



Lathom South Parish Council

servicing our local community



Newsletter 31

Spring 2023

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Lathom South Parish Council newsletter which we hope will give an insight to what the Parish Council has achieved in recent months and what it hopes to be involved with in the months ahead.

We start with a note from the Chairman...

Parish Precept

Every year, the Parish Council has to report to the Borough Council (WLBC) the amount that it wishes to raise over the new financial year to fund its budget requirements (the 'precept'). No Parish Council is immune to rising costs but our Councillors have been keen to keep down the demands on local householders at this time of severe financial pressures. Thus, the budget requirement for 2023/4 has been held at last year's level through tight controls on spending, where possible, and financial reserves will be used, if necessary.

Even though the financial requirement, which forms the Parish component of your Council Tax demand, is not rising, your Council Tax demand from WLBC shows an increase of 0.9%. This can only be because there are more empty properties in the Parish than there were last year or possibly because the same sized reduction was reported erroneously last year. (The change is based on WLBC's assessment of the number of "band D equivalent" properties in the Parish).



Looking forward to next year and the year after, the number of households in the Parish is expected to rise so this should not result in large percentage increases in those years.

Whilst this increase in housing will give residents a useful respite from rising costs on average, additional households also impose increased costs on the Parish Council, meaning that the total precept will rise over time. Also, the threat of huge levels of housebuilding at inflated market prices in the area of the Parish would damage the very qualities that have attracted people to live here. Our commitment to defend the Green Belt remains as strong as ever. Consequently, we will continue to scrutinise future plans and also any amendments to existing plans and will comment, object or make suggestions as we see fit.



A newcomers perspective

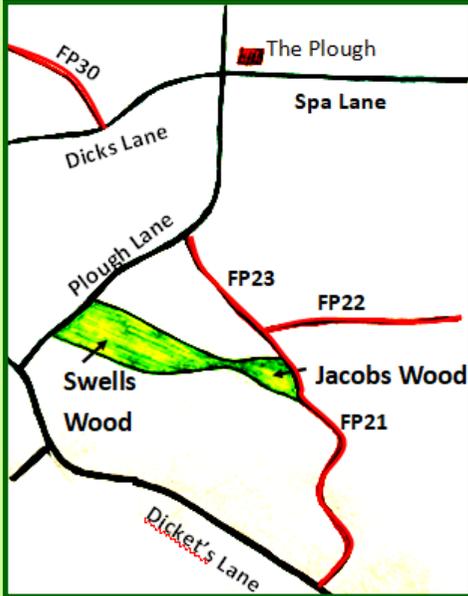
By Cllr Darren Steele

As a new councillor (since February 2023) I'd like to share my thoughts on what it is that our Parish Council does for us, the residents of Lathom South.

We meet once per month in Skelmersdale Cricket Club at 7.30pm on the second Wednesday of each month. The public are most welcome to attend the meetings where tea/coffee and biscuits are served. During the meetings we will talk through the agenda. Regular agenda items seem to be issues with all the building that is taking place in our area by Bellway and Wain Homes. The Parish Council keep a close eye on planning applications and modifications by Bellway/Wain as they seem to change quite frequently usually to the detriment of our local community and open spaces.

Another regular item is Jacobs and Swells woods. For those that don't know these are the wooded areas on the old disused railway line that used to run into Ormskirk. The woods can be accessed via Plough Lane or through the metal kissing gate off Footpath 21. The Parish Council own these woods and

we regularly plant trees and bulbs in the area as well as use some of our funds to keep the space managed.



In the past the Parish Council have erected footpath signs, benches to rest on and various noticeboards with information about what's going on. The Parish Council also use funds to keep some of our public footpaths clear in the Summer months and to pay for an annual litter pick.

Attending Council meetings and being a part of the Council is a wonderful way to keep abreast of what's happening in your local area and what changes are coming in the future. I thoroughly encourage anyone that is civic minded to attend the meetings if possible.

A date for your diary

Annual General Meeting
and
Annual Parish Assembly
10th May 2023

Agendas will be available on the Parish website and displayed on the Parish noticeboards from 3rd May 2023.

Firwood Road Traffic

We have long been concerned about the dangers posed to pedestrians and cyclists using Firwood Road. Lancashire County Council's (LCC's) recommendations to allow access from Firwood Road to two new housing developments from the road, instead following the adopted development guide, has made matters considerably worse.

