

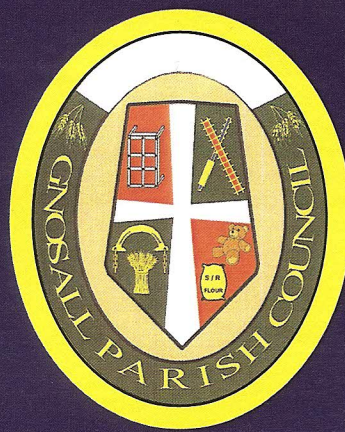
Gnosall

PARISH COUNCIL

including the Wards of Moreton and Knightley

Mission Statement

To improve the quality of life for those who live and work in the Parish of Gnosall, and those who visit it.



ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



Q QUALITY
PARISH COUNCIL

Report from Cllr Gail Gregory Chair of Gnosall Parish Council

Although this is my first report as Chair of the Parish Council, it could well be my last because it coincides with the end of the 4-year term of office and we all realise that the May elections can bring sweeping changes! This is, therefore, an appropriate time to look back on the Council's achievements not just in the preceding year but in the term of the current council as a whole

The first thing I'd like to highlight is the work of our outgoing Chair, Cllr Pat Alker. She and her Vice Chair, Mike Deegan, worked tirelessly to raise the profile of the Council and to fully establish partnership working with other organisations, which has been greatly to the benefit of Gnosall. We have a reputation as an outward-looking council, ready and willing to embrace new challenges and this is directly-related to our team of councillors, who give untold hours outside regular meetings to ensure that what is agreed at Council is actually achieved. But have no fear – Pat is still in harness, this time as Vice Chair!

There has been quite a turnover of councillors over the last term and we have said goodbye to some faces associated with Gnosall for many years. I would like to give my personal thanks to Jamie Cook, Mike Deegan, Shirley Wallis and Sue Green; each of them has added so much to our work and has given so freely of their time and expertise over many years but, unfortunately, family circumstances meant that they felt unable to continue. We have been fortunate to welcome new councillors in their place and Vicky Kessey, Tony Innamorati, Jordan Archer and Janet Lammin are bringing new skills and experiences to our team. You will also realise that we have made sweeping changes to the way in which this Annual Assembly is conducted and that was inspired by our desire to recognise the outstanding achievement of our longest-serving former councillor, Derek Watson-Jones. In his name, we introduced the Community Awards, which are presented on this evening and which give everyone the opportunity to recognise the contribution of local people to parish life; I think he'd be pleased about that. In turn, that led us to ask community groups to make presentations at this evening's event, so that their work was recognised publicly. I have to say that these changes have been much praised and I think everyone enjoys the chance to learn a little more about what goes on.

Council gained Quality Gold late in 2017, in recognition of the excellent level of support which it gives to parishioners; this really was a significant achievement. So, too, was the recognition of our superb Clerk, Jayne Cooper, as NALC Clerk of the Year! The last couple of years have really seen our national profile rise and we have a lot to live up to – but we're up for the challenge!



National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Clerk of the Year, Jayne Cooper, being congratulated by parish and borough councillors

Over the last four years, the parish 'estate' has grown or been improved. We now manage many leisure and recreation sites, including the allotments, the chippy jumps, the Acres, the children's play park, MUGA and the village green. In 2018 we added to this by completing the Tennis Courts project and outdoor gym equipment will be sited there shortly (if it hasn't already been by the time you read this). Hen and Chicken Lane was also cleared and reinstated, with help from the Community Pay Back Scheme, under the leadership of Sue Green. All this needs a lot of looking after and is a significant drain on our resources, both financial and in personnel terms, but we feel it is well worthwhile. We encourage parishioners to value our open spaces and wildlife and the Bird Insect Box Making event was a highly enjoyable way to raise the profile of environmental awareness.

