



WINTER 2021

WHITCHURCH BULLETIN

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE, JANUARY 2021

As I write this, the number of UK residents testing positive for Covid-19 is at the highest level since the virus first arrived in the UK almost a year ago. We are in a critical situation and the UK remains in full lockdown for the foreseeable future. Looking forward, there is also hope and optimism as the three vaccines which have been approved for use in the UK are rolled-out. Many of us will know of local residents who have now had their first vaccination and others who are looking forward to receiving notification of theirs.

WOT Coronavirus Support Volunteers: Many residents will have maintained support contacts from the lockdown in the spring, but we are aware that some residents may still be in need of help during the current lockdown. If anyone needs help with shopping, collecting a prescription, a lift to the doctors, etc. we do still have a group of volunteers who would be very happy help. As before, you can contact them by emailing WoTVolunteers@gmail.com or by calling John Bradon on 078789 944676. Please don't hesitate - we are all here for each other.

Corona-virus and Village Open Spaces: The Parish Council discussed the most recent government guidance in relation to the current national lockdown and its implications for the Village Green and other open spaces at Parish Council meetings on the 7th and the 14th January. We agreed to the following actions for now, but will continue to monitor the situation and any updates to government guidance:

- The Village Green remains open for exercising but the football and cricket pitches are closed in a manner similar to the previous lockdown. A notice to this effect was put on the Village Green notice board. The notice also reminds users to practice safe social distancing.
- The Manor Road playground will remain open, however we encourage parents to follow social distancing guidance including use of the hand sanitizer that is provided. Should you notice

the hand sanitiser running out, please notify Cllr Ferguson (cllrferguson.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com). We will continue regular cleaning of these facilities.

- If residents become aware of incidents where social distancing is not being observed, they have the option of contacting the non-emergency police line on 101.
- Whilst the Parish Council cannot enforce individual behaviour or their compliance with the law, you may have noticed the new signs at either entrance to the Village Green encouraging respectful behaviour. Thanks to Cllr Ferguson for co-ordinating this effort and to members of the Village Green Working Group for contributing to the messages.
- We have also relocated the rubbish and dog bins from the front of the school entrance where they were not heavily used, to the Village Green entrance by the car park. This is something we have been planning for a while and hope it will help to address the recent littering problem.

Village improvements from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

are continuing: There are a number of long standing requests to OCC for maintenance or improvements to the village that are now coming to fruition. Hopefully you will have noticed some around the village – especially now that we are all walking more.

Pavements: Following the completion of the Hardwick Road pavement resurfacing in October, work to repair damaged parts of other pavements on Swanston Field, the High Street, and Manor Road was completed in November and December. OCC has confirmed that contractors will be back to provide a new surface “slurry seal” over the pavement surfaces which will be a smooth top to finish the pavements. This work can only be completed when the temperature is consistently over 10 degrees.

I understand that the High Street Road closure from the 22nd February is to perform similar road patching work prior to a “carriageway dressing” planned for next fiscal year. I am trying to find out more

details on this but assume this will require all road markings to be refreshed.

Drainage work continues: Residents may be aware that OCC recently repaired a stretch of storm drainage on the upper High Street by the Art Gallery. This is a continuation of the High Street the maintenance work that has been completed since the flash flood of June last year, in which OCC has cleared blockages in the drains near The Greyhound. The storm drain near the Art Gallery was allowing water to leak into their cellar. The old brick build drain has now been replaced with a modern pipe that can be maintained by pressure-jetting.

I have been told by OCC that a full clearing of the remaining High Street drains will be completed once both the storm drain work and the slurry seal work is completed as debris from the slurry seal often falls into the drains.

Road Safety for Cyclists: Following the recent tragic death of a cyclist coming down Whitchurch Hill, the Parish Council reviewed options with both OCC Highways and Goring Heath Parish Council to understand what can be done to reduce the risk of serious cycling incidents happening in the future.

We agreed with OCC to make the following road improvements in the Spring when the new budget is available and highway line painting work resumes:

- Refresh the centre dashed lines on Whitchurch Hill stretch leading down from the top of the hill as well as the “SLOW” road markings
- Repaint the road markings in the upper narrows.
- Approve use of road signs alerting cyclists of the danger and for cars to be aware of cyclists in both directions on the road.

