



ASPLEY GUISE PARISH COUNCIL

Summer 2021
Newsletter

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New flower meadow at Browns Way. All photos courtesy of Chris Simons



Planters in the Village Square



Welcome to this, the latest of our quarterly newsletters, I am delighted to be writing this in the sun, in the garden and at the end of lockdown. I appreciate that for some, the easing of lockdown restrictions brings fresh worry and concern, to those with concerns if there is anything you believe the Parish Council could be doing to help, please let us know.

We've had a busy quarter, working hard on behalf of the whole Parish, facing some challenges along the way not least managing with COVID related issues with our grass cutting programme, a rapid response to the potential threat of a traveller settlement in the heart of the village, the East West Rail response, the on-going planning and neighbourhood plan activities, whilst also developing a street lighting policy, the planting of new trees at "the clump", the awarding of our yearly grants and even the installation of the wildlife noticeboard at the Browns Way pond. Busy indeed!

Our East West Rail response brought a good number of residents to the Council meeting. I mentioned to everyone at the time that it would be great to see this level of resident engagement throughout the year. We had some specialists in the room that, if we could co-opt them onto the Council, we'd further improve the depth and breadth of the knowledge we can bring to bear on behalf of the Parish. We much rather see people working with us from the inside, rather than criticising from the outside. If you'd like to help the Parish and could spare some of your personal time (all Councillor roles are performed voluntarily and without pecuniary reward), do please get in touch. You can call 07579 809474 or email clerk@aspleyguiseparishcouncil.gov.uk.

To end with a positive note, next year is the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we are creating a committee to plan our festivities....we very much want you, the residents involved! Even if you choose to not join the committee please do send us your ideas!

My very best regards and best efforts, Stewart.



Meet your Councillors:

Hi Residents of Aspley Guise , I am Richard Davis.

Many years ago my wife and I were looking to move out of London with our 3 children. We wanted to move north as Grandparents were in Nottinghamshire and Northumberland.

I was working in Sales and junction 13 was as far north as I could stretch. We were very lucky to have friends living in Wavendon who used to send us the Citizen property pages weekly (no Right Move in those days) and they told us that the nicest village to live in was Aspley Guise.



That was 25 years ago and we have enjoyed living in Aspley Guise ever since. All our children attended Aspley Guise Lower School and I was a Chair of Governors some 15 years ago.

I have always been very community minded and when an opportunity came up to join the Parish Council I was pleased to do so.

I think it is fair to say that I prefer to concentrate on the practical aspects of being a councillor and am involved in the Play Area committee and the ongoing refurbishment and maintenance of the streetlights.

Aspley Guise faces many challenges in the future with the East West rail project and the ongoing expansion of Milton Keynes amongst them.

It would be great to have some more help on the Parish Council and I would urge community minded people to give it a go.

Richard Davis



Parish Council news:

Browns Way:

At the start of July Browns Way residents alerted the PC to a possible threat of Travellers taking up residence on the grass at Browns Way, and by the following day Woburn Estates (*thank you Ward Cllr Baker for the contact*) had kindly installed logs around the edge of the field to prevent vehicular access. The Clerk received the following email:

“On behalf of the residents of Browns Way, I would like to say a huge thank you to yourself and the Parish Council for acting with such expediency in resolving the matter below. We are all so very grateful and feel a lot less concerned. Please pass our thanks to the contractors too.”

We would like to thank the residents of Browns Way for bringing this to our attention and a **big thank you to Woburn Estates** for helping out so quickly. This is prime example of how you the residents, the PC and local community can work together as a team to protect our Parish.



Over the coming weeks, we will discuss whether a more permanent solution is required and if so what that could look like.



Parish Council news:

Browns Way continued....

Protection of this space was particularly important due to work that has taken place on site this year. The greenspace at Browns Way has undergone several changes this year.

An information panel on the wildlife that use the area has been installed near to the pond. Nearby, a wildflower meadow, similar to the one that can be found at Townlands, has been added and looks to be growing well. We hope that this meadow will encourage a variety of animals and insects and be an area of interest for Browns Way residents and visitors.