We strive to maintain these areas and amenities and sadly, we had to do a great deal of work to the Boardwalk when it was vandalized but that unhappy event led to a huge outpouring of community spirit and working together, which was wonderful to see. Our Clerk became Project Manager in Chief and a fine job she made of it; parishioners were able to express their love for the Acres in practical terms and now it is as if it had never happened. We are carrying out further improvements to the Boardwalk this year to prevent flooding, so things go from strength to strength. We also hope to add to our range of amenities by completing our Dementia Garden this year, which will provide a tranquil place for carers and sufferers alike to spend a few moments, surrounded by accessible scented, textural and colourful planting.

We also continue in our efforts to improve our amenities as best we can and we really do hope to see progress on the improvement of the Grosvenor Centre this year, after many setbacks due to funding streams simply drying up. Unfortunately, we shall be unable to completely replace it, but we are working with professional advice to see how we can best reconfigure the space we have to bring it to a higher standard without major disruption or expenditure. In the short term, we have upgraded things a little to ensure that hirers get good value for money.

It seems ages ago that the Neighbourhood Plan was brought to completion and we are aware of the need to stay abreast of changing times as Stafford's Local Plan is renewed. Rest assured – we are ready to respond to whatever develops from that. We have continued to monitor new development sites within the village and it is pleasing to see that so many of our newer residents have begun to take part in village events such as the Fun Days, Fun Fairs and Christmas Lights; we hope they will also take part in some of our many GFest activities planned for later this year – our second during this term of office. This really has become a major item on the village calendar and it raises money for good causes within the parish very successfully indeed. Events which bring the community together, such as these, are things which give pleasure to participants and volunteers alike. One of the most enjoyable, in my book, is the Over 84's Teas. What began as a one-off to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday has now become a fixture, with 3 Teas per year, and it is heart-warming to see how much our guests enjoy this simple opportunity to make contact with those they don't see as often as they'd like.

I think that we have catered for both ends of the age spectrum over this term of office, because GG's Youth Club is now 3 years old and has gained awards for the work it does with young people in our village. This is a major asset to our community and I am grateful for all the work that went into its creation, especially the gift of a venue from St John Ambulance, without which it would have been impossible. That venue, now refurbished and almost unrecognisable, is also part of Gnosall's very newest facility – the long-awaited Library – since they share space during parts of the week, which is testament to partnership working and mutual support. Although the Library is the baby of GLEAN rather than the Parish Council, and they have worked tirelessly to raise funds and push this project through, we have worked very closely together and I am staggered at the amount of work that has been done by councillors, our handyman and our kind volunteers within the village. Without their combined efforts I really do doubt that it could have come to fruition. Now we have a facility for both young and old, staffed by volunteers, of which we can all be proud.

Of course, none of this would be possible without partnership working and the generosity of volunteers. The BKV team, who achieved their hat trick last year, continues to make our village a welcoming and attractive place to live and visit but they also represent the true values of BKV by demonstrating community working and team spirit. That is replicated by our councillors, old and new, and by our employees under the leadership of our Clerk, Jayne, who is so knowledgeable and yet never makes you feel a fool for asking. It's a rare and precious gift! Of course, there is still volunteering in the village that few people do see; I am thinking specifically of volunteers like the 60 or so people who help us by delivering the GMK to every home. It is so important to recognise just how much every little act of generosity makes Gnosall what it is.

We also enjoy positive working relationships with our Borough and County Councillors, with the school, the churches and with local trades-people and retailers. It really is a team effort and I thank everyone who has played any part, however small, in helping to achieve all that we have done over the last four years. Here's to many more years of partnership for our community!

Report from Cllr Tracey Simkin, Chair of the Personnel Committee

Over the past year the Personnel Committee has sought to support its valued and dedicated staff of the Parish Council and has reviewed and updated staff contracts to ensure they are up to date with current legislation.

We continued with our strategic approach with training, annual appraisals and one to one meetings and continually assessed working practices to ensure our delivery of service remains to be of the highest standard and in line with Quality Gold. This dedication, sustained hard work and continued best practice was recognised with the Clerk's achievement of the National Association of Local Councils' award, Clerk of The Year 2018 for which were all delighted about.

