

PC CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – JANUARY 2020

Happy New Year! I hope 2020 is a great year for you. I participated in the New Year's Day community walk organised by the Whitchurch Society. We had a great turnout this year and it was a beautiful day for a walk. You can see some of the participants going up the Hartley Steps on the front cover.

New Parish Councillors – Please join me in welcoming our two newest councillors:

- Jean Marc Grosfort - has been active in a number of community activities such as the Arts & Crafts competition and refurbishment of the Village Hall. He will be continuing this work from the Parish Council and has a goal of working with the Village Hall Management Committee to continue to raise funds for a refurbished kitchen and other improvements. They would like to have the new kitchen facilities in place by the end of the year.
- Diana Smith – moved to the village with her husband Peter in 2003 and has been a member of the Traffic and Parking Advisory Group (TAPAG) for a number of years. She will now be driving this and other initiatives from within the Parish Council.
- We still have one vacancy open for a councillor. Please let me know if this is something that you may be interested in.

Parish Clerk – I am also pleased to welcome Jane Yamamoto as our new Parish Clerk. Jane has been a resident of the village since 2002 and has been the office manager for local business Oxford Renewables for several years and also the Secretary of the Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group until recently. She has not worked as a Parish Clerk before, but her relevant experience is allowing her to come up to speed quickly and she has a number of training courses planned for the coming months.

Village Plan – You may have seen that the final Whitchurch-on-Thames 2019 Village Plan is now available in pdf form on the website. Printed copies will be available for each household shortly and I

would encourage you to read it. As you are probably aware, it is the result of a lot of hard work by John Bradon and the Village Plan team over the past few years. The recommendations in the plan are intended to support the needs of the community following extensive consultation. While some recommendations will be challenging, they should all be achievable, and the Parish Council will be working to implement them over the next 3 years, where possible.

Traffic Management on the High Street – One of the key recommendation from the village plan is to improve the traffic flow on the High Street to address congestion. TAPAG has developed a proposed design, working with a traffic consultant. The new scheme includes double yellow lines at key pinch points and designated parking spaces. This has been reviewed by OCC Highways who agree that it should improve traffic flow through the village. The next step is consultation with residents of the village and other affected parties. There will be an opportunity for residents to provide feedback on Saturday the 8th February at the Old Stables, from 2 to 4 pm (see related article). It is important that residents from the village confirm their support for this initiative for it to be approved, as well as raising any questions or concerns they may have. This Open Day will feed into the formal OCC consultation process and, if successful, the changes could be implemented later this year.

Village Emergency Plan – I am organising an Emergency Planning meeting 29th January, 8pm at Ferryboat Inn – everyone in the village is welcome. Please let me know if you are able to attend:

- A draft Village Emergency plan was developed as part of the Village Plan work in December 2018, which has now been updated.
- The plan looks at the key risks and actions we can take as a village for scenarios such as flooding, road blockage, power outages, if someone has a heart attack, etc.
- One of the key areas we need volunteers for is Telephone Tree contact list for various streets of the Village. We need points of

contacts to coordinate with local residents that may be affected by the emergency, in particular those residents that may be vulnerable.

Coombe Park Fence – We have been working with SODC and Coombe Park representatives for almost a year now to try to find a solution for the new green metal fence that was installed in Hartslock Bridleway and was proposed for their border along Manor Road. Coombe Park Estate has now approached us with a potentially very satisfactory solution. We are waiting to receive and review the formal planning application, but this revised approach is supported in principle by the Parish Council:

- They are now proposing to use a wooden fence instead of the metal fence previously proposed.
- The wooden fence would be the same 2.4m as the proposed metal fence.
- They would use the same location as the previous fence on Hartslock Bridleway instead of the revised location that was put up at the end of January 2019.

Eastfield House – As the Bulletin went to press, Ross Healthcare had submitted a revised planning application for the redevelopment of Eastfield house that does not require a complete demolition of the building. It keeps the main street facing portion of the house, but demolishes selected other portions and adds a large extension in the rear. I encourage affected residents to review the plans and submit their own comments. But I think it is at least encouraging that Ross Healthcare is working to find a new solution to make Eastfield House a viable healthcare facility again, instead of continuing to leave it in a deteriorated vacant state.