Later this year, at Townlands, conservation work will be carried out to the trees and hedgerows and bat and bird boxes will be installed in the small area of woodland.

To carry out this work, AGPC was secured funding by the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership Programme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, in conjunction with money set aside from the precept.

You can find out more about the Greensand Country, within which Aspley Guise is situated, here:

<https://www.greensandcountry.com>



Parish Council news:

Committee updates:

Neighbourhood Plan: we are in the process of sourcing a consultant who specialises in planning to help us with the next stages of our Neighbourhood Plan development. A tender has been issued and we are hoping to appoint someone shortly.

Playground redevelopment: as you know we are planning on upgrading some of the equipment at the Common (recreation ground) play area this year. A tender has been issued and it is hoped work will start later in the year, avoiding the summer school holidays.

Traffic Calming: A couple of years ago, we were advised a pot of money would be available, made up with contributions from CBC, MKC and AGPC towards a traffic calming scheme for the village. Unfortunately due to change in personnel and COVID little progress appears to have been made, but one of our Councillors is trying to re-engage with CBC to discuss what options are still available.

Platinum Jubilee: 2022 is the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and we are planning a village celebration over the long bank holiday weekend. There are still 2 spaces available on the committee, so if you would like to get involved please contact clerk@aspleyguiseparishcouncil.gov.uk

Grants:

We were pleased to be able to donate £13,671.71 of grants to several local charities/organisations. Although this was £3,171.71 in excess of the budget of £10,500 we felt the applications were all for good causes and the money would be put to good use. The grants awarded were as follows:

- Aspley Guise P3 £240.46 for the repair of their brush cutter to maintain our footpaths
- Aspley Guise Helping Hands £250.00 to cover the cost of their Public Liability Insurance and a small portion towards the hire of the Village Hall for a Xmas party
- Aspley Guise Parochial Church Council £400.00 to help with the cost of owing the grass at the Graveyard.
- Woburn Sands Town Council £500.00 towards replacement windows
- Aspley Guise Village Hall £4,281.25 towards the partial replacement of the kitchen
- Swallowfields PTFA £5,000 towards a new MUGA play area and memorial garden
- Aspley Guise Sports Trust £3,000 towards recent tree work and regular grass cutting



Helping Hands:

HELPING HANDS IN ASPLEY GUISE

By Lin Vorley

Helping Hands in Aspley Guise is a voluntary group within our village. We established ourselves in September 2013 with a grant from Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC). We help people in the village who have difficulty travelling to appointments, such as hospital and GP appointments or going to the hairdresser, and we also do practical home tasks like changing a lightbulb and watering plants. Basically, we will do anything non-professional to help. This also enables us to keep a close eye on older people in our community who might be more vulnerable.

The volunteers at Helping Hands are very proud to have been able to continue helping our residents throughout the pandemic with vital lifts to surgery, hospital and Care Homes, all with social distancing, seating in the rear of cars and wearing of masks etc. Most residents have found they have their own family support, but there have been some occasions when we have been greatly appreciated, particularly at this time, sometimes at extremely short notice.

Over the last year, we logged over 800 calls in our reporting to BRCC, and we are continuing to support clients with medication runs, befriending phone calls and initiatives to keep spirits up. Realising we would be unable to hold our annual Christmas Tea Party, we decided on some Well-being Initiatives. This included supporting our local Cherry Farm by purchasing cherries to distribute to the housebound. We also delivered 25 lots of chocolate to our residents over Christmas, and in March, we delivered 25 bunches of daffodils.

Our Well-being Initiative for Easter involved delivering scones and jam to 25 residents. These initiatives were partly funded by Aspley Guise Parish Council grant, as we were unable to have our Christmas party, and partly by our own funds.



Helping Hands:

More recently, we were available for vaccination runs. Our regular clients knew this, and we also advertised locally and on Facebook. BRCC has provided Perspex screens for two of our volunteers' cars, together with a quantity of PPE.

Our newest venture is the Memory Club which started with our first group in April. If it becomes popular, we plan to have these meetings once a fortnight, following Covid rules and in conjunction with the Aspley Guise Village Hall. We also had our first afternoon tea, for those regular clients we have helped over the years.