Report from Cllr Kenneth Ingram, Chair of Resources Committee

The Resources Committee oversees the Parish Council's finances. On an annual basis it recommends to the full Parish Council the next financial year's budget. By careful management of the Parish Council's accounts and constant monitoring against the agreed budgets any areas of concern can be identified and corrective action taken. The Resources Committee may require representatives of Parish Council Committees to attend its meetings when necessary to account for the proper control of the budget for which they are responsible and to ensure action plans are in place to meet any budget savings approved by the Council.

The accounts are internally audited as soon as possible after the end of the financial year and then are presented to the external auditor to await their report, after which, any necessary action is taken.

The main income of the Parish Council is the "precept" which forms part of the Council Tax collected by Stafford Borough Council. By careful monitoring of the actual spend against budgeted figures it is clear if any increase in the precept is necessary to maintain the Council's obligations. For the financial year 2018/19 we have managed to keep the increase down to just £3.23 per household. The Council total precept per household is less than many of the surrounding parishes that provide many less services than we do and about half the national average (which is currently £67.69 per Band D property compared with Gnosall's precept per Band D property at £35.51).

Stafford Borough Council also make a payment to the Parish Council for jobs and activities that are undertaken on their behalf, which in 2018/19 amounted to £3680.

The main projects during 2018/19 have been the new tennis court, the Grosvenor Centre refurbishment, the Library, the Acres Fun Day, the Christmas lights event and internal modifications/improvements to the youth club.

During 2018/19 we made grants totalling £800 to the following local groups:

AFC Gnosall, Gnosall Scouts, Gnosall Royal British Legion, Gnosall First Responders, Border Group of Churches and Moreton Millennium Centre.

We also received funding during 2018/19 from the Borough Council towards the Christmas lights, from SCYVS, the County Councillor fund and Waitrose for GG's Youth Club. Two private donations were received to help purchase the memorial benches adjacent to the tennis court.

Report from Cllr Tracey Simkin, Chair of Open Spaces Committee

Last year's largest open spaces projects was the construction of a brand new tennis court which was officially opened in August by County Councillor Mark Winnington. Visitors to the official opening not only had a chance to test out their tennis skills but also take part in a number of other activities including archery, basketball, football and a very popular 50ft assault course. This event was organised by the Parish Council to celebrate the much loved Acres recreation site, providing a completely free fun packed morning of activities.

The tennis court contractors also laid the bases for two new memorial benches as well as the base for outdoor gym equipment that will be installed during 2019. The tennis court is a free to use facility and the council is very pleased that it has been regularly used by parishioners and visitors of all ages.

A fun fair on the village green was held on the first weekend of the school summer holidays and in 2018 the weather was favourable (unlike the previous 2 years!)

During 2018 the Open Spaces Committee carried out an extensive review of its facilities and land it manages and devised a maintenance plan to make improvements – either to carry out minor maintenance or to make significant enhancements to some of the older facilities. Additional facilities such as the Chippy Jumps Park and tennis court, funded from grants and S106 money, are wonderful assets to have in our parish and very much used and appreciated by parishioners. However, the upkeep of facilities adds to the maintenance costs which the Parish Council has to fund from its precept and when setting the budget for the coming year, these additional costs were factored in. The council believe that the amount of precept charged to each household is still exceptionally good value for the varied amount of quality recreational facilities that the parish is fortunate to have and which the Parish Council has to maintain. Plans are in hand to make even more improvements with new play park equipment, new fencing around the park, repairs to the older section of the boardwalk and some rotting bollards around village green will be replaced. The last project of the year was to install a water supply on the Acres which is needed to clean court surfaces and recreation equipment.

This committee works closely with the Best Kept Village team who help keep the open space areas free from litter, keep benches and notice boards in tip top condition, enhance facilities with projects such as the wild flower meadow on the village green and several flower beds. The Council was delighted when the BKV team were rewarded with Best Kept Village award in 2018 for the third year running. There are already new BKV projects underway for 2019.

All these projects and ongoing maintenance can only succeed with the help of our dedicated councillors, staff and volunteers and I sincerely thank all of them for their hard work and efforts that benefit all our parishioners.

