

Disley Parish Council Annual Report 2023/24

Chair's review of Disley Parish Council's (DPC) activities for 2023/24 prepared by Cllr. Simon Brownbill.

Introduction

As our community continues to develop and grow, this past year has proven to be yet another busy period for the Parish Council. We now boast a record nine councillors, among whom is Cllr. Sue Adams, who also serves as our Cheshire East Ward Councillor. I wish to acknowledge Cllr. Adams for her tireless efforts, which have played a crucial role in reinstating a clearer demarcation between the functions of the Parish Council and Cheshire East. Whilst the situation at Cheshire East remains challenging, I am confident that we have the very best representation.

I also extend my gratitude to my fellow councillors and council staff for their tireless dedication, often exceeding expectations to deliver top-notch services for our community. Additionally, I express deep appreciation for the numerous volunteers who work alongside us contributing significantly to enhance life in Disley and Newtown.

Furthermore, I want to take this opportunity to offer a special thank you to Richard Holland, the Parish Clerk for the past eight years. Richard's leadership has been transformative for the Council, and he deserves our sincerest thanks and our very best wishes for his retirement.

Election of Officers for the year 2023/24

Borough and Town/Parish elections were held on 4th May 2023 at which five new Parish councillors and a new Cheshire East Council ward councillor were elected. At the Annual Parish Council Meeting held in May 2023, the Council appointed:

- Chair of the Council – Cllr. Simon Brownbill.
- Vice Chair – Cllr. Jackie Pattison.
- Chair of the Planning Committee – Cllr. Jackie Pattison.
- Chair of the Finance Committee – Cllr. Jean Windsor.

The chair recorded thanks to all the out-going Councillors for their efforts on behalf of the village. Cllr. Brownbill outlined his hopes that the larger, and more diverse, Council would be able to take on new initiatives and that there would be stronger engagement with Cheshire East Council.

Disley Parish Council Services and activities

1. Community Centre

- The Community Hall was utilised by regular hirers most weekdays and evenings and weekend bookings included Messy Church, children's birthday parties and many fund-raising events. The council continues to receive regular enquiries about hall availability.

- The Parish Council welcomed a new weekly hirer, the FIT Programme social exercise class.
- Saturday coffee mornings – the majority of Saturdays were booked with the library kindly covering any gaps.
- The programme of improvements at the Centre continued in 2023/24 with new chairs and curtains and renovation of the hall floor. Outside the building, additional hardstanding was installed front and back and new benches and bins were fitted.
- A 50" display monitor, donated by Cheshire East Council, was installed in the library window to advertise events and news for the village.

2. Ranger Service

Projects and work undertaken by the two Council Rangers in 2023/24 included:

- Installing benches and bins at the Community Centre.
- Installing new cycle racks, picnic table and fencing at Newtown Play Area.
- Renovating the youth shelter at the Station Ball Court.
- Installing a new defibrillator at Newtown Playing Fields.
- Removing fly tipping from village hotspots.
- Maintaining Council assets such as the Community Bus, Ranger Van, allotment sites and play equipment.
- Partnering on specific projects with village groups such as Disley Footpaths Society and the Friends of Disley Station.
- Dressing the village for events such as Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Extravaganza.
- Regular tidying, litter picking, strimming, hedge-cutting and improvement work in the village centre.

3. Community Bus Scheme:

- A full programme of social trips has been provided throughout the year, many of which have been fully booked.
- Outings included pub lunches, garden centres, shopping trips and day trips to Holmfirth, Llangollen, Port Sunlight, Haworth, Colwyn Bay and many more.
- The Weekly Shoppers Group continued to be well utilised, providing a vital service to some less mobile residents.
- A team of 13 volunteer drivers gave their time and support to the scheme, for which the Council is truly grateful.
- Some new groups hired the bus during the year, and it was used as a shuttle service for Disley Show and the Community Bonfire and Firework display at Disley Golf Club.

4. Allotments:

- The Council owns 34 allotment plots across Hagg Bank, Springfield and Greystones in Newtown.

- 7 new tenants were welcomed over the past 12 months and the waiting list stands at 6 people.
- Two site inspections were carried out during the year to ensure that plots were fully cultivated and well-maintained.
- Council Rangers continued to maintain paths and vacant plots and undertook some minor tree and hedge work.

5. Parks and Play Areas.

All Council play areas and the outdoor gym are subject to an annual independent safety inspection as well as monthly safety inspections by the Parks and Assets Ranger, who is ROSPA Play Area Inspection qualified.

Newtown:

- The new changing rooms are now fully operational.
- An external defibrillator was fitted to the changing room wall.
- The play area was relandscaped with new play area surfacing, fencing, gate, picnic bench and bins installed.
- A Community Tree Planting session in the top field created a new wood in memory of Queen Elizabeth II.

Station ballcourt:

- The ballcourt shelter was re-painted and the lights over the ballcourt were repaired.

Memorial Park

- Extensive bush and tree pruning was undertaken.
- The Jubilee stone and Memorial plinth have been cleaned.

6. Electric Vehicle ChargePoint:

- The Parish Council's EV ChargePoint at the Community Centre continues to be well used and averaged 75 vends per month.

7. Tree Management:

- The Parish Council commissioned a Trees' Safety Condition Assessment for all trees on Council land in March 2024.
- All Priority 1 (High) and some Priority 2 (Medium) work is due to be completed in 2024.
- Tree work is completed by a specialist tree surgeon, with smaller jobs undertaken by the Parks and Assets Ranger who has a City & Guilds Level 2 Crosscutting and maintenance qualification.

