

Available to view during normal open hours.

There is always a warm welcome at Staffordshire Libraries

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Trying to keep warm this winter? Don't make cuts to fire safety.

Advice from Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service: We are urging residents across Staffordshire to Be Warm, Be Safe this New Year, as low temperatures and high heating costs continue across the county. As the cost-of-living increases, so too does the need to heat your home cheaply. However, this can bring with it some serious dangers. And with more people looking for low-cost, unsafe ways to heat their homes this winter comes an increased likelihood of accidental house fires.

Follow these top tips to make sure you are staying warm safely and not putting your safety, or that of others at risk:

- Get chimneys swept and use a fireguard
- Keep heaters a safe distance away from other items and materials
- Store fuel, such as logs, away from the heat source
- Use appropriate fuel on open fires/in log burners. Look for the Woodsure “Ready to Burn” logo.
- Camping stoves, BBQs and outdoor heaters should only be used outdoors
- Keep a safe distance from heaters and open fires
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors
- Candles are a big fire risk, LED candles are much safer, or use a torch
- Electric heaters should be plugged into a wall socket – do not use extension leads as they can easily be overloaded and cause a fire
- Run dishwashers, washers and tumble dryers when you are awake, they can cause fires and at night you'll have less time to react and escape

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Who do I call if there is a power cut? If you need to speak in an emergency, perhaps because you are experiencing a loss of power supply, you will now need to contact National Grid and you can use the following numbers: 105, from a landline or mobile or 0800 328 1111 from a landline or 0330 123 5008 from a mobile. * calls to 0330 numbers cost no more than a local rate number from a landline or mobile

Should you require any help or assistance with any matter you can contact any of the people below who will be happy to try to help:

Brocton Parish Councillors

Chairman: Cllr Robin Bates
Robin.bates@brocton.staffslc.gov.uk

Vice Chairman: Cllr Bethan Smith
Bethanbroctonparishcouncil@gmail.com

Cllr Emma Faunch
Emmabroctonparishcouncil@gmail.com

Cllr Georgina Thomson
Georginabroctonparishcouncil@gmail.com

Cllr Andrea Pugh
Andreabroctonparishcouncil@gmail.com

Clerk to the Council - Jill Davies,
29 The Crescent, Stafford ST16 1ED
Tel. 01785 598434
Email: clerk@brocton.staffslc.gov.uk

Stafford Borough Council Representative

Cllr Peter Edgeller
0780 3276431
pedgeller@staffordbc.gov.uk

Staffordshire County Council Representative

Cllr John Francis
01785 665490
john.francis@staffordshire.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

Theo Clarke
Tel: 01785 252273
Email: theo.clarke.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.theo-clarke.org.uk

<p>WHO DOES WHAT: There are 3 tiers of Local Government in this area and 3 Local Councils with separate responsibilities, Councillors and budgets. The main services for each authority are:</p>		
<p>Staffordshire County Council:</p> <p>Births, Deaths, Marriages & Civil partnerships Business</p> <p>Advice, Support and care for adults</p> <p>Care for children and families</p> <p>Children and early years</p> <p>Community</p> <p>Education and learning</p> <p>Environment</p> <p>Health, wellbeing and leisure</p> <p>Heritage and Archives</p> <p>Libraries and Arts</p> <p>Roads and Highways (<i>including grass cutting & weeds</i>)</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Telephone: 0300 111 8000 Email: contactus@staffordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Website: www.staffordshire.gov.uk.</p>	<p>Stafford Borough Council:</p> <p>Planning Applications & Advice</p> <p>Recycling, bins and waste</p> <p>Council Tax & Benefits</p> <p>Car Parking Road Closures,</p> <p>Abandoned Vehicles</p> <p>Street cleansing, litter & graffiti</p> <p>Parks, sport & fitness</p> <p>Housing & Neighbourhood complaints</p> <p>Business Rates, Licensing, permits & advice</p> <p>Environmental Health</p> <p>Community Safety</p> <p>Voting & Elections</p> <p>Customer contact: 01785 619000 Email: info@staffordbc.gov.uk</p> <p>Website: www.staffordbc.gov.uk</p>	<p>Brocton Parish Council:</p> <p>Grass cutting – throughout the village and at the Village Play Park on Sawpit Lane</p> <p>Village Play Park – maintained and owned by the Parish Council. Regular inspections of the park supported by volunteers</p> <p>Noticeboards – 3 located at various sites within the village</p> <p>Book Swap – owned and maintained by the Parish Council, with volunteer support</p> <p>Defibrillator – located in the phone kiosk, located at the crossroads with Sawpit Lane and the Cannock Road. Owned and maintained by the Parish Council, with volunteer support</p> <p>Planning – statutory consultee</p> <p>Village Green – owned and maintained by the Parish Council, with volunteer support</p> <p>Bus shelter – located on the main Cannock Road, owned and maintained by the Parish Council</p> <p>Community Speed devices – 2 devices, located along Sawpit and Pool Lane. Owned by the Parish Council with regular battery changing carried out by volunteers</p> <p>Community Speed Watch – equipment owned by the Parish Council</p> <p>Telephone: 01785 598434 Email: clerk@brocton.staffslc.gov.uk</p> <p>Website: www.broctonpc.co.uk</p>