Report from Cllr Mary Booth, Chair of Procedures Review Committee

Our Committee has this year mainly worked on completing the policies necessary to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We followed the Information Commissioner's Office's 12 step guidance and finally managed to draft all the paperwork required. This ranged from a social media and electronic communications policy to a policy on data privacy and protection for allotment holders, among others. By the time this report is published, I hope that all these new policies will have been adopted by Council and will soon be published on our website.

My sincere thanks are due to our Clerk for preparing the drafts and to the committee members for reading and reviewing all the paperwork with dedication and humour.

Report from Cllr Roger Greatrex, Chair of Planning Committee

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee by request and the Parish Council does not actually make the final decision for approval or refusal of applications. This is the responsibility of Stafford Borough Council. However, the planning committee take its responsibility seriously considering every application that is received on its own merit using the Neighbourhood Plan and Stafford Borough Council's Local Plan to guide members in reaching a final decision.

The Committee have viewed approximately 40 planning applications over the last twelve months and monitored the decisions made by the Borough Council on each application. Many of Gnosall's Parish Councillors attended a training course delivered by Stafford Borough Council on how to use the planning section of SBC's website and officers were able to answer specific planning related questions that councillors raised. Meetings were held with SBC's Forward Planning Manager to ensure our councillors were up to date with the borough's review of its Local Plan. Consultations throughout the year were reviewed and detailed responses submitted.

Matters of concern, raised by parishioners are reported to either planning officers or enforcement officers depending on the nature of the issue raised. All reports are monitored by the planning committee.

Residents are reminded that when notification of a planning application is received, members of the public are able to comment on the application at Gnosall Parish Council's Planning Committee meetings. If parishioners have a query about submitting a planning application, advice and guidance can also be sought from the Parish Council.

Report from Cllr Chris Emsley, Chair of Grosvenor Centre Committee

The Grosvenor Centre in the centre of the village has had another busy and successful year. In addition to housing the administrative centre for the Parish Council the centre also houses Rosebuds Day Nursery and has a number of different facilities available for Parishioners to hire. The venue remains popular with regular bookings and one off lettings holding up well.

When St. Lawrence school was redeveloped the village lost both its youth club and library. The youth club was re-housed in the former St. John Ambulance building and continues to go from strength to strength under the leadership of Jordan Archer.

It was noted last year that it was hoped to open a Community Library adjacent to the youth club and I am very pleased to confirm that, although it took longer than initially envisaged, the library was eventually opened in February this year. Hopefully, parishioners will make use of this facility and thanks must be given to the GLEAN committee for their determination to get the library open against what, at times, appeared to be insurmountable problems.

I reported last year that discussions continued to ascertain the feasibility of redeveloping the centre and whilst whatever decision is finally arrived at, this will be a long term project and the Council will keep parishioners informed of developments as they occur. Progress remains slow and the Council is aware that sources of finance that may have been available to fully redevelop the centre are no longer available. The Working Group members however, continue to discuss improvements to the centre with architects and are currently discussing concept and developed design of proposed changes. Last year I advised that Neil Nicholls had been appointed our Designated Premises Supervisor and that he had made a good start to his tenure. Unfortunately Neil left the Horns and was unable to continue the Council's "DPS". I am pleased to advise however, that Jordan Archer has obtained his personal licence and has recently been appointed "DPS" meaning that fully licensed events can be held in the Centre. Jordan has already installed new equipment and I feel sure that he will provide an excellent service to hirers of the centre.

Finally may I also take this opportunity of thanking Brian and Mavis Hill who continue their sterling work in their roles as Caretakers of the centre.

Report from Cllr Mary Booth, Chair of Public Rights of Way

In 2017 a small group of volunteers met with me to start surveying public rights of way in the parish and also to research into any historic paths which have not yet been officially recorded on the County's Definitive Map. These must be officially recorded by 2026 or will be lost for ever. We have continued to meet regularly and survey paths whenever we can. In consultation with the Parish Council, we have agreed to take the softly softly approach to most of the issues we find such as broken stiles or paths not reinstated after crops being sown. We ask the clerk to write to the landowner concerned in the first instance, pointing out the problem. We also have recorded our thanks to people who have paths going through their land who have improved the right of way. This approach seems to be working.

I would like to thank the members of the Group for all their hard work.