These actions are in addition to the pedestrian safety initiatives described separately.

As the dangerous road stretch falls between the two villages of Goring Heath and Whitchurch-on-Thames, both Parish Council's are co-ordinating efforts. We support the actions Goring Heath are pursuing with OCC including reduce the speed limit through Whitchurch Hill from 40mph to 30mph. They believe that this is not only right for the village but will help reduce traffic speed approaching the hill.

Pedestrian Safety: Cllr Smith and I had a Teams meeting with OCC Highways to discuss options to address the pedestrian safety issues that we recently prioritised:

- Pavements in front of the Ferry Boat Inn
- Pedestrian crossing the High Street at Eastfield Lane

For the Ferry Boat pavement, the Parish Council has agreed to follow OCC recommendations to hold two trials to see if they reduce the amount of infringement on the pavement:

- Trial 1: Giving priority to traffic in the south to north direction to test priority Give Way approach. The aim is to see if this reduces the number of times that two cars enter the single lane narrows at the same time as this is when pedestrians are most at risk.
- Trial 2: Setting up traffic cones along the side of the pavement on the Ferry Boat to test the effect of barriers such as bollards. The aim is to see the effect this has on driver behaviour and if this reduces the number of times cars drive on the pavement.
- This would happen in the spring when the new OCC budget is available and traffic levels increase assuming lockdown restrictions are reduced.

We also discussed a number of options for pedestrians crossing the High Street near Eastfield Lane, especially when parents and children are going to and from school. We will be seeking feedback from residents on different options in the near future once the viability of each option is confirmed.

20mph Speed Limit: OCC approved a motion in December to make 20mph the standard speed limit in built up areas in Oxfordshire. This new policy appears to mean that OCC will support village applications for 20mph speed limits without the need for traffic calming measures prior to the change being made. This is something we have long wanted for the High Street, Hardwick Road and Eastfield Lane and is a key element of our 2019 Village Plan recommendations. I have raised our desire to OCC to have a 20mph speed limit in key areas of the village as soon as practicable. The recent decision should now make this goal achievable, although it is still likely to take some time.

Maintenance of Village Trees: The Parish Councillor has selected Heritage Tree Services to perform maintenance work on the ancient yew trees and a number of other trees along the entrance to Manor Road. Cllr Higley has been leading the work to select an appropriate tree surgeon with experience in conservation area work. She has now received approval from the SODC Tree Officer, so this work will go ahead in the near future.

Gill Goodwin of WOTHabs has also sought approval from SODC for work to cut back some trees at the south end of the Village Green. The Parish Council also selected Heritage Tree Surgeons for this work and Cllr Higley will co-ordinate both activities.

Tea Hut Replacement: As part of the Parish Council's work to assess the feasibility of replacing the Tea Hut on the Village Green, Cllr Hanna Ferguson is collecting community feedback on how a new Tea Hut could be used by the community for various events such as the village fete, school sports day and potentially private events such as small birthday parties. The goal is to understand what capacity and facilities the Tea Hut should have and how much fundraising would be required.

If you would like to provide ideas or feedback, or would like to join a small working group to develop the plans further, please get in touch with Hanna at cllrferguson.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com or 07375 457 584.

Standing order meetings: The Parish Council held two extraordinary meetings in December and January to review our standing orders. Standing orders are the rules for how Parish Councils and committees/working groups make decisions, including how motions are raised, debates are held, and what kind of public participation is allowed during meetings. A copy of the standing orders can be found on the village website. The second meeting was focussed on standing orders relating to Parish Council Committees and Working Groups such as the Traffic and parking Advisory Group (TAPAG) and Village Hall Management Committee. The discussion was primarily to ensure all councillors had a common understanding of the standing orders, but we also agreed to follow them more closely in meetings, and will be raising a few small changes in the coming months.

As part of these discussions, we agreed a plan for Cllrs Smith and Leadbeater-Hart to lead recruitment of new members of TAPAG to replace members who have recently resigned. If becoming a member of TAPAG is something that you may be interested in, please contact Carrie or Diana.

