



The Yew Tree

October 2011

Newsletter for Keele Parish Council

Keele Parish Councillors

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Sue Hughes

Wenslie Naylor (Chair)

Val Newman

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Robin Studd

Jane Tillier

Sue Wedgwood (Vice-Chair)

What Can the Parish Council Do For You?

The Open Forum at the start of each Parish Council meeting is proving successful.

The issue of poor broadband services in the Parish was raised at Open Forum, and not only were we able to make residents aware of the County Council survey, the issue has now been raised at the Borough Council, which is trying to obtain funding for improvements in the area.

Road signs in Highway Lane are also being replaced after their poor state of repair was brought to the attention of the Council in the Open Forum.

Following the publication of a Feasibility Study for the Village by Staffordshire County Council, which proposes a zebra crossing from the campus to the village, residents attended the Open Forum to express their views to the council.

So no matter how large or small the subject, if there is anything you would like the Parish Council to do – come along and let us know.

Zebra Crossing for the Village

Staffordshire County Council have produced a Feasibility Report for The Village focused on traffic and pedestrian movement in the village with special regard to access to the school, traffic speed reduction, bus turning movements and the environment for the village tree. The initial result is the provision of a zebra crossing from the campus to Keele Road, thus providing safer access to Quarry Bank Road and the school. The university is funding the work that needs to be done on the campus side of the crossing.

The Parish Council welcome the crossing, but would like to see more done to slow down traffic through the village in general and to reduce the complexity of the 5 way junction by the Yew Tree. We would like to see the section of road where the bus stops designated “Buses Only”, and even with the crossing we feel more needs to be done to reduce speeding vehicles.

New Gates on Quarry Bank

Some of you will have noticed the concrete blocks that turned Quarry Bank into a cul-de-sac. These were removed by Staffordshire County Council following the installation of substantial new gates. The gates have been installed to help enforce the use of Quarry Bank for “Access Only”, as indicated by signage at both ends of the road. To this effect it is important that the gates are kept closed. It is not intended for the gates to be locked as this would deny access when required.



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Working with Keele University

The Parish Council invited the new Vice-Chancellor (Nick Foskett) to attend the September Council meeting. With a relatively new Parish Council and a new VC we have an excellent opportunity to work together to improve the parish. An example of this is the university's support for the zebra crossing.

The VC was asked to give a brief summary of the plans for the university, and this included:

- Recognition for delivering high quality teaching & research
- Minimal increase in student numbers (currently c.9,500 & not to exceed 10,000)
- Widening participation by recruiting new students through non traditional routes
- Increasing the number of international students from c.10% to 15%
- Focusing on courses with a social impact, e.g. Medicine, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy
- Improving sustainability – the goal is to have a carbon neutral footprint
- Supporting enterprise as in the Science Park, but also providing courses & opportunities for students to develop business ideas

The Parish Council offered to get involved with officers of the university to try and resolve some of the issues that inevitably arise when a large organisation and a rural village/community are in close contact. Parking in the village was immediately identified as an issue that would arise with the start of term, and unfortunately the application for a Traffic Regulation Order on Quarry Bank Road has been moved down in priority for consideration by the Joint Parking Committee because, according to a County Highways officer, it is 'linked to the University application regarding the Hawthorns development proposals'. The Parish Council are challenging this decision.

Planning

Keele University appealed against the refusal of their planning application for a hotel on the campus opposite the Medical School. Following a visit by the planning inspector to the borough and the proposed site for the hotel, permission has now been granted.

Broadband Services

Thanks to all who participated in the County Council broadband survey. The poor service in the area has been highlighted and is now being discussed at cabinet level in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council. The borough council are now bidding for some of the £7million funding that is available through the county council to improve services.

Vision for Keele Parish

The councillors would love to hear from residents about the services that you would like to see in Keele. We may only have a small budget, but we want to use it to maximum effect so let us know what we could do that would improve the parish for you.

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