With funding obtained via Councillor John Baker, we have been able to purchase new games and various items for entertainment.

We are always looking for dedicated volunteers and committee members who might bring fresh ideas to continue all the good work for the community in the coming years. So if you are interested in helping, please contact:

Helping Hands in Aspley Guise: [07923 490001](tel:07923490001)

Helping Hands Woburn Sands: [07834 287255](tel:07834287255)

Help Around Woburn: [07815 411229](tel:07815411229)



Greensand Country Landscape Partnership

What is Greensand Country ?

As residents of Greensand Country you might wonder what exactly that term means. Greensand Country is an island of distinctive, beautiful and loved countryside in the heart of Bedfordshire. It is a landscape rich in wildlife and cultural heritage, with its own special qualities and sense of place.

The character of the landscape comes from the geology of the area thanks to the Greensand Ridge which forms the back bone of the landscape. This band of higher ground stretching from Leighton Buzzard to Gamlingay, rises out of the surrounding vales to create a locally unique environment. The area contains all of Bedfordshire's remaining heathland, and more than half of its woodland.

The area is less well suited to agriculture and was therefore used for the siting of monasteries. After the dissolution of the monasteries, the land was given to major landowners who established their own stately homes and gardens, deer parks and estate villages. Towards the middle of the 19th Century the railways, brought by the Industrial Revolution, transformed local towns and created new industries such as quarrying, brick making, cultivation and milling.

Preserving the landscape

To help look after this wonderful landscape the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership was formed. This happened in January 2017, a National Lottery Heritage Funded Programme was established to deliver up to 90 projects that would help raise awareness of the heritage value of the landscape and reverse the gradual decline of its distinct character. There are 24 partners working together to make the projects a success. They include Central Bedfordshire Council, The Greensand Trust, Sustrans, The British Horse Society and the Bedfordshire Geology Group to name but a few.



Greensand Country Landscape Partnership

Did you know that Greensand Country has more historic parkland than anywhere else in the UK? These parklands were often designed by the likes of Capability Brown and Repton. These parklands are integral to the 'character' of this landscape and make a significant contribution to local distinctiveness.

If you want to learn more about the unique geology of the Greensand Country, there are three Geological Walks you can take in. The geological wall at St Mary's old Church at Clophill, explains the different layers of rock in the landscape and the quarries which Greensand Country has exposed, so that you can actually see the rock profile.

The Greensand Country Landscape Partnership has restored walls and buildings throughout the Greensand Country for example the walls at RSPB Sandy and in some of the churchyards in the area.

Today, an excellent network of public rights of way are available to allow residents to explore by foot, bicycle or horse. There is also the annual Greensand Country Festival in May, supported by Mulberry Homes, which includes events and activities organised by partners, local business, special interest groups and visitor attractions to encourage those living within the area to get out and explore the outstanding countryside on their doorstep.

Encouraging local wildlife in Greensand Country

Greensand Country is alive with diverse and wonderful wildlife. The poor and thin sandy soils mean that the area has heathlands as a natural habitat. Some of these heathlands date from the Bronze Age some 3,000 years ago when humans cleared trees for use as fuel and building materials. While historically Greensand Country contained extensive areas of lowland heathland, only fragments now remain. However, these fragments are of great importance both locally and nationally, forming a vital link between other lowland heathlands and providing a habitat for much flora and fauna.



Greensand Country Landscape Partnership

Greensand Country Landscape Partnership has supported RSPB The Lodge, The Greensand Trust at Rushmere and The Wildlife Trust at Cooper's Hill to create better habitats and improve the chances of colonisation on heathlands across the Greensand Country landscape.

Thanks to the work carried out by Greensand Country Landscape Partnership, Nightingales, Dartford Warblers, rare moths, a Water Rail and an Otter have returned to the area.

Key species in the Greensand Country include the Adder and Common Lizard on the dry heaths at Stockgrove and Rushmere; Otter and Kingfisher on the Flit river; and Purple Emperor, White Letter Hairstreak and White Admiral butterflies in the woods at Chicksands and Kings Wood. On the heathland and acid grasslands look out for Slow Worms and Common Lizards, Sand Wasps, Digger Wasps and Green Tiger Beetles.