Parish Councillor Vacancy: You may also be aware that Jean-Marc Grosfort has resigned as a Parish Councillor in October due to some important health issues and some serious challenges with his work in the hospitality sector. We will miss him as a councillor and are grateful that he will continue to be engaged in Village Hall activities from outside of the council.

The Parish Council is recruiting for this vacancy so please contact me or our Clerk, Jane Yamamoto, if this is something that you may be interested in. There are some details further on in this Bulletin.

Kind regards,

Jim Donahue

Chairman, Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council



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COVID-19 VACCINATIONS: MESSAGE FROM THE BOATHOUSE SURGERY (reproduced from the Village Website)

PLEASE do not phone the Boathouse Surgery in Pangbourne regarding Covid vaccine bookings, we WILL phone you. And if we miss you, we will phone you again, and again until we get hold of you!

We are being swamped by people phoning to try and book a Covid vaccine or ask when they will be getting their turn, or they think they missed a phone call etc. We have clear messaging on our website, on our phone message and there is a national campaign that patients must not phone us, we will contact them, but it simply isn't working!

We have a specially trained team of booking agents working tirelessly, even over NYE bank holiday weekend, to contact eligible patients as quickly as possible, and in a very short time frame, we need to let them do their job - they will repeatedly try to get hold of everyone.

Reception are not trained to book Covid vaccine appointments, and they must remain available for regular, daily patient needs and helping acute sick people, so these phone calls are entirely pointless as reception cannot help or get them booked any quicker. They're just wasting a lot of time and preventing sick people getting through.

Please help to spread this message.

Priority Groups (Cohorts) for Vaccinations (taken from BBC website)

Broadly, vaccines are being given to the most vulnerable first, as set out in a list of nine high-priority groups (cohorts), covering around 25 million people in the UK. The first four cohorts are targeted by UK Govt for completion by 15th February, with all remaining cohorts completed by April (note – first jab only).

They are thought to represent 90-99% of those at risk of dying from Covid-19.

1. Residents in care homes for older adults and their carers
2. 80-year-olds and over and frontline health and social care workers

3. 75-year-olds and over
4. 70-year-olds and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. 65-year-olds and over
6. 16- to 64-year-olds with serious underlying health conditions
7. 60-year-olds and over
8. 55-year-olds and over
9. 50-year-olds and over

People aged over 80 in hospital, frontline health staff and care home workers have been the first to get the Pfizer jab at designated hospitals hubs and community sites across the UK.

The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is better suited to protecting people who are housebound and in care homes because it's easier to store and transport. It is now being made available to these groups and the over-80s at more than a thousand GP surgeries and community sites.

Richard Williams, Editor

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S COMMENTS

Those of you with a long memory will recall that nearly 6 years ago the District Council offices in Crowmarsh burnt down, and ever since then the Council has been working from rented offices in Milton Park, Didcot. Renting offices was not a long term solution, as eventually the money would run out, and, after the election last year the new Council set about a rebuild programme. There were two possible sites, either the original Crowmarsh site or a car park owned by the Council by Didcot Station. At that stage, the Didcot site was deemed to be too small. However, experience since March has shown, that as in other organisations, many people can work from home without any loss of efficiency, and so the decision to rebuild at Crowmarsh has been rescinded, and we are now going to have an office on the Didcot carpark site. Although further from us locally, as it's a shared office with the Vale of White Horse District

Council, it is a better location from that point of view, and also better served by public transport. The delay was fortuitous, although we now have to crack on with an even tighter timetable.

The District Council has also formulated a new Corporate Plan, and it is based around six main themes:

Protect and restore our natural world, Openness and accountability, Action on Climate emergency, Improved Economic and Community wellbeing, Homes and infrastructure that meet Local need, Investment that rebuilds our financial strategy.

The Corporate Plan gives a direction to the Council and its officers over the next 4 years. Such plans are uncontroversial, and worthy, and it's interesting to compare this plan with the previous one, which covered 2016-2020. The comparative headline themes in that one were **Invest in the Districts Future, Unlock the Potential of Didcot, Homes and jobs for everyone, Build Thriving communities, Services that reflect Residents needs, Be tough on enforcement.**

It is of course easy to pick holes in plans afterwards, and I am pleased that the objective of tough and swift action on fly tipping, part of the Enforcement theme, is now well embedded in the council, and I personally have a good working relationship with the officer who leads on this. However, a clear promise to build a new Leisure Centre at Didcot was abandoned , and I could identify other failings, but then, plans are only plans.

