

## Warden's Notes: February 2018

### 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 round 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.

### Winter Weather

As I write this, storm Eleanor is disappearing into the east leaving behind fallen trees, overturned wheelie bins and quite a lot of broken and blown apart Christmas decorations in our gardens. Winter has well and truly hit us in recent weeks with snow, ice and storms alternating with surprisingly bright days. Ah well, we should be used to it by now as it's typical British weather – *changeable* as they call it !

The picture shows the canal bridge in Grappenhall village where I managed to get out early on a couple of mornings to put salt down on both the footbridge and road bridge which were dangerously slippery. I also did the same on and around the footbridge at Stanney Lunt bridge which had turned into an ice rink overnight.



## Stockport Road Footway

I spent some time in the latter part of 2017 working on the footway alongside Stockport Road at Thelwall where it slopes down from the bridge over the Trans Pennine Trail. The footway was becoming narrower and narrower due to the encroachment of soil and weeds from the fence side. This seems to have happened due to the overhanging trees on the embankment which drop their leaves in to the footway which then rot down to form soil which itself is further anchored in place by the growth of nettles and other weeds. The solution was simply to trim back the overhanging branches and then to remove the soil and weeds with a shovel and brush to restore the full width of the footway. Simple but quite hard labour !



The pictures show the newly cleared footway now restored to its full width.



## Duke of Edinburgh's Award Volunteer

You may have seen me out and about, often on Saturdays, with a young helper. He's a volunteer from Lymm High School who is taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, as part of which he is required to spend time doing voluntary work in the community.



From my point of view it's great to have some company whilst working and very welcome to have an extra pair of (vigorous, young) hands to help me complete my tasks in double-quick time ! Some of you may have seen us cleaning out the drainage gully alongside Narrow Lane footpath in Grappenhall village the other day which we completed in much less time than it normally takes me working alone.

### **Best Kept Village Competition**

The Parish Council has decided to enter the Best Kept Village competition organised by Cheshire Community Action again and which of course we won in 2016, being judged the Best Kept Large Village in Cheshire (with a population of 5,001 -10,000). You may have seen one of the plaques around the parish that we were awarded then.

Clearly we would like to improve on our last win and be voted the Best Kept Village overall in Cheshire but this relies on a big effort, not just by me and Parish Councillors but by all the businesses and property owners in the parish in keeping their premises neat, tidy and well cared for throughout the year. If you are aware of any particularly messy or untidy areas that need a bit of TLC, please ring in to the parish council office and let us know so that we can direct our resources to resolving the problem.

Details are also given below of the three community litter picks that we are organising for 2018 so it would really help if we got a good turnout for these to give us a chance to make the parish look as good as possible for this competition.

### **Community Litter Picks**

The Parish Council organises a series of community litter picking events throughout the warmer months of the year where members of the public are encouraged to come along to the council office on Bellhouse Lane in Grappenhall to take part in an organised litter pick throughout the parish. It's usually an event enjoyed by those who take part and gives people the chance to 'give something back' to their local community with free refreshments provided at the conclusion of the event.

The programme of litter picks for 2018 has now been finalised and the first one will be on 3<sup>rd</sup> March to tie in with the Great British Spring Clean, a national event organised by the Keep Britain Tidy Group.

The other litter picks will be on 7<sup>th</sup> July and 6<sup>th</sup> October and will both form part of our campaign to win the Beat Kept Village competition, referred to above.

All our community litter picks are on Saturday mornings and start at 10:00 and end around 12:30.

If you wish to be reminded of the events nearer to the time, contact the Parish Council office (01925 264918) or email us at [info@grappenhallandthelwallpc.org.uk](mailto:info@grappenhallandthelwallpc.org.uk) and get your name on our database of people who will be notified the week before a litter pick.

## Rant of the month

Another one where I may be repeating myself here but aluminium drink cans, presumably thrown out of vehicle windows, are everywhere along our streets and grass verges. I can't imagine who would do such a thing but clearly a lot of people do so judging by the (literally) tons of the stuff I pick up.

How difficult is it to take cans home or put them in a litter bin?

By the way, there's a brilliant phone app called '*love clean streets*' that anyone can download to their mobile phone. If you see fly-tipping or any other environmental problem you just take a photo of it, describe what it is and it sends a report to the right person in the local council along with a precise GPS location. It may vary in different council areas but Warrington certainly seems to act very quickly to clean up stuff reported through the app.

I'll end this section as ever with my usual plea, ***please take your litter home.***

## Fly tipping and litter

And 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 and the Borough Council will move them) please let us know by contacting the parish council on **01925 264918** or [info@grappenhallandthelwallpc.org.uk](mailto:info@grappenhallandthelwallpc.org.uk). I can't promise to 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.