Warden's Notes: March 2026

Hello



This is the latest of an occasional series of personal notes by me, Martin Stuart, the Parish Warden, where I talk about what's happening in Grappenhall and Thelwall, what work I've been doing recently and bring you some pictures of the amazing wealth of natural beauty and wildlife that I come across whilst travelling around the parish.

I work 16 hours a week patrolling the highways, footpaths and public places in the parish keeping them free from litter and clear of overhanging growth and weeds along with any other tasks that need doing. I also act as the 'eyes and ears' of the Parish Council by resolving problems that occur or reporting them to other authorities. I like to think that I act as an ambassador for the Parish Council, being out and about around the parish and being able to talk to lots of residents. So, if you see me around (wearing my hi-vis vest that says what I am) stop and have a chat or at least say hello.

I also now have a role as Neighbourhood Plan coordinator for part of my working time, helping to put together the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish currently being prepared by a Steering Group of volunteers. (I was, after all, a professional Town Planner for the 40 years prior to starting this job.)

Community Litter Picking

We have now agreed our Community Litter Picking programme for the year. There will be two Community Litter Picks this year, the first one on Saturday 25th April at All Saints Church in Thelwall. As usual, it will commence at 10 am and all equipment will be provided along with a drink and light refreshment.

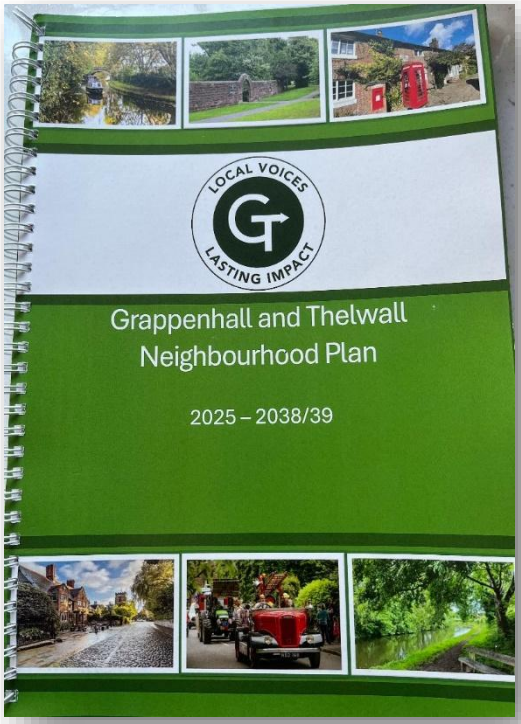
The second event will be run from the Parish Council Office at Bellhouse Lane in Grappenhall on Saturday 12th September with the same times and arrangements as the Thelwall event.

Let us know if you can help by telephoning or emailing the Parish Council office or just turn up on the day.

If you would like to be placed on our database so as to be sent an email reminder shortly before the next litter pick just telephone the Parish Council office on 01925 264918 or drop a line to info@gtpc.org.uk or alternatively, just keep an eye on the Parish Council noticeboards.

Neighbourhood Plan

As mentioned above, I now work a few hours a week helping to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. It is a community-led statutory document that allows local people to set out a shared vision for the future development of the area. This is seen as particularly important in view of the fairly large scale development allocated for this area in the Warrington Local Plan.



The important public consultation phase of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has now finished and we are busy analysing all the hundreds of comments made on the draft plan, the vast majority of which were broadly supportive.

The next stage of the formal process for getting the plan approved as part of the Local Plan for Warrington (and therefore the document used to decide planning applications) is to submit a version of the plan (revised if necessary) to Warrington Council who will put it out for a second round of public consultation.

Any comments made at this stage will be passed directly to an Independent Examiner who will assess the plan and decide whether it needs any changes to meet the legal requirements. He/she will also make a recommendation as to whether it should be the subject of a public referendum.

Any such referendum will be organised by Warrington Council and will be open to all electors in the Parish. In order for the plan to be approved, it will be necessary for it to gain a more than 50% ‘Yes’ vote.

Jubilee Park

As ever we have been busy maintaining the chidren’s play equipment in Jubilee Park which is, of course, subject to a considerable amount of wear and tear in it’s daily use.

The first two pictures show ‘before’ and ‘after’ shots of the small slide which had been the subject of a nasty graffiti attack. We moved quickly to remove it as I am a firm believer that graffiti/damage left untreated tends to invite further damage.

As you can see, it came away fairly easily with the specialist graffiti removal liquid that we have.





The second set of pictures show the see-saw in the play area which, mysteriously keeps losing the two-part rubber pad which children are meant to sit on. Fortunately we managed to retrieve the missing part both times and concluded that the nuts holding the two parts together must have been pulled through the rubber holes in which they sat.

Having solved the mystery, the solution (I hope!) was to put washers under the nuts to stop them being pulled through.





Defibrillators

You may have noticed the several defibrillators fastened to walls around the Parish. These green or yellow boxes contain vital life-saving equipment which the Parish Council has undertaken to service i.e. to ensure that the ‘pads’ within them are not out of date, that their batteries are functioning and that any equipment within them is replaced after being used.

It also agreed recently to provide a further defibrillator (or defib) on the gable end of the Barley Road shops in Thelwall, facing on to Stanton Road (pictured below.)



However, checking this defib and the one on Thelwall Parish Hall I discovered that they had both lost their mains power supply. It is of course important to say at the outset that mains power is not required for the defibs to operate – they have their own batteries for that purpose - but mains power is needed to operate the light in the unit and to power the heater inside them that stops the equipment from freezing up in cold weather.

We therefore took swift action to restore power to this defib and the owners of Thelwall Parish Hall are taking similar action with their defib

Thelwall War Memorial

The Parish Council has recently taken responsibility for the maintenance of Thelwall War Memorial which is situated at the junction of Bell Lane and Lymm Road. In addition to being in need of some care and attention it was found that the many box shrubs on the site had been killed by an infestation of box tree caterpillars.

We have therefore removed the dead box shrubs and given the site a general tidy-up prior to a more ambitious redesign of the planted areas being undertaken.

Thr pictures below show a view of the war memorial with the shrubs removed and ‘before’ and ‘after’ the tidy-up.



Sign Cleaning

Another, probably little-noticed task that we have taken on is to clean road signs that get covered in dirt or a sort of green algae, particularly where they are situated under trees, to the extent that they become almost illegible in the worst cases.

Below is an example of signs at the top of Stanton Road in Thelwall.



Path Clearance

We were recently alerted to a muddy and overgrown footway on Stockport Road, just by where Deans Lane goes off. Ever alert, Bradley and I hot-footed it there and managed to clear and smarten up the relevant piece of footway. See pictures below.





Nature and Wildlife

My final picture shows the beautiful spring display of crocuses and narcissi on the grass verge on Stockport Road opposite Deans Lane. They are the product of a contract let by the Parish Council to a firm who have planted a mix of bulbs which will flower throughout the spring/early summer and come back over the following years. Apparently, they are all species which are particularly nutritious to bees and therefore will improve the biodiversity of the Parish.

In future years we will roll this programme forward by planting at more locations throughout the Parish.



Fly tipping, fly posting and litter

And finally, finally, if you come across examples of fly-tipping, fly-posting or large concentrations of litter within the parish that we can clear up (or where there are larger items involved which Warrington Council will move) please let us know by contacting the Parish Council on **01925 264918** or info@gtpc.org.uk

I can't promise to always deal with everything reported instantly but can usually deal with most things reported within the week in order to keep the parish as clean and shiny as we all want it to be.