Identified problem points are:

- Narrow sections of road with narrow or non-existent pavements
- The hazardous bend (approached over "slow" markings on the road), with outgrowing trees and bushes
- The national speed limit (60 mph) for vehicles travelling along the northern section of the road. This section also has the two problems mentioned above
- The junction of Firwood Road with Blaguegate Lane, where pedestrians emerging from Blaguegate Lane cannot see Firwood Road traffic approaching the junction (especially when they are turning left). Vehicles entering Firwood Road from the Ormskirk-bound carriageway of Blaguegate Lane regularly cut the corner, making it necessary for emerging vehicles to keep well to the left, leaving little margin for pedestrians
- The old, hump backed railway bridge, with a pavement so narrow and sloping steeply towards the road surface, where only one unaccompanied person, taking great care, can remain on the pavement. Vehicles often approach the apex of the bridge at too high a speed, risking vehicle collisions and personal injury to pedestrians, children in buggies and dogs.



Traffic calming has become a major priority for us but we have to tackle one problem spot at a time if we are to make reasonable progress towards making the road safer. Our first priority is to make proposals to Lancashire County Council to make the bridge crossing safer by sharing the cost of any agreed works that are within our spending power using CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds. We hope to attract a contribution from the two developers' payments to West Lancs Borough Council's (WLBC's) linear park funding on the grounds that those plans bring users of the linear park to the surface on the incline to the bridge. From that point, users will need to go over the bridge if they are to go to the nearest public footpaths. Cyclists, unfortunately, will have only two relatively unsafe options – to go south towards Blaguegate Lane or north over the bridge (probably walking).

Our proposal is to widen the pavement to at least 1.5 (preferably 2.0) metres, thus narrowing the road surface to enable only one stream of traffic to proceed at a time; this would be controlled by traffic lights. A similar arrangement exists on Junction Lane in Burscough.

We have been waiting for about a year to make this proposal but a promised County-wide scheme to enable such cost sharing arrangements to come forward has managed to find the "long grass". Nevertheless, our County Councillor (Rob Bailey) has told us that individual schemes may still be proposed and given proper consideration. We live in hope!

Milfoil Adonis Corn Cockle Alyssum Primula Borage

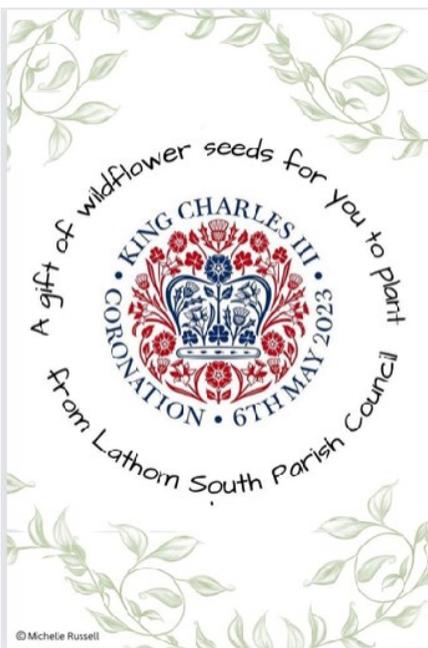
Columbine

Coronation Wildflowers

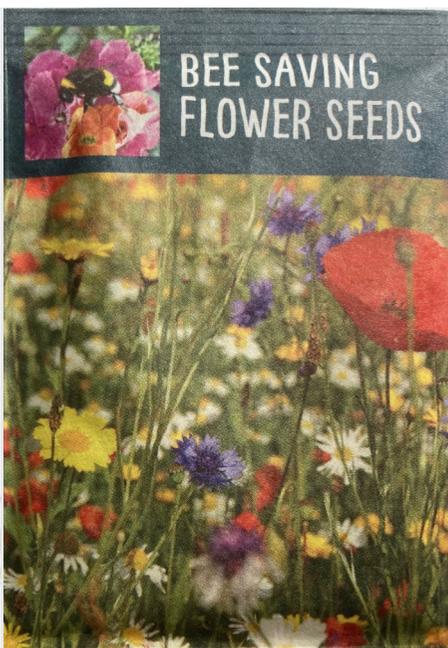
Pot Marigold

After being cooped up over the winter you may be thinking how to add to the beauty of the natural world around us. From back gardens to window boxes, any square foot of space can be transformed into an oasis for wild flowers and the species that depend on them. In celebration of the coronation of King Charles III, we have enclosed a packet of wild flower seeds for you to create your own small oasis.

Cornflower



Chrysanthemum



Wallflower

From the 1930s up to the 1980s over 97% of wild flower meadows were lost but they have increased in popularity over the last 20 years. Wildflowers provide bees, butterflies and other pollinators with a source of food throughout the season. Our favourite fruit and veg rely on pollinators to produce a good crop and the pollinators rely on wild flowers as a food source.

Flax

Chicory Love-in-a-mist Wild Mustard Forget-me-not

Sweet Rocket Honesty Evening Primrose Annual Borage

Daffodils

At the time of writing this article many of the verges in Lathom South Parish are bursting into colour as the daffodils begin to flower. This is always a welcome sign after the dark days of winter and heralds the brighter and warmer spring weather to come hopefully!