Kind regards,

Jim Donahue

Chairman, Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

GREEN TEAM UPDATE

Our Mission

The Green Team is a team of both core and ad hoc volunteers who help look after and maintain the green spaces in Whitchurch-on-Thames. Coming together in this way also encourages a sense of community and is a good way of getting to know people.

What's On

We'll soon be publishing the working parties for 2020. In the meantime you can find out more about the team and what we have planned at our new page on the village website here; <https://whitchurchonthames.com/groups/greenteam.html>

What's Happened Recently

A big thank you to all the volunteers who've helped with these tasks over the past three months

- Planting spring bulbs
- Final working party of the year at the Maze to mow and edge the grass around the bricks
- The Friends of St Marys & St Johns have also had 2 working parties at St Johns churchyard to clear all the vegetation along the fenceline at the front (so that the railings can be painted and repaired).
- Trimming back verges on Hardwick Road and the High Street narrows
- Cleaning and trimming the Manor Road Playground
- Sweeping and tidying Muddy Lane
- Get together and working party at the Polish Church Garden. Quotes are now being obtained for the work discussed. More information about this project can be found here; <https://whitchurchonthames.com/groups/polishgarden.html>
- General clearing of leaves throughout the village

Find out more

Visit our page on the village website <https://whitchurchonthames.com/groups/greenteam.html> or contact me on 07557 852600 or alexa@ontherunhealthandfitness.co.uk

A big thank you to everyone who's helped us in 2019, your efforts and support are much appreciated. Many thanks also to the core Green Team members who's invested huge amount of time and energy into the green spaces of the village this year; Geoff, Gill, Martin, Tim, Sally, John, Charles, Richard, Peter, Keith and Leslie - your work and passion for this village is really appreciated!

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

We gather at Whitchurch Village Hall on Thursday 20th February for our Annual General Meeting. We shall also hear from Mark Davies about the extraordinary story of a humble pastry cook in Oxford who was one of the pioneers of aeronautics. He was in fact the first Englishman to fly in a balloon, ascending from Oxford in October 1784, a journey that lasted six miles. He went on to fly longer distances, and even helped a Mrs Sage to become the first British female balloonist. Despite coming down in the sea on two occasions, he lived to 72 years. Mark Davies is a respected historian of Oxford, and has appeared in radio and television documentaries about Alice in Wonderland, and the waterways of Oxford. We meet on the third Thursday of most months for a speaker or other historical activity and go on two outings in the summer. Why not join us? The subscription is just £12 a year.

On Saturday 15th February we'll be running the coffee shop, hoping to raise money to buy the Victoria County History volume on our area when it is published. A worthy cause to eat cake for!

THE VILLAGE HALL

Have you been wondering what's going on down at the village hall? Well over the past year the hall has undergone a transformation for the good. New windows have been installed together with new blinds and the lighting much improved and upgraded to a modern design and a new Wi-Fi system installed – we have much to thank Jean-Marc Grosfort for many of the improvements. The hall was extensively redecorated by volunteers from Grant Thornton who we are grateful to and the roof was repaired and cleaned which was paid for by the Parish Council. Volunteers have also painted the railings and repointed the brickwork on the exterior of the hall. Now we have made these significant upgrades to the village hall we need more people to use it! The rates are very competitive at £10 an hour and we already have many village groups taking advantage of this – tap dancing, yoga, bridge, camera club, line dancing and the history society. More recently afternoon tea and cakes is served every second Thursday of the month so come along and check out the new village hall for your possible event.

We have lots of plans to further improve the facilities and using the donations which we have already received we will be upgrading the kitchen area in February as well as applying for grants to achieve our dream to make it a first rate community facility for Whitchurch on Thames.

Keith Brooks

Chair Village Hall Management Committee

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

It is our turn to visit La Bouille this year, which we expect to do from Friday 8th May to Monday 11th May. All residents of the two villages are qualified to join us and more details will appear later, but it is always a most enjoyable long weekend. There are photos of previous visits on the Whitchurch on Thames web site. Our Annual General Meeting will be held at the Old Rectory Stables at 7pm on Tuesday 11th February, all welcome.