In the new plan, there is much less emphasis on building, and more on community involvement and local needs, nature restoration and well-being. Some of this change of direction is part of a societal shift, where everyone from the Prime Minister downwards is taking a more environmental view, so I am pleased that the Council is very much in the mainstream with its approach to how the world should be in the future.

Peter Dragonetti, District Councillor for Kidmore End, Whitchurch, Goring Heath and Mapledurham

THE SWANS OF HERON RISE

We moved to Whitchurch on Thames in 2008 and lucky to have a property right by the banks of the River Thames.

Our lovely next door neighbours at the time Peter and Caroline Hooper called the swans Leonard and Virginia and we were bemused when we saw each morning Leonard and Virginia waddling up their garden to the back door for breakfast. One morning Caroline was at the bottom of the garden and said to the swans you know you have to walk up to the back door for breakfast.

It was not long before Leonard and Virginia started visiting us on a regular basis. Over the years we have been lucky to see them having cygnets often using our lawn overnight to sleep with their cygnets. Obviously they felt safe and secure.

After Peter died suddenly and Caroline moved away to be closer to her daughter and family, we found Leonard and Virginia visiting us more often.



Fast forward and Leonard and Virginia this year had one cygnet who was born later than normal for swans. So the cygnet is still dependent on his parents and small.

We had been away for a few days when restrictions have been lifted to visit my parents. We came back to find Virginia was covered in blood, clearly injured. We instantly phoned Swan Line for their assistance.

We were shocked when we found out that Virginia's wound had been caused by a dog bite and it was touch or go if Virginia would survive. At the time Virginia was taken away for medical assistance they were unable to catch the cygnet as normally they like to take the cygnet with Mum as Dads are known not to look after cygnets and they adore them. The cygnet was not old or big enough to protect itself.

Over the weeks we kept in regular contact with Swan Line to check on the progress of Virginia and to let them know Leonard was doing a fantastic job in looking after the cygnet, still visiting us everyday.

We were over joyed to hear when Virginia was able to come back. There were some concerns of her settling back into her family but happily this has not been the case.

We were both saddened and shocked that in a village and the surrounding areas with so many dog owners, that someone could allow this to happen. If you do not have control over your dog then they should be on a lead, especially around wildlife. If not sure how your dog will react around wildlife then put them on a lead please.

If the worse is too happen and your dog is to attack an animal please seek help instantly, do not just walk away. We are dumbfounded how somebody could see their dog attack a swan and not seek help.

This story ends up happily but next time it may not be the same outcome.

Hayley Bowen

THE BOAT

After a year in captivity the boat was finally moved to its new resting place – Whitchurch Primary School.

On a bright sunny morning before Christmas it was put onto a trailer and taken up to the school. Grateful thanks go to Dave Bowen for providing the trailer and to him, Keith Brookes and Dave Maynerd for the mammoth task of getting it onto the trailer and delivering it safely.

It's good to know that the school are so happy to have been offered it and are looking forward to the children decorating it for various events – watch out for photos on the website of all they do.

Leslie Maynerd

WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL

Over the past ten months, the Staff and Committee of Whitchurch Pre-School have been navigating the never-ending changes in Covid-related rules with dexterity. We cannot thank the current staff enough for continuing to provide childcare to our young local families through the latest lockdown. Whilst distance learning is just about manageable for older children, nothing comes close to replacing the experience a pre-school offers the littler ones, whether it's understanding how to develop relationships with their peers, or the chance to exert the incredible energy that they possess during these years. Our Pre-School is a haven for our children to enjoy playing with one another, learning new skills and exploring nature amidst so much change in their young lives.

We are continuing with a slightly reduced timetable, but we have still been able to accommodate our families' needs.

