

Warden's Notes: May 2024

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.

Neighbourhood Plan

Now that Warrington's Local Plan has been finally adopted as the statutory development plan for the borough, the parish council has resumed preparation of its Neighbourhood Plan for the parish. The intention is that we can add value to the local plan policies by preparing local policy to a finer grain to reflect the particular characteristics of the local area and to reflect the views of local people.

Following a well-attended public meeting a steering group has been formed to carry forward the preparation of the plan, a planning consultant appointed to guide us and regular meetings are held. There will, of course, be many more opportunities for the public to see and comment on the plan as it progresses.

And me? Well I've been seconded away from *wardening* for one morning a week to help with the project. (Planning is, after all, what I did for the previous 40 years before I started this job.) Environmental work around the parish will not suffer as Bradley has been given an extra 4 hours work a week to compensate for my loss.

Community Litter Picks

The first of this year's community litter picks was held on Saturday 20th April in, surprisingly, bright spring sunshine from the council office on Bellhouse Lane.

With a reasonable turnout of 11 people we managed to fill some 16 bags with litter including some fairly sizeable items pulled out of the hedge alongside the canal on Chester Road.

I never seem to get the right litter pick pictures of happy smiling faces having completed the picking. (Perhaps I need to adopt the bullying tactics of your average wedding photographer!) The picture below at least shows my vehicle full of litter bags.



The future litter picks for this year will be on Saturday 8th June at All Saints Church in Thelwall and on Saturday 28th September back at the council office on Bellhouse Lane, all at the usual time of 10am. Make a note in your diary and come and join us.

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

Picnic Tables at the Walled Garden

I don't know if you've visited Grappenhall Heys Walled Garden recently (which the parish council owns and operates) but if you have you can't have failed to notice the magnificent new picnic tables at the outside seating area by the café.

The parish council commissioned the tables from Thelwall Mens Shed who made the tables to replace the previous ones which were rotting away and well past their best.

Bradley and I merely assisted in setting up the new tables and taking away and disposing of the old ones.

Thelwall Mens Shed is an amazing organisation which combats loneliness and isolation while supporting the wider community through craft and activity. The picture below shows the new tables in place at the Walled Garden.



Park Benches

Talking of benches, you may have noticed the new bench and table set installed at Jubilee Park.



It's metal so won't rot or burn like the previous one and even has space for a wheelchair to pull up to the table.

There's another similar one to be installed at Diamond Park once the weather permits but which hopefully will be in place by the time these *notes* are published.

Yet another feature installed in our parks to encourage a range of activities by people of all ages and interests.

Wildflowers in Morris Brook Park

I recently helped facilitate a project by Marfield Women's Institute to plant wildflowers and daffodils in Morris Brook Park. When I say "*helped*" there should be no doubt that these doughty ladies did all the hard work of raking and planting the seeds and bulbs, as shown in the pictures below, whilst I stood by and watched. My role was confined to marking off the planted area with temporary paint and ensuring that those mowing the grass in the park do not also mow the wildflowers !



Nature and Wildlife

I recently undertook one of the more satisfying tasks of this job which is to walk the full length of the Bridgewater canal within the parish – that is from Lumb Brook Road to almost the M6 motorway – to pick litter and note any other issues.

As well as being a beautiful and scenic route it's also brimming with wildlife. The pics below show, firstly, an irresistible mother duck and her 13 tiny ducklings. (I know the first picture doesn't show 13 but that's because 4 had become separated by my presence but the second picture shows they were subsequently reunited in the water.)



Then further along the canal I also snapped these two beauties, a magnificent swan and the heron about to launch into the air.



And finally, I couldn't resist putting up these two pics of local flora, the first being carpets of wild garlic at the back of Chaigeley School at Thelwall and the second being blue, white and even pink bells alongside the Bridgewater canal.



Fly tipping and litter

And finally, finally, if you come across examples of fly-tipping or large concentrations of litter within the parish that I 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.