Most of these daffodils were planted by volunteers from South Lathom Residents Association before the formation of the Parish Council. In subsequent years the Parish Council planted more and also supplied some residents with bulbs to plant on roadsides or public rights of way.

It has been noted that there are some unplanted areas within the parish and it would be lovely to see these areas blooming in the future. Can you identify a suitable planting area? Would you be prepared to plant some bulbs? The Parish Council intend to obtain more bulbs later this year in the suitable Autumn planting period - please get in touch via our clerk if you would like some bulbs, providing a brief description of the planting area. The main requirement being that the area should be beside a road or public right of way so that the flowers will be visible for the benefit of all our residents.



Baby's Breath

Foxglove

Toadflax

Corn Chamomile

Soapwort

Poppy

Campion Nemophila Mallow Lupin Mignonette



Working together for a Community Defibrillator

The Parish Council are currently working with Skelmersdale Cricket Club and Community HeartBeat Trust to provide a Community Defibrillator which will be accessible 24/7 outside the cricket club on Blaguegate Lane.

We hope that the cricket club will be successful in gaining a grant through the English Cricket Board for partial funding of a defibrillator and the Parish Council will use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to cover the remaining costs and installation of this life-saving system. WLBC have already approved the use of CIL funds for this project which will include housing the defibrillator in a 24/7 monitored external storage cabinet.

Look out for further information in the coming months.

Want Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband - in our area?

Building the new Ultrafast Full Fibre broadband to the whole of the U.K. is a massive engineering project that will take Open Reach years to complete. But did you know the more people in a community or area that register their interest on the Open Reach website the more likely it is they'll come to your area –

help spread the word and get more people to register at

openreach.com/ultrafast

Pavement Parking

Pavement parking within the parish is becoming a huge problem. A recent survey showed that disabled, partially sighted and special needs people just don't like to go outdoors because of pavement parking, walking with your children is even worse when using a buggy.

The government has been moving forward with its debate on pavement parking. In London pavement parking has been banned for years, Wales and Scotland are now ready to introduce a total ban.

In our Council Area it is the Police that monitors pavement parking, they actually already have the authority for issuing min of £70 fines for obstruction of pavements.

Some of our local roads currently have a pavement parking problem, not only causing problems for pedestrians but also for other drivers whose vision is blocked at junctions. Please consider other road users, pedestrians and their needs, also consider the illegal parking implication that is breaking the law.



A walk in the woods

We're lucky in Lathom South to have not just one but two community woods - Jacobs Wood and Swells Wood. Jacobs Wood is with thanks to the generosity of the Jacobs family who have moved away. Swells Wood, which was acquired from Lancashire County Council, has a mixture of old woodland and a replanted former small arable field. Both currently have an informal path through them, on which parish residents and others are most welcome to walk (no cycles) and at this time of year enjoy the bluebells, which you may not have known were there. You may also be lucky enough to see some deer.

The parish council also has a project for additional planting and, if readers have any suggestions and specimens, please let us know.

This spring we have received 240 free saplings from the Woodland Trust to add diversity to our woods. Our thanks go to Crawford Scout Group, their leaders and families for planting the saplings for us.



And finally

We hope you have found this newsletter interesting and enjoy sowing the wild flowers seeds. We have a limited supply of additional packets of seeds if anyone would like extra packets, please contact our clerk to arrange collection.

You will also find news and information on our website, not just about the Parish Council, follow the 'News update' and 'Community Engagement' tab to access information about local community events such as the new Memories R Made Choir and changes to bus services etc.

The WLBC Community Briefing can also be downloaded directly from our website. This gives details on opportunities to get involved around the borough, provide your views, details on funding and support schemes, learning opportunities, wellbeing updates and much more.



We thank you for your patience as we iron out teething problems with the new website. If there are any features you would like to see added to the site please let our clerk know. All suggestions will be considered.

Contact Details

Clerk: Mrs Jane Smith
Oakdene, 1 Vale Lane, Lathom, L40 6JH
Telephone: 07495 970005

Email: lathomsouthpc.clerk@yahoo.com

Website: www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk

Your Parish Councillors are:

- Andrew Beeston
- Carol Blackledge (Vice-Chairman)
- Andrew Chanter
- Roger Clayton (Chairman)
- Ian Moran
- Ernie Pallas
- Darren Steele

All contact via the Clerk

**Meetings held at 7:30pm at the
Cricket Club, Blaguegate Lane, Lathom, WN8 8TY**
**Meetings are usually held on the second Wednesday of
the month but please check the website**

www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk

**Please contact the Clerk (details above) to raise any items
you wish your Parish Council to discuss.**