8. Communications:

- The Council's monthly eBulletin had 734 subscribers, receiving news updates and details of local events etc.

- Two editions of the Disley News hardcopy newsletter were distributed in the year. This was hand delivered to every home and businesses in Disley and Newtown.
- The website at www.disleyparishcouncil.org.uk was regularly updated with council meeting information, news and events etc.
- The Council's freelance Media Assistant continued to increase the council's presence on social media and contributed to the eBulletin, Disley News and website.

9. Village Events:

The Parish Council has organised a varied programme of events over the past 12 months, including:

- **Coronation Weekend in May** – the Council decorated the village for the Coronation celebrations with Union Flags over the bins and planters, flags down Market Street and bunting at the Ram Green.
- **Civic Sunday** – Chair of the Council, Cllr. Simon Brownbill hosted this event in October which included the awarding of Community Star Awards. (See below).
- **Remembrance Sunday** – this was very well-attended and was a poignant occasion. The Parish Council engaged a Traffic Management company, supported by volunteers, to halt traffic at the Ram's Head crossroads to ensure the Service of Remembrance has due gravitas.
- **Christmas Extravaganza** – Fireworks, Santa's Grotto, face painting, festive food and live music all made the extravaganza one of the highlights of the community year. The Christmas trees, Nativity scene and Disley's unique big presents gave the village a wonderful festive atmosphere.
- **Litter picks** – the Council organised two successful community litter picks in 2023.

10. Planning:

- During the year 2023/2024, the Parish Council debated and submitted comments on 39 planning applications.

11. Civic Awards and Commendations:

- 2023 saw the launch of the Parish Council's new Community Star Awards and a brand-new youth award presented in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- The awards acknowledged the extraordinary contributions made by Disley & Newtown residents to the lives of others in the local community. The 2023 recipients were:

Community Star Awards:

- Jane Ball for her tireless work of many years as a volunteer for 1st Disley Beavers.

- Helen Boardman for her dedication in looking out for the elderly in the community and being such a good neighbour to all.
- Kevin Breegan for litter picking, maintaining the Baptist Church gardens and making the Ram's Head bowling green such a beautiful space.
- Sarah Bunnage for providing volunteer support to the children of Disley Primary School as well as being a School Governor and supporting her neighbours in the wider community.
- Lindsey Pollard for her many acts of kindness including providing residents with transport, and helping with Cuppa an' a Chat, Good Neighbours and Community Speedwatch.

QEII Youth Awards:

- Connie Dean and Isabelle Payne for volunteering with 1st Disley Beavers as Young Leaders and being consistently helpful, cheerful and positive and being real assets to the Scouting community and to the whole village.

Civic Commendation:

- Jackie Pringle of Slimming World, Disley for her tireless dedication to supporting residents on their weight loss and healthy eating programmes.

12. Parish Council enquiry service:

- The Parish Council dealt with 64 logged enquiries in 2023/24.
- The main issues related to roads and pavements (28%), streetlighting (16%) and overgrown hedges and trees (9%).
- Other enquiries included drains and flooding, roadworks, disposal of dead animals, inconsiderate parking, vandalism and graffiti and fly tipping.
- The Council continued to signpost residents to many outside bodies such as Cheshire East Council, BT, United Utilities, Cheshire Police, the Environment Agency and Peaks & Plains Housing Trust.

13. Community Grants:

In 2023/24 the Parish Council awarded Community Grants to:

- Disley Arts Society – for posters and flyers for a recruitment campaign.
- 1st Disley Scouts – for new dome tents for younger members.
- Ram's Head Bowling Club – for children's bowling kits to encourage youth involvement.
- Disley Community Choir – for the cost of a musical accompanist.
- Basement Youth Club – for a laptop for competitions and games.
- Disley Parochial Church Council – for a musical proms event.

14. Village Health and Well-being:

- Defibrillator and CPR Training – the Parish Council organised free community defib and CPR training in June.
- Warm Places – The Parish Council supported Warm Places initiatives during the winter months, such as soup and a roll lunches, a programme of Sunday afternoon film shows at Disley Community Centre and refreshments for users of Disley Library. It is hoped that these initiatives will restart in the Autumn.
- The Parish Council supported many other health and well-being activities such as Disley Friends Group for carers and the cared for, Disley Bereavement Group and FIT Classes for falls prevention.
- The Council also promoted and hosted health and well-being events such as an NHS Menopause Session, Community Connect for people with a learning disability and Time to Talk dementia advice,

15. Flexilink Bus Service: The Parish Council collaborated with Ansa to introduce a weekly Flexilink bus service from Disley to Handforth Dean and Poynton on alternate Tuesday mornings. Over 35 Disley and Newtown residents registered with the service and passenger feedback was excellent

16. Air Quality:

The Parish Council and Cheshire East Environmental Health partnered to install a real-time analyser (RTA) near the Dandy Cock to measure particulates as well nitrogen dioxide levels. This has allowed far more regular and accurate air quality data to be collected in the village.

17. Disley and Newtown Parish Strategy

Councillors and Council Officers dedicated a day off site to develop a new Disley and Newtown Parish Strategy for the next four years. This is due to be published in Summer 2024.

Specific projects and activities for 2024/25

- Community Centre – Further improvements are planned to include non-slip flooring in the foyer, rear entrance and toilets, replacement windows for hall, library and Clerk's office, plumbing improvements and a new storeroom in the rear lobby.
- Disley Community Showcase – An event in July will showcase the fantastic array of clubs, societies and interest groups in Disley and Newtown.
- Arnold Rhodes Playing Field – Improvements will include repairs to the play area surfacing, new goalposts and surfacing around the goalposts and the installation of car park barriers.