Goring Heath Parish Charity
Regd No 1056772

Goring Heath and Whitchurch

Spring Show

Saturday 28 March 2020

2.30 pm to 4.00 pm

Goring Heath Parish Hall

**Enter your finest flowers, fruit, veg, floral
arrangements, handicrafts, artwork, baking and
photos.**

**Or come along to view the entries & enjoy homemade
cake, tea & coffee, raffle and plant stall.**

Full schedule of classes and entry
forms will be available on:
www.whitchurchonthames.com
www.goringheath.com

Phone for a printed copy:
Judith Johns on 0118 9842816
Liz Gibson on 0118 984 2012
Sally Trinder on 0118 984 2610
Sue Sexon on 0118 9844236

Current committee members will be
standing down after this show and
are actively looking for a new team.
Please contact Sue Sexon

THE 2019 WHITCHURCH ART & CRAFT EXHIBITION

This popular annual event took place in Whitchurch Village Hall over the weekend of 16th/17th November. There were 189 entries overall – 57 of these were on the theme of ‘Masks’ created by the junior exhibitors for the Joyce Voysey category. These made a particularly eye-catching display!

It was a very successful and sociable occasion which provided the opportunity for everyone to see and share the results of the creative talent in our community. It was lovely to welcome new exhibitors to the show, and we hope they will continue to enter in the years ahead. The only disappointment was that there were no entries at all in the Junior 12 to 18 years section. We must really try to encourage the secondary school youngsters to enter next year.

Colourful displays of work by children at the Pre-School, the Primary School and the Oratory Prep School were again on show on the stage. A lot of time and effort went into these super displays by the hard-working school staff and helpers.

This was the second year for the Brazil Award. This category is for film, documentary or animation videos, no longer than 5 minutes in length. There were four entries this year, which was encouraging. All were very enjoyable and well filmed but the winning video entitled ‘The Battle of Bedroom Castle’ by Henry Lowe aged 9 was outstanding.

Visitors enjoyed refreshments all weekend and meeting up with friends and neighbours before the prize-giving ceremony at 4.30pm on Sunday.

Congratulations to all the worthy prize winners. A full list can be viewed on the village website.

Very many thanks to all exhibitors and also to everyone who helped with the setting up, dismantling and running of the show, including serving the refreshments and making delicious cakes. Finally, my special thanks to Sarah Dixon, Wendy Ferguson, Jean-Marc Grosfort

and Laura Lucas who helped me in the planning stages and to the Whitchurch Society members who supported us.

*** STOP PRESS *** The theme for this year's Joyce Voysey Prize is 'Happiness'

Sally Woolhouse (sally@wotarts.co.uk)

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

As many of you will know, from your contributions to the Village Plan, traffic and parking are the main issues concerning residents of our village.

The Parish Council tasked the traffic advisory group with trying to find a solution. A consultant was engaged and meetings with OCC Highways undertaken. A plan to get more order into the parking and improve traffic flow was submitted to OCC and, with a few minor tweaks, provisionally approved by the Highways Officer.

The next step is for the village to hold an informal consultation with residents to gauge opinion before submitting a formal request to OCC. At this point a formal public consultation will take place at a cost of over £3000 which will be borne by the Parish Council.

It is important that as many people as possible attend this informal consultation to give their opinions both from a positive and negative perspective. Members of TAPAG will be on hand to answer questions and explain reasoning and interpretation from the flow and parking diagrams which will be on display.

The meeting date is **Saturday 8th February** between **2.00** and **4.00 pm** in Old Stables.

Please make a note in your diaries and place this notice in a prominent position.

TAPAG

14th January 2020

OWL – OUR WOODCOTE LIBRARY

OWL has completed five years of volunteering in the library, and most of the original members are still hard at work helping the librarians.

However, we do have a need to top up our pool of people and would welcome anyone who would like to help. We work around people's other commitments, but usually a volunteer would expect a two-hour session once or twice a month. We particularly need more people who can come in on Tuesday afternoons and Friday mornings. It's a nice place to be, the staff are very appreciative of what we do and tea and biscuits are supplied. Ask at the library for details (01491 682323). Our Annual General Meeting will be held at 6.30pm on Monday 2nd March in the library, and all welcome.