Especially important during Covid times, our children really enjoy playing in our lovely outdoor area. With plenty of space for them to be active, it comprises a new mud kitchen, a large sand pit, growing vegetable patch and much-loved climbing equipment. The children

have the opportunity to visit our allotment twice a week too. They are able to explore, dig, and do nature activities, visit the orchard and even pick apples for snack time! Led by our knowledgeable and adventure-seeking teacher Claire, the allotment allows the children to experience nature first hand in a secluded space, which is a project that continues to be worked on and developed by much-appreciated volunteer parents and members of our community.

The Pre-School also offers short, focused activities for children who are interested in taking part. These activities, led by our engaging, experienced teachers, include Rising Fives, which prepares children for school; PE and physical activities; fascinating science experiments; songs and action games. Our latest offering is TastEd – sessions in which our children explore and try different types of fruit and vegetables which are kindly donated to us by the Co-op.

Whitchurch Walk 2020 update - We have been extremely fortunate to raise over £2,000 from the Whitchurch Walk, which saw the children walk a collective 360km in November to raise money for Pre-School. Thank you to everyone who took part in this and donated. We will be investing the money on resources for the classroom as many of our current resources are many years old. Our main aim is to spend on items which we know our current cohort will love and will have many more years of use for our future Pre-Schoolers too, including an adjustable car track, a wobble board, a farm set, dressing up unit, art rack and new items for our home corner.

Community Thank-You's

- To Graham at the Ferryboat for generously donating to help us purchase new Christmas decorations,
- To Warmingham & Co and Classic Flooring for sponsoring our inaugural Whitchurch Walk,
- And to everyone else who has donated to our cause, or helped in any way

THREE FREE and EASY ways you can support Whitchurch Pre-School

- Become a Co-Op Member and select Pre-School as your local community cause. For every £1 spent 2p will be donated to our cause: <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/48954>
- Sign up to easyFundraising and every time you shop on-line thousands of retailers will donate money to Pre-School: <https://bit.ly/37ZlgxH>
- Register with AmazonSmile and select Pre-School as your charity through the app or browser and when you shop with Amazon 0.5% of your order value will be given to Pre-School: smile.amazon.co.uk

Or, you can help us reach our £5,000 fundraising target as we recover from Covid-19 by donating to our online fundraiser:

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/whitchurchonthamespreschool>

Thank you for all of your support!

Mel Uglow & Jo Reading – Co-Chairs, Whitchurch Pre-School

THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S & ST JOHN'S, WHITCHURCH (AN INDEPENDENT CHARITY)

Just as other local organisations, the Friends have not been able to have any social and fundraising events because of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we did manage to have a number of socially-distanced workdays at both St Mary's and St John's Churchyards over the past few months. Many thanks to the volunteers who took part in these events.

When considering new projects to finance, the Friends need to work closely with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) as the two church buildings are, of course, their responsibility. At present, the PCC are arranging significant building repairs to St Mary's and assessing possible improvements to St John's. The Friends will need to consider if some financial assistance is appropriate for such developments.

The Friends Trustees have continued to meet through Zoom to ensure that we will be in good shape to resume activities when the pandemic ends.

The Friends AGM took place on the 5th January 2021, again through the use of Zoom and after five years as a Trustee and Chairman, I stood down. I am very pleased to report that Geoff Weir was appointed by the membership to become a Trustee at the AGM and that Paul Witcher has agreed to take over the position as Chairman of the Trustees.

The Friends Trustees are now: - Paul Witcher (Chairman), Gordon Painter (Treasurer), Theresa Elsome, Geoff Weir, Ken Baker (PCC nominated), Graeme Pearce (PCC nominated) and Revd. James Leach (ex-officio). Sally Woolhouse continues as Secretary.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to fellow Trustees and all members of the Friends for your excellent support and enthusiasm throughout my five years as Chairman.

Keith Williams

Paul Witcher writes: Just a few words to introduce myself to those who don't already know me. Firstly, I must thank Keith for his excellent chairmanship of The Friends over the last five years and his trust in recommending that I take over as chairman.