Report from Cllr Kenneth Ingram, Chair of Communications Committee

The popular GMK magazine, now under the auspices of the new Communications Editorial Working Group, continues to be delivered to every house in Gnosall and as many residents as possible in the rest of the parish in a new 12 page format every four months. The magazine is being well received by readers and we have had many complimentary comments. A particularly popular item is the picture on the front cover which is always interesting and vibrant.

We continue to manage and maintain our ever popular web site, now with record number of people regularly following the content (www.gnosallparishcouncil.org.uk) Our vibrant Facebook page, now with well over 1000 followers (www.facebook.com then look for gnosall parish council) is a useful, efficient and rapid way to disseminate information and announcements.

With our very good relationship with local newspapers and magazines we issue regular press releases about local parish news particularly the many successes and celebrations of completed projects.

Report from Cllr Kenneth Ingram, Chair of GFest 2019 Committee

It will be here on July 13th – 21st – our 5th biennial Gnosall Festival, bigger and better than ever.

Many of the regular events are back as well as some new events but unfortunately some of our previously regular events are unable to be held this year (the Open Gardens and the Church Tower Opening). The popular Made in Gnosall Craft Fair is back together with the expanded Community & Countryside now incorporating a Dog Show. The Valuation event will now include collectibles and will be, no doubt, be more popular. Other regular events will be there including the end of Festival Fun Fair The major new addition to the festival is CFest, being held on the second weekend of the festival on the Canal and includes events at the Boat Inn and The Navigation pubs. Historic and trade boats will be moored from the Cowley Tunnel up to The Navigation with canal related stalls at The Navigation. Canal boat trips will be available throughout the weekend as well as a cider & gin festival at The Boat Inn.

During 2018 two GFest film nights were arranged, Bohemian Rhapsody in particular was very well supported, with a packed Grosvenor Centre

Thanks to all the committee, our volunteer helper and the Parish Council staff for all their help in organising this festival.

Annual Report from Mark Winnington, County Councillor; Gnosall Parish 2018/2019

I thank the residents of Gnosall and the surrounding areas for all the work they put in to keeping the parish they live so beautiful. All the effort people put in has borne fruit in terms of the fantastic results achieved, particularly Best Kept Village win. Gnosall is really a great place to live, work and play.

In terms of achievements affecting the residents of Staffordshire, we now have 96% of the population able to access Superfast Broadband, however, we still have to try and achieve a solution for the last 4% (myself being one of those). We also have to be aware that whilst speeds of 25mbps were perfectly adequate 5 years ago we now have to start looking for solutions to provide even faster speeds for our residents.

With regards to roads, I am aware that there have been historic problems with potholes however, residents do tell me that the situation is slowly improving. As a Conservative administration, even in times of budgetary pressure, we have pledged an extra £5m this year towards road maintenance.

I am really pleased that this year working with the Parish Council Staffordshire County Council has been able to play a large part in the provision of the new tennis courts and the opening of the library. Well done to GLEAN for their efforts with the library project.

Kind regards.

Mark Winnington
Local Member for Gnosall and Doxey

Report from Stafford Borough Councillors 2018/19

We came to power in 2003 and promised not to increase Council Tax above the rate of inflation. And 16yrs on we are keeping that promise. For many years we have frozen our portion of the Council Tax, even reducing it in 2014 by 2%

This year the Borough part of the Council Tax will increase by 1.9%, this is again below the level of inflation. Had we increased the Council Tax by inflation over the 16yrs it would now be £199.34 instead of £156.30 for a band D property.

At the same time services have been maintained and in some cases improved.

We have done this by making major changes in the Council's organisation and methods of working. For example we share back office functions with other councils.

Keeping a cap on council tax has not stopped us investing capital in numerous projects. Our first project now a few years old was the new £15m Stafford Leisure Centre, this paved the way for the new shops centred on Marks & Spencer. This was followed by improvements in Victoria Park and Wildwood park destination play areas. We have now built a new Leisure Centre in Stone

In Stafford our new Waterside multi storey Car Park and the new Delux Odeon Cinema have been completed.

