

# **WALTON PARISH COUNCIL**

## **SPRING NEWSLETTER**

Edited by Cllr Ann Hardie

Vol 12 Issue 17

May 2012

### **Officers for 2010/2011**

Chairman Cllr J Ashcroft

Vice-chairman Cllr Y Shaikh

We welcome Malcolm Eldridge who has just joined the Parish Council and thank Paul Morgan for his help during the 12 years he worked with us.

### **Extracts from retiring Chairman, Cllr R. Hardie's Report**

He was pleased to report that our recent tree planting had been at a cost of materials only, making a great saving compared to the previous costs. Thanks were given to those residents who had assisted in making the Parish look better and to those who had contributed to the trees.

Planning applications had dropped to 18 this year, which was significantly lower than previous years. They are now submitted electronically, which is a lot less convenient for viewing than paper copies.

Comment was made on the low crime rate we are fortunate to have in Walton.

To assist drivers in icy conditions, the PC has placed 5 grit bins through the Parish for residents to spread at nearby junctions and pavements.

Thanks were given to the Clerk Ray Hallam for his unstinting work, our Borough Cllr Paul Kennedy for his help and advice, Karen Dakin the designer of the new website for the Parish, the residents who had been so helpful and the Parish Cllrs for their help.

### **Walton Hall Estate Development**

The PC is represented on a newly formed Walton Estate Liaison Group. The group meets regularly to hear and discuss the plans that WBC has for the estate. It is encouraging that WBC are ready to commit significant funds for renovations and new investment. In the short term, a new café is to be provided and additional toilets constructed. The riding school will be given a new roof to allow it to be used for functions. A marquee has been purchased (and extended) to provide a facility for wedding receptions or similar functions. The number of functions held at the Hall doubled between 2010 to 2012 and all the other facilities have increased their incomes.

### **Mersey Ports**

Mersey Ports have issued a proposal detailing their intention to move more freight along the ship canal. WBC produced a report showing the effects of bridge swings through the working day. Roads traffic can take an hour to get back to normal after a bridge swing. M/P hope to mitigate such effects with advance warning, and modification to the masts of some of their maintenance vessels. They are not, at present, giving any indication that they will avoid bridge swings during "rush hours" nor at any other time of the working day. The Parish Council is asking for more consideration for residents by doing such things as scheduling bridge swings so as not to conflict with busy times and using boats which do not require bridge swings.

### **Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations**

Walton is joining with Appleton & Stockton Heath PCs to provide a Beacon at High Warren on 4<sup>th</sup> June. It will be lit, along with others around the country, at 10.15pm. It is planned for the lighting to be followed by a dramatic firework display. Members of the public will not be allowed onto the land, which is owned by United Utilities nor the golf course. UU have been very accommodating in permitting and setting up the beacon. The PC is assisting with street parties at West Avenue and Lychgate

### **Parish Precept**

The precept was increased this year by nearly £1200, to cover part of the cost of a contested election of Parish Councillors. The full cost could have been over £5000, but it would have been paid over several years. This is the first time that WBC has imposed charges on Parishes, when Parish elections are concurrent with the election of Borough Councillors. As there was no contested election, our costs will be less than £400. (Note - The Precept for 2011/12 had been reduced below the amount required by the budget as money was taken from reserves.)

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### Look-of-the-Borough

On 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2011, a team from WBC devoted six weeks to working in Walton. They filled all the small potholes that did not meet the normal criteria for attention, prepared the small flowerbeds, cut back the wild vegetation along the roadsides and planted 43 trees for us.

### Village Betterment

We purchased 125kg of daffodil bulbs - which residents have helped us to plant around the Parish. THANK YOU HELPERS. The seven small flower beds were dug out and planted and bring a little colour to the corners. We would still welcome a sponsor(s) for the bed(s). We planted a further 32 trees in the verges of four roads and replaced the 11 trees that had been vandalised in Stetchworth Rd and on the A56 Chester Rd. We would be pleased if those residents who asked for trees would ensure they are kept moist by watering regularly, particularly during their first year. We are greatly disappointed that two new trees in Stetchworth Rd have already been broken. Thank you to those residents who contributed to the cost of the new trees.

### Website

Following our appeal, Karen Dakin, has designed an excellent site for us. It can be accessed at [www.waltonpc.org.uk](http://www.waltonpc.org.uk). Our minutes and agendas will appear each month and the contact details for all the Parish Cllrs. We hope that you will find some other useful information there for you to read. Please have a look and send us your comments. Have you any interesting photos of Walton that we could use on the website?

### Creamfields

The concert will be held again this summer with a greater number of attendees. It is important that you phone the "hotline" if you find the noise overbearing. If you have any complaints at all, then please tell a Cllr so that it can be recorded and improvements made the next year. The organisers can only make improvements if they are aware of troubles that the event causes.

### Toilets

You may not be aware that Helen Curden of Stockton Heath has encouraged a number of businesses in Stockton Heath to allow their toilets to be used by people who suddenly need that facility. Some of the businesses have purple notices on their door. The toilets are at St Thomas' Church hall, Ego, Café-au-clay, Nandos, Esquire, Costa Coffee, Cape, Red Lion, Mulberry Tree, Pan-y-Veno, A-la-Turk, Pizza Express, Fire Station & Library.

### Parish Council Function

Many of you know exactly what the Parish Council does, but twice this year the question has been asked - "What does the PC do?" We can print answers to this question in a series.

A Parish Councillor is a volunteer, but once they formally accept the office, they must carry out their duties without any payment. The law forbids payment. The job is to bring local issues to the attention of the Parish Council (and WBC) and help it make decisions on behalf of the Parishioners. Your Cllrs keep an eye, or ear, open for shortcomings in the fabric or facilities within the Parish. We are interested in the condition of the Parish, including the pavements, roads, vegetation, drains and streetlights. We endeavour to get faults corrected and improvements made. We are interested in public safety and will try to get improvements made by the Borough Council. The PC does not have any power to force through changes, but has to rely on the goodwill of WBC or on persuasion, logic and persistence. More later.

### Parish Council Meeting Dates

The PC will meet at 7.30 on the first Thursday of each month, except August

A full set of the minutes can be seen at the Public Library, Alexandra Rd, Stockton Heath, and are now available on the website.

### Contacts

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