

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting 1 May 2024

The local Government act of 1972 requires that an assembly of the parish electorate is held each year and this is usually chaired by the Parish Council Chairman. The meeting is to provide an opportunity of giving an overview of the Parish Council's activities during the previous 12 months and to give members of the public an opportunity to ask questions about the service we provide and to raise any other matters that fall within the jurisdiction of the Parish Council.

In this respect, I know that on occasions there can be a general perception that the work of the Parish Council is conducted at eleven meetings each year but, in fact, those meetings are merely the tip of the iceberg. They are actually the culmination of many hours spent on case work, in discussion groups, working parties and the various Parish Council committee groups. The Parish Council is also represented on a number of external committee groups and Councillors regularly attend meetings of HS2, Birmingham Airport Consultative Committee, Marston Green Parish Hall, Marston Green Village Trust and the Solihull Area Meetings.

In addition to the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of the Memorial Garden, the Chapel Garden, the Recreation Ground, the Burial Ground, Millennium Wood and the various planters in and around Marston Green, every year the Parish Council organises the Remembrance Day Service at the Garden of Memory and arranges for the Christmas Lights and the installation of the Christmas Trees.

In addition to the regular annual projects, however, each year new projects are proposed, designed and launched and, as I have already mentioned, there is always a need to maintain and upkeep the green areas and the planters for which the Parish Council has responsibility.

It is now my pleasure to present a report of just some the activities and the projects with which the Parish Council has been involved since May 2023.

1. There has been ongoing communication with a landowner regarding the possible acquisition of land for the extension of the Burial Ground.
2. It has been necessary for CCTV cameras with ANPR equipment to be installed at the Recreation Ground, following regular occurrences of antisocial behaviour.
3. An extremely successful and memorable Coronation Day event, involving a number of local community groups, was held at Marston Green Parish Hall and enjoyed by many members of the public.
4. A bench was purchased and installed at Millenium Wood commemorating the Coronation of King Charles III.
5. A donation was made to St. Leonards Church towards a trip to Weston Super Mare.
6. New signage and road markings were arranged at the recreation Ground and a trip rail was installed on the 3Ms field to provide a desperately needed increased parking facility.
7. A donation was made to the Challenge Adventure Group for tree work on the Vicar's Field.
8. A delightfully enjoyable and successful Community Event Day was held at the Recreation Ground involving many local groups. (It is anticipated that this will become an annual event and work is well in hand for another such event in September, together with an event to celebrate the 80th anniversary of The D Day Landings in June.)
9. A public meeting was arranged with the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner. This was following one or two incidents that had occurred at the Recreation Ground and the

Parish Office which were reported to West Midlands Police but were subsequently closed with no apparent investigation having taken place.

10. A donation was made to Marston Green Gardening Club.

11. A donation was made to the Royal British Legion Poppy Fund.

The above items are merely a taste of the projects with which the Parish Council has been involved and none of these would have been as successful without the proficiency and competence of the Parish Council staff. It is because of Nikki and Tony, our groundsmen, and Wendy, our deputy clerk, so ably managed by Julie, our Parish Clerk, that we make such significant progress towards our goals and I am confident that we will continue to succeed with their tremendous support.

At this point I want to make specific mention of Millennium Wood. It is an asset of which we are particularly proud. Regardless of the season and the weather it is always so picturesque, and I am pleased to mention that children from Audley School pay regular visits to Millennium Wood for forest school sessions where they spend time out of doors learning about wood craft and all aspects of nature. RSPB members also regularly carry out mist netting at the wood providing interesting information about the bird population, including the varieties and migration patterns etc. It was also in the wood where Marston Green Scout Group held their Easter Fun Weekend which proved extremely successful and was attended by many.

Councillors Jon Horton and Sue Rogers left the Parish Council this year and I want to pass on our thanks to Jon and Sue for their involvement and their expertise which proved to have been so helpful during their time with the Parish Council. We miss them both and wish them well in all they are doing now.

Cllr Philip Clover was co-opted to the Parish Council on the Bickenhill Ward in February. Welcome Phil.

A notice advising of casual vacancies has now expired, and the three Councillor vacancies have now been advertised with a view to co-opting so that we have a full contingent of Parish Councillors.

Finally, I would again like to express my thanks to you for allowing me to have held the position of Parish Council Chairman again this year, as I mentioned last year it has been an honour, a privilege and a pleasure.