Your Borough Councillors:

Ken and Mike.

Receipts and Payments Statement for Year 2018/2019 (Un-audited)

	Budget	Actual
Council Tax & Concurrent Grant	£70,241	£70,241
Grosvenor Centre Lettings	£35,621	£39,357
Other income inc. Grants received	£12,281	£13,606
BKV/GFest/GLEAN/Heritage/GG's	-	£23,025
Reimbursement of VAT	-	£11,100
TOTAL	£118,143	£157,329

	Budget	Actual
General Management Expenses	£81,151	£73,922
Councillors Expenses	£650	£141
Election Expenses	£1,000	£0
Open Spaces Maintenance	£26,382	£18,921
Christmas Lighting	£2,000	£2,396
Local Grants	£1,800	£1,800
Projects	£128,000	£66,396
Sec 137	£800	£93
Grosvenor Centre Expenses	£11,750	£11,822
BKV/GFest/GLEAN/Heritage/GG's	-	£45,419
VAT	-	£19,592
TOTAL	£253,533	£240,502

Balance b/f at 1st April 2018	£166,201
Plus Receipts	£157,329
Less Payments	£240,502
Balance c/f at 31st March 2019	£83,028

Gnosall Parish Council, List of Councillors April 2018 to March 2019

NAME	ADDRESS	TEL. NO.
Keith Abbott	7 Meadow Close, Gnosall, ST20 0LT	01785 823691
Pat Alker	73 Fountain Fold, Gnosall, ST20 0DR	01785 823271
Jordan Archer (from July 2018)	13 High Street, Gnosall	01785 824200
Mary Booth	The Cottage, Hollies Common, Gnosall, ST20 0JD	01785 822742
Mike Deegan (April - May 2018)	Prospect House, Cross Street, Gnosall, ST20 0BX	01785 824293
Chris Emsley	4 Elmwood Close, Gnosall, ST20 0RR	01785 822837
Roger Greatrex	Holly Cottage, Gorse Lane, Knightley, ST20 0JP	01785 284553
Sue Green (April - December 2018)	3 Norbury Close, Gnosall, ST20 0QR	01785 822934
Gail Gregory	Audmore Villa, Audmore, Gnosall, ST20 0HF	01785 822104
Kenneth Ingram	25 Fountain Fold, Gnosall, ST20 0DR	01785 822082
Tony Innamorati	4 Gnosall Lane, Moreton, TF10 9BX	01952 691222
Victoria Kessey	10 Heathway, Gnosall, ST20 0DE	07403 349415
Janet Lammin (from January 2019)	22 Hollies Brook Close, Gnosall	01785 824659
Graham Payne	14 Glendower Close, Gnosall, ST20 0BP	01785 822243
Stuart Powell	Coopers Chimney, Sellman Street, Gnosall, ST20 0EP	01785 822826
Tracey Simkin	Gable End, Sellman Street, Gnosall, ST20 0EP	01785 823911
Jennifer Tomkinson	Befcote Farm, Gnosall, ST20 0EB	01785 823473
Doug Webb	36 Old Barn Close, Gnosall, ST20 0DY	01785 823317

OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL:

Jayne Cooper	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Jeanene Walton-Sanders	Council Support Officer
Mavis Hill	Grosvenor Centre Cleaner
Brian Hill	Grosvenor Centre Caretaker

PARISH OFFICE:

Address:	The Grosvenor Centre, High Street, Gnosall, Stafford, ST20 0EX
Tel:	01785 822685
Opening Hours:	Monday: by appointment, Tuesday: 10am - 2pm, Wednesday 1pm to 3pm, Thursday: by appointment, Friday: office closed.
Email Address:	clerk@gnosallparishcouncil.org.uk
Website:	www.gnosallparishcouncil.org.uk

COUNTY & BOROUGH COUNCILLORS:

Cllr Mark Winnington	Woodside Farm, Gnosall, ST20 0JA	01785 822224
Cllr Mike Smith	Batchacre Cottage, Shebdon, ST20 0PX	01785 280648
Cllr Ken Williamson	12 Sharman Way, Gnosall, ST20 0LX	01785 823433