Running Coaching

Private coaching, technique analysis, training plans and online coaching

Alexa Duckworth-Briggs
www.ontherunhealthandfitness.co.uk
07557 852600

Sports and Remedial Massage

My own private treatment room on Hardwick Road

Treating back pain, aches and pains, niggles and sports injuries





When did you last review your Will? Secure your free Will consultation today

Get a Solicitor approved and checked Will for £149 plus free lifetime storage worth £300.

I can offer a daytime, evening or weekend no obligation appointment in the comfort of your own home to review what you have in place to ensure your estate is protected.

I am also able to advise you on Lasting Power of Attorney's and am able to provide both the Health & Welfare as well as the Property and finance Power of Attorney's.

Having a Power of Attorney in place is as vital as having a Will yet few people have a Power of Attorney prepared in advance of actually needing it. By the time you need one it can be too late. In the event of losing mental capacity, such as dementia, suffering a stroke or even being involved in a road traffic accident, bank accounts including joint bank accounts could be frozen. Having an Power of Attorney in place allows your attorneys to manage your finances in the event of losing capacity.

Call now for more information or to book a no obligation home visit to discuss your circumstances.

07531 600888 or 0800 847 7104

or email david.bowen@honeylegal.co.uk
www.honeylegal.co.uk/people/davidbowen

KEEPING AN EYE ON THE RIVER

There has been a lot of news in recent months about floods seriously affecting riverside communities such as those in Derbyshire. Some people have been asking whether we are properly prepared for flooding in Whitchurch. This brief article addresses the issue.

What is our flooding history? Most of us remember the flood of January/February 2014 which caused problems for owners of some properties in Eastfield Lane and nearer the river. It also affected the sewage collection system. That was reckoned to be an event to be expected once every five or ten years and it caused a limited amount of damage. The most recent major Thames flood occurred in March 1947 and caused considerable damage. The river level rose to about 40 cm higher than in 2014 and for a while there was a lake in the High Street near The Greyhound. That was reckoned to be a flood that could be expected once every hundred years. A flood of a similar magnitude had occurred in 1874.

How about global warming? There is some comfort to be drawn from the fact that the 1947 flood followed a sudden thaw after a winter of heavy snowfall on unusually frozen ground. The melting snow could not drain into the ground and very high levels of runoff occurred. Such extensive frozen ground should be less likely with global warming. But (isn't there always a 'but'?) global warming is expected to cause more intense and frequent rainstorms so that may even things out.

Do we get a warning when a flood is imminent? On the Links page of the Whitchurch Web there is guidance to helpful Environment Agency website pages. These explain, for instance, that anyone living in a vulnerable property can register to receive phone or text warnings on Floodline, a free EA service. The Links page also guides readers to the flood maps for Whitchurch which indicate which areas of the village are vulnerable. There are links to graphs of our local river level which are updated continuously and to the page giving the current status of any flood alerts ('get ready') or flood warnings ('take action') for us.

Who will hand out sandbags? Probably no one. It is up to the individual householder to consider in advance how to protect their house. The best source of advice on what measures can be taken is provided, thanks to Northamptonshire County Council, in the Flood Toolkit (see below).

What is the community doing about flood risk? An illustrated 'Report on Flooding in Whitchurch-on-Thames during January and February 2014' by John Southey and Richard Wingfield, updated in 2019, brings together a lot of information on the subject**. It includes an explanation of the historic 'village watercourse', an important drainage flow route parallel to the river, which crosses invisibly under the High Street at The Greyhound. Investigations showed that this was partially blocked during the 2014 event, which exacerbated the flooding in Eastfield Lane. The parish council is currently considering a renewed attempt at a CCTV survey to investigate the exact route and condition of the hidden culvert near the village centre. This initiative is being led by ex-councillor Warren Beard, who is also looking at ways to ensure our many roadside drainage gullies are regularly cleared. Flooding is one of the risks taken into account in the Village Emergency Plan – see below.