I moved into Whitchurch on Thames with my wife Geraldine nearly 25 years ago, having previously lived in west Reading. I am a retired Chartered Building Surveyor and have family and grandchildren living in Somerset and Colorado USA. During my time in the village, I have been churchwarden in St.Mary's and St.John's to two previous incumbents, namely Peter Steddon and Claire Alcock, and I played a significant role in obtaining the permission and the development of the Old Stables meeting room from a vacant derelict building into the present day meeting room with an apartment above.

There is no doubt that the forthcoming months will continue to be challenging with regard to fundraising and social events for The Friends, but we will keep everyone posted as the future becomes clearer. I am sorry to see Keith stepping down, but I am very thankful that he leaves an excellent team of trustees and secretary of The Friends.

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

No meetings at Whitchurch Village Hall until announced, but we continue to look into our history.

The preparation of a new book based on a 1960's competition is going ahead, and a question about the origin of Goffs Hill (B471) has been answered. Until the re-organisation of parishes in 1952, Whitchurch Parish's northern boundary was just north of Hill Bottom. Janet Hurst, of the Goring Gap local history society was consulted therefore, and the Goff family found to be resident in Cray's Pond and around from 1777. James, an agricultural labourer was first noted, but it was a large family, with the electoral roll of 1885 showing George and John in a cottage on the Coombe Farm estate, and James in a cottage in Little Heath. The name appears in the census of 1911, but no-one of that name was resident in 1939. It's nice to know that we have a road (and house and clump) named after a family of agricultural labourers, rather than a local dignitary.

Vicky Jordan

THE WHITCHURCH MAZE – AN UPDATE

The brick Maze in Whitchurch dates back to 2004, when Nick Brazil came up with the original inspired idea. At that time, the land was available for the community to use but it was an area of rough grassland, used primarily by dog walkers. With the backing of The Whitchurch Society, Nick took the orders for the engraved bricks and Pete Woolhouse laid all the 2,650 bricks (engraved and

un-engraved). It was officially opened in June 2004 with a typical Whitchurch-style celebration.

There are now three generations of bricks in the circles – the originals dating from 2004, the first restoration ones laid in 2013, and the most recent ones laid in 2018. When both the restorations were undertaken, new ones were laid and also replacements for some frost damaged originals. The net result now is quite a complicated ‘history’ which is supported by 3 lots of order forms and spreadsheets – all in different format! We are occasionally asked “Do you know where my brick is?” but this is not an easy question to answer because there is no record of the location of every brick – only the records of the orders.

This is an unsatisfactory state of affairs so I have initiated a full ‘audit’ of the bricks and I am pleased to report that this is now well underway. I began by devising a ‘schema’ which is a drawing of the maze installation in which every discrete section of bricks is shown with a reference. This schema forms the basis of the audit process which Geoff Weir and I are now working on. I am very grateful to Geoff because he is doing the major proportion of the painstaking task of logging every brick. This entails writing down the details of the engraving, its condition, its generation and (most importantly) its exact location, defined by the section reference and the brick sequence within that reference.

When we have completed this logging and created an easy-to-use digital document, we will then be able to publish the first ‘Maze Guide’. It will be available on the village website for public use and interest. It should be available by 1st March so keep an eye on the website for this news.

This Guide will serve two important purposes. It will make it easy for anyone to locate any brick that they are interested in finding. It will also of course be an invaluable tool for future reference when another restoration is planned, and it can then be readily updated to reflect the changes. Please be assured that there will be no personal details made public in the Guide – it will simply show the wording on the engraved bricks and when they were laid.

Meanwhile, if you have a brick in the Maze, why not visit when taking your allowed daily exercise and give it a wash and brush up! In particular, many of those installed in 2013 are getting hard to read because the surface has darkened over time.

Finally, I have agreed with Laura Lucas of The Whitchurch Society that I will hand over this audit project to her when completed because the Society is the appropriate body to hold the Maze Archive for future generations.

Sally Woolhouse

AFC WHITCHURCH (CHILDREN'S FOOTBALL)

We are an enthusiastic parent-run football club for children. We currently run 5 competitive teams (U12, U13, U14 and two U17s) plus a weekly training programme for our youngest members aged 5-7. This latter group is growing massively so please get your sons and daughters involved. Our training and playing principles for all ages are inclusivity, competitiveness, and fun.