So as you walk through Greensand Country, on one of Greensand Country's three new Historic Parkland walks, look out for this designed landscape, with meandering paths, lakes and aesthetically placed clumps of trees, tree avenues and of course, the associated Manor House and learn the stories of the people who worked and lived here.

Discover more: greensandcountry.com/discover.



Village Flowers: to be completed

A huge thank you to our flower fairies for keeping the planters topped up with beautiful flowers throughout the year. It takes a lot of work to organise and maintain the planters around the village and they are currently looking outstanding. The most recent addition that hopefully you will have seen in person are the hanging baskets in the village square, and there are 2 new planters being planned, which will sit near the bench at the Church and at the War Memorial on Bedford Road.

For those of you not able to appreciate the flowers in person, here is a selection of photos from around the village.



Village Flowers: to be completed





News from Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership

- We responded to the East West Rail consultations as a CRP and now await the next stage of Statutory Consultations for the proposals that will have been influenced by this non-statutory consultation.
- Symbol Spot activity is proving to be popular with families. The activity book with a rail safety theme can be obtained when you buy a child ticket for travel on the Marston Vale line from the booking office at Bedford or Bletchley stations (not on the train) or you can show your ticket and obtain a book at the Ridgmont Heritage Centre. A 'relaunch' planned for August (tbc - watch for announcements) now that many of the restrictions have been lifted. You can find out more about Symbol Spot here: <https://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk/symbol-spot/> including recommendations for trains to catch to make this a 'Day out by Train' for the family.
- Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre and Tea Room has re-opened and we now have a properly paved outside seating area, with the lockdown closure providing the opportunity of revising some of the exhibition space and displays in and around the Heritage Centre. The Ridgmont Station Tea Room is open for breakfast, lunch, coffee and cake, and afternoon tea (book in advance). Opening hours are Wednesday to Sunday - 10am to 4pm. Food is served 10am to 3pm Call 01525 287120 to book
- We are always on the look-out for folk who would like to get involved in community rail as volunteer 'Station Friends' at their local station - further details from officer@marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk
- To see what's going on at Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership please visit www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk or 'like' our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/marstonvalecrp/>





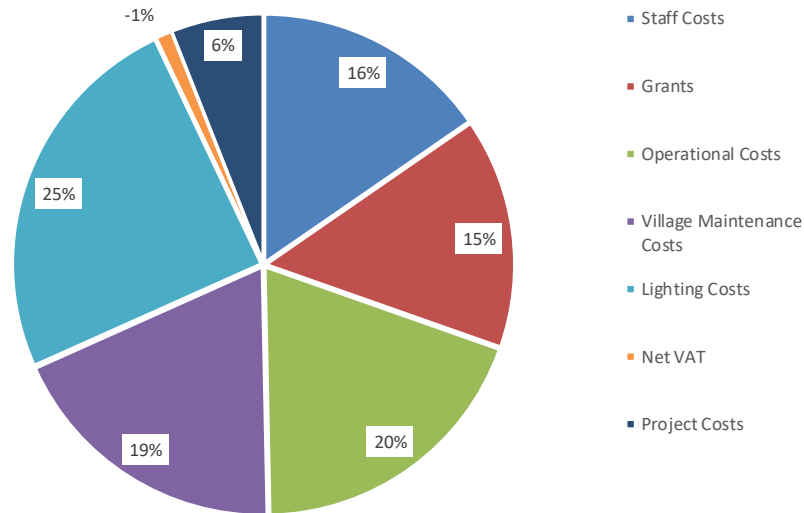
- There is now a limited train service running on the Marston Vale with line rail-replacement buses continuing to fill in the gaps. However, from Saturday 24 July 2021 until Saturday 4 September 2021: On Saturdays, buses will run in place of trains on the Marston Vale Line (Bedford – Bletchley).
- Please also continue to buy train tickets from the Ticket Vending Machines at stations (card only), any staffed rail station or online before travel as the Rail Replacement Bus drivers are unable to issue train tickets.
- A further increase ('uplift' in railway parlance) in train services is planned for September and we will provide further details when this is confirmed. In the meantime, please check online before you travel.