What about sewage? Thames Water is aware of the problems in the village in 2014. They confirmed last month that the pumping station in Eastfield Lane has adequate capacity and said that one of its two pumps was recently replaced. They are keen to encourage anyone who experiences poor flushing of toilets or emergence of foul water during a flood to make sure to call them on 0800 316 9800 as this helps them to build a picture and diagnose the problem. They also want everyone to avoid pipe blockages by being careful about what they flush down the loo.

Is river flooding the only type to worry about? No, there is also a threat of flooding from heavy local rain that can cause runoff to accumulate in the centre of the village. This is sometimes referred to as 'flash flooding' and is independent of the Thames river level. The Greyhound suffered flooding of its interior after a heavy rainstorm

in 2007. Some protection can be achieved by regular maintenance of the many roadside soakaways on the hill, from the war memorial down, which help to divert storm runoff. The parish council succeeded in having this work done with great thoroughness by Oxfordshire County Council in November 2019.

Is there a good source of general advice? Yes, Oxfordshire County Council now provides a wealth of advice and guidance on the subject of flooding in the Flood Toolkit on its website. (<https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/>)

Is there a Village Emergency Plan? Yes, and this covers all risks including flooding. It was drafted as part of the work last year on the Village Plan. An open meeting to discuss the draft is planned for Wednesday 29th January – details are in the Chairman's Report elsewhere in this issue of the Bulletin.

The article above was written by Richard Wingfield who used to have some involvement with the EA Thames Region's flood defence team.

******Anyone who would like an emailed copy of the Report on Flooding mentioned above can contact Richard on 0118 984 3682 or rmwingfield@btinternet.com.

WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL

Whitchurch Pre-School has a packed schedule this term for our little ones. We now have an offering comprising Outdoor Learning, Mini Professors, French, Boogie Mites and Cooking along with the usual arts, crafts and outdoor activities. Our Rising Fives session is gearing up preparing our children starting Primary School in September. Within this dedicated session, there is more focus on writing, numbers, listening and understanding rules.

We are now taking applications for next academic year, so do get in touch with our Supervisor Kathleen on whitchurchpreschool@me.com if you would like to come for a visit or apply.

Whitchurch Pre-School is the only official provider of childcare in the village, and is an essential life support for young families. Due to its uncommercial size, it only exists through enormous effort from an active parent body along with a supportive local community.

For this reason, we are incredibly reliant on the hard work of the fundraising team. Last term our Bingo fundraiser raised a fantastic amount, for which we thank Graham and the Ferryboat enormously for hosting and compering the evening and contributing to make it such a success!

This year, WhitFest 2020, on Saturday 2nd May, will be the Pre-School's biggest fundraiser. With support from the Parish Council, we are shaping it to be a true celebration of everything great that Whitchurch and its surroundings has to offer, bringing together local music, food, drink, societies and entertainment for the whole family. We are keen to make it a real community event to be repeated year after year; in order to do this, we need your help!

We are currently seeking involvement from village societies and committees, sponsorship from local businesses and also individual patrons to support WhitFest 2020. We are also looking for local musicians to join our already fantastic line up and any local suppliers of food/drink that would want to showcase their local produce.

If you are a member of a local society, have connection with a local business, or would want to personally become a patron, know any local musicians or food/drink suppliers, please get in touch with Hannah Dunbar at the following email address fundraising.whitchurchpreschool@gmail.com.



A beautiful 18th Century country style pub and restaurant
nestled in the small riverside village of Whitchurch-on-Thames,
just a few yards from over the Whitchurch toll bridge,
a short walk from the car parks in Pangbourne.

-
- Serving quality homemade food
 - Comprehensive bistro style menu
 - Homemade stone baked pizzas
 - Traditional Sunday roasts
 - Take-away food available
 - Private function room
 - Superb lunch menu
 - Fine selection of wines, cask ales,
Spirits and soft drinks
 - Parties catered for
 - Great friendly atmosphere
 - On-line booking

The Ferryboat, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG8 7DB
Telephone 0118 984 2161 email info@theferryboatwhitchurch.com
www.theferryboatwhitchurch.com