



The Yew Tree

August 2025

Keele Parish Council Newsletter

From the Chair: Graham Bibby

In June of this year, I was elected to Chair the Parish Council until next May, when there are Parish Council elections. I would like to thank Val Newman for her hard work as Chair over the last couple of years.

Parish Council

A reminder that the Parish Council meet on the 2nd Monday of the month in the Village Hall on the corner of Highway Lane and The Village. There is an open forum at the start of each meeting where you can have your say.

We send out regular monthly email bulletins which are also posted on our website. If you would like to subscribe, please send your email address to keeleneighbourhood@gmail.com, and we will add you to the over 200 current recipients

Your email address will only be used to send you parish updates and will not be shared with anyone else. All mails are sent BCC so other recipients do not see your email address.

We have also recently launched a Facebook page. This is not to replace either our twice yearly paper newsletters or our e-bulletins but to further extend our reach to include Facebook users. The page can be accessed by scanning this QR code or at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61577568830720>



Local Government Elections May 2026

Elections for the Borough and Parish Councils will take place on May 7th 2026. Keele Parish Council has 11 members. In the election, voters will be invited to select candidates from the list for each of the positions. If there are fewer than 11 candidates the election is 'uncontested' and all candidates become councillors and no poll is held. The Parish will then seek to co-opt additional members.



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We would encourage those who are eligible and with connections to the Parish to stand. Further details of eligibility criteria and the process of registering as a candidate will be given in our winter newsletter.

Around Keele

Hedges and footways.

Parish Councillors walk the Parish on a regular basis to keep an eye on hedges and the accessibility of footways, the condition of gutters and weeds. A report is produced on a monthly basis as part of our e-bulletin which is available on our website or from our Facebook page for anyone who does not subscribe. We welcome reports from the community: keeleneighbourhood@gmail.com

The Parish Council has no statutory powers to enforce hedge cutting where obstructions occur, but we work co-operatively with landowners/tenants to keep footways free from obstructions. Summer is always a difficult time in respect of hedges. We have lots of lovely hedges adjacent to footways and look to strike a balance between the duty to protect wildlife and that of removing obstructions to footways. The recommendation is that hedges should not be cut during bird nesting (March to August) but that they should be carefully cut back where outgrowth is obstructing a footway or highway. Our advice is that, if you have a hedge fronting on a footway or highway, keep an eye on it during the summer and remove any obstructions whilst keeping an eye out for any nesting birds.

Weeds

We also monitor excessive growth of vegetation from the base of hedges keep an eye out for under hedgerow vegetation causing obstructions. Nevertheless, we are a rural parish and know that this vegetation supports wildlife. Where accumulations year on year are narrowing the footway, we do sometimes employ a contractor to 'side' the pavement. Similarly, weeds will grow in the gutters of the roads. Where this is leading to established vegetation which over-winters, we do sometime commission weed spraying. That noted, the clearance of weeds in gutters is a responsibility of the Borough or County Council.

Grass Cutting

This year, the County contract for cutting grass verges in the parish is being managed by the Borough Council. We are pleased to note that the quality and frequency of the cuts has improved and would like to thank the Borough for their work.



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Footpaths (Public Rights of Way)

We are pleased to note that a recommendation has been made that the footpath proposed by the Parish Council in the 1990's between Quarry Bank and Silverdale, along the top of the old golf course has been recommended for approval by the Rights of Way Team at Staffordshire County Council.

We have recently inspected the "Narley" footpath which goes from Station Road to Quarry Bank. It is passable but requires some work which will be undertaken later in the year.

Yew Tree

The yew tree adjacent to Keele Farmhouse remains 'unwell' but we believe that there are signs of recovery and new growth. We commissioned expert opinion on the tree and have restored the irrigation system to its original schedule as well as mulching around the tree. We will continue to monitor the situation.

War Memorial

Strimming, a weed spray of the gravel and a cut of the hedges is planned later this month. The condition of the area will be reviewed in the autumn in the run-up to Remembrance Sunday 9th November 2025.

Litter

We now have a litter collector again who patrols the parish.

Defibrillators in Keele Parish

The Village has two defibrillator units. One is externally mounted on the Village Hall, and the other is externally mounted at The Sneyd Arms. Both defibrillators are available to the community in case of cardiac emergency. Both boxes also contain blood kits for controlling severe bleeding. Full instructions are provided with the units on their use, and no specialised training is needed to use them.

Planning

Borough Plan

The Borough Local Plan has now been through its inspection. The Planning Inspector has written to the Council . **She has concluded that the plan as it stands is not sound but can be made sound by some major modifications.**



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The Parish Council's summary of the modifications most relevant to Keele are here. This document also contains links to the Inspector's letter and Council's response.:

<https://keeleparish.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/August-2025-bulletin-on-Borough-Plan.pdf>



In addition, we understand from Newcastle Borough Council that the government will require the Local Authority to start a new plan within two years if the current plan is modified successfully. The new plan will be required to use the new housing targets which are around 50% higher than the targets in the current plan. Changes in the national planning framework mean that greenbelt areas are not necessarily safe from development. Our draft Neighbourhood Plan recognises this and seeks to protect the integrity of Keele from possible encroachment.

Neighbourhood Plan

Our Neighbourhood Plan is now in draft, and we are preparing for the first round of public consultation in the autumn. We will engage with the local community and relevant stakeholders before submitting the plan to the local planning authority. The purpose is to gather feedback on the draft plan and ensure it reflects local views and concerns before it proceeds to the next stage. It is likely that the final referendum on the plan will take place at the same time as the local government elections in May 2026.

Phone Numbers to remember:

StreetScene: 01782 742500 or 615599 for out-of-hours emergencies

Non Emergency Police: 101 - Non Emergency Health Service: 111

Village Hall Lettings: www.keelevillagehall.org.uk

KPC website: <https://keeleparish.org/>

Local Police team: colin.hodgkinson@staffordshire.police.uk