Finance update: Current year
1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022
As at 27th July 2021

More information can be found on
our website under Agendas,
Financial Summary

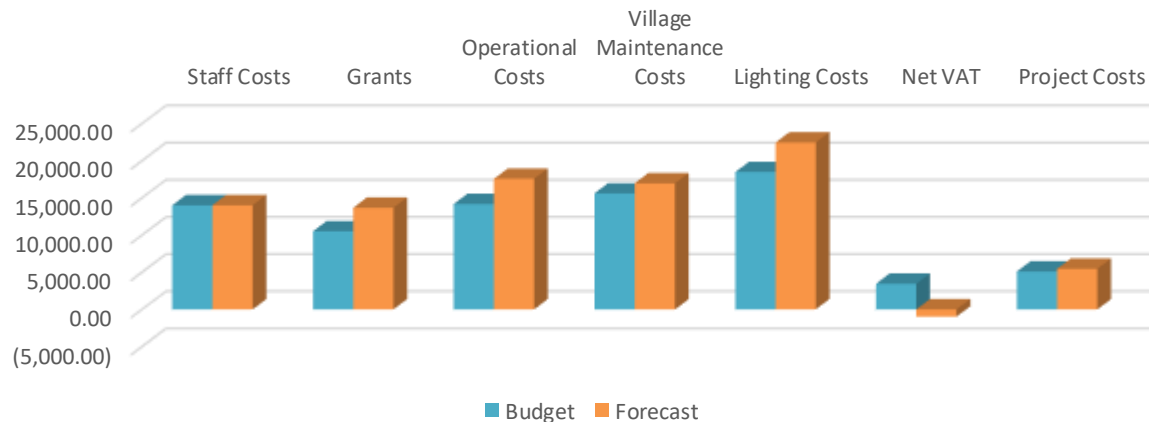
FY2021 cost types as a % of total forecast expenditure



General Reserve ONLY

	£
Bal Carried forward 1/4/21	49,290.06
Actuals to date Apr-Jul	(10,296.23)
Forecast Aug to Mar	(13,694.69)
Forecast Closing Bal 31/3/22	25,299.14

FY2021 AGPC Forecast expenditure vs. Budget



Your Councillors



Stewart Bailey
Chairman



Tim Raper
Vice Chairman



Barrie Plasom
Councillor



Tamsin Lee-woolfe
Councillor



Matt Bird
Councillor



Saran Andrews
Councillor



Richard Davis
Councillor

There are 5 Councillor vacancies. Please contact clerk@aspleyguiseparishcouncil.gov.uk for more information.



Useful contacts

Helping Hands Aspley Guise: 07923 490001

Grand Union Housing emergency repairs:

Jeakins & Weir: General repairs 01525 722290

Weldons: Plumbing & heating (Phone menu option 3) 0800 1777003

Central Bedfordshire Council Main switchboard: 0300 300 8301

Anglian Water General enquiries and emergencies: 0845 714 5145

Electricity emergencies: Western Power Distribution 0800 6783 105 (for Hutton Way and lower part of Weathercock Close), UKPN for the rest of Aspley Guise 0800 029 4285

Aspley Guise Emergency contacts:

Central Bedfordshire Council Duty Emergency Planning Officer on 07964 111942

Parish Clerk 07579 809474

clerk@aspleyguiseparishcouncil.gov.uk

Cllr Richard Davis Plan Administrator on 07981 715499

Pauline Hawley Volunteer community resilience champion on 07738 164224

Jayne Owen Deputy Community Emergency Response Team Coordinator on 07786 331623

Contact Details for the Parish Council:

Parish Clerk: Lynne Simons

Email: clerk@aspleyguiseparishcouncil.gov.uk

Mobile: 07579 809474

Website: www.aspleyguiseparishcouncil.gov.uk

If you would like to be kept up to date with news from AGPC and be sent our newsletters, please subscribe via the home page on our new website.

Or follow us on Facebook via: Aspley Guise Parish Council

Please remember to like our page to receive up to date news.





ASPLEY GUISE PARISH COUNCIL