The football club has been running for many years and many children have passed through the ranks. We currently have over 70 children representing AFC Whitchurch.

Our coaches and parents are active supporters and advocates of the club and we are always looking for energetic new talent and team-members of all ages.

Like so many sporting groups, the last year has been a challenge and severely impacted our time on the pitch. Whilst the FA have lobbied hard to ensure the continuation of grass roots football, the full lockdowns do impact our children who are so keen to play. The end of the 2020 season was curtailed with both our U17 teams unable to play their cup final. The new 2021 season started well but has since come to a halt, we hope to resume soon!

We are always looking for new players and would welcome both boys and girls (we have no girls only teams at the moment). We would

also love to fill some of the age gaps so if any parents would be willing to start a new year group they would be most welcome. Any prospective players or parents should contact us at afcwhitchurch@yahoo.co.uk

Alex Hilton, Club Chairman

WHITCHURCH PRIMARY PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

It was a joy to see our kids back in school at the start of the term in September. The staff at Whitchurch Primary worked incredibly hard to prepare for their return and the children's beaming smiles on the first day back said it all.

With so many of our usual events being cancelled due to COVID restrictions, the Parents' Association worked harder and smarter to run new socially distanced events for the parent body. Our annual Christmas Fair was replaced by our first entirely online Christmas raffle, a Christmas tree fundraiser as well as a virtual wreath making event. We are incredibly grateful to the Whitchurch Village community for your support as we managed to raise over £2,000 for our school through the raffle. This enables us to support our school as we purchase essentials such as online resources, assessment tools and parent communication tools. We also have to thank one of our parents, Kasia Shuttleworth, who ran 200km in November and single-handedly raised £1,000 for Whitchurch Primary!

The Parents' Association ended the term with a gorgeous socially distanced outdoor Santa's Grotto brilliantly led by Santa and his cute elves. The look on the kids' faces was priceless, and after so many cancelled events, this truly was a fun filled afternoon which brought some holiday cheer to us all.

As ever, our school needs your help. Fundraising has been challenging, but in these unprecedented times with another lockdown, local financial support is vital.

Ways you can help:

Whilst we have all been staying at home, we have continued to support our school by naming Whitchurch Primary Parents' Association as our charity of choice as we shop online through easyfundraising and AmazonSmile. The good news is that we are a registered charity, so every online purchase through easyfundraising or smile.amazon.co.uk results in a donation to our school.

You can support us by shopping at smile.amazon.co.uk where the same products are sold at the same prices with the fantastic addition of Amazon making a donation to "Whitchurch Primary School Association".

If you would like to support children in your local area, we would love to hear from you. One way of doing this is through matched funding as part of a charitable giving scheme offered by your organisation. Get in touch with us to learn more about matched giving or with any other ideas about supporting us at whitchurchpa20@gmail.com.

Elaine Mullins, Chair

Whitchurch Primary School Parents' Association

Registered charity 1114159

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL: VACANCY FOR A PARISH COUNCILLOR

This is a voluntary position and requires a minimum of one evening a month to attend Parish Council meetings (note: presently via Zoom). You may also choose to focus on specific areas that will require you to attend additional meetings. Councillors bring local issues to the attention of the Council, help it make decisions on behalf of the local community and represent the views of residents within and outside the village.

The key requirements are that Councillors are minimum eighteen years-old, on the electoral role and citizen of UK, Commonwealth,

EU or Ireland. They must be a resident of the village or within three miles of the Parish, own land or work in the Parish.

We are looking for people who are interested in local issues with an understanding and willingness to represent the views of the whole community in a professional and effective manner.

To apply, or to obtain a full job description, please contact our Parish Clerk Jane Yamamoto Email: parishclerk.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com

Please feel free to contact Council Chairman Jim Donahue, or another Councillor, if you have any questions.

Jim Donahue, Chair

EDITOR'S NOTES

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 regulations, "events" in the Village are still largely restricted to Bin collections and Zoom meetings. Hopefully this will change in the next 3-6 months.

The deadline for content for the Spring edition of the Bulletin is Sunday 11th April and will cover events from late April through to July. As usual, contributions are welcome from anybody in the Village (in Word or PDF format).

Richard Williams, Editor



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