

Westoning on Sunday

Lockdown Eased – Just a little more!!

The Newsletter of Westoning Parish Council

July 2020

STAY ALERT

**CONTROL THE
VIRUS**

SAVE LIVES

Thank You Westoning

While the COVID-19 Pandemic has disrupted the lives of people all around the country and cost many people their jobs or their loved ones, some good things have come out of this terrible disease. Many people in Westoning responded to the call for help from Westoning Cares and volunteered their time to help others. Within 48 hours over 70 offers of help were recorded. Many residents who were 'shielded' or in a vulnerable category were helped with their shopping, their medication collections and in other ways that enabled them to stay indoors and safe from the virus.

We would like to thank all those who helped others in some way small or large, over the past few months. You have made a real difference to the lives of those you have helped and you have demonstrated very clearly what a caring community we have in Westoning.

As the lockdown is gradually eased we cannot predict what lies ahead. There may be an effective vaccine developed, treatments may be improved, or there may be an Autumn or Winter spike. But whatever lies ahead, the community spirit that Westoning has shown during those difficult months will still be there and will always be strong.

Stay safe over the coming months, COVID-19 is still here!!

Children's Play Area

You may have noticed that the children's play area has been closed since March due to the measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. That area will have to remain closed at least until the resurfacing of the adjacent Netball court has been completed and can only be re-opened after a full risk assessment has been done and our insurers are happy that the Parish Council has taken all reasonable steps to minimise the risk of spreading the virus.

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Netball Court

The tarmac surface on the village Netball court was starting to break up and was presenting a trip hazard to the children at Westoning Lower School who use that area for break-time play.

Earlier this year, the Parish Council was successful in seeking a grant of £10,000 from Central Bedfordshire Council which has enabled us to completely re-surface that area at a cost of almost £30,000.

The work started on 29th June and should be finished by 10th July but the area may need to stay closed to let the new surface harden and line markings laid. While the area is closed, the only access to the Recreation Ground will be from Newlands Road or the main entrance to the Recreation Club.

The entrance area by the school is also being tidied up with the unsightly muddy area hard surfaced and a small planting area created.

Football Pitch

In recent years the playing surface of the village football pitch has been deemed sub-standard for the league that Westoning Football Club play in. In order to bring local adult football back into the village the Parish Council and WFC will be starting a Pitch Improvement Program (PIP) in August. The program is funded by the Football Association and will extend over 5 seasons with the Parish Council funding the final two years of the program.

The scheme will involve scarifying, weed-killing, fertilizing and drainage improvement over the whole grassed area of the recreation ground.

This maintenance program aims to improve the quality and sward of the grass to make the pitch more resilient to match wear and winter conditions. WFC will take on responsibility for the grass cutting and management of the PIP from the Recreation Club

Dog fouling in the Recreation Ground

For the avoidance of doubt, dogs (other than guide dogs and other registered working dogs) are not allowed in the recreation ground even if on a lead. Dog poo that is not cleared up results in a serious risk to health, particularly the health of children, and it can even result in loss of sight. Dog poo can carry bacterial and viral infections transmitted by dogs, even from healthy dogs. The most common of these is toxocara canis which can be easily contracted by humans.

Please do not exercise your dog anywhere in the Recreation Ground. The Parish Council will be working closely with Central Bedfordshire Council dog wardens to confront those who drive from outside Westoning in the morning to 'walk' their dog(s) in OUR recreation ground in contravention of the warning signs.

New Village Notice Board

The current village notice board near B W Deacon is coming to the end of its life span. It is also quite small and there is little space for 'Community' notices as well as Parish Council notices that we are required by law to publish. In the next few weeks a new double panel noticeboard will be erected near the Christmas tree enclosure. That area has a high level of footfall with parents taking their children to and from the Lower School as well as to the recreation ground and the Recreation Club.

We hope that this will be well used by residents as we propose to use one panel for Parish Council notices and the other for community groups and organisations to publicise their activities.

VE Day in Westoning

The response from the village to celebrate VE Day on Friday 8th May during the harshest period of the lockdown was amazing. Street parties morphed into socially distanced front garden family gatherings while flags and bunting gently fluttered in the breeze.

Many residents commented on the community spirit demonstrated by the village and it is clear from the photos that appeared on the Westoning Cares Facebook page that a good time was had by all.

A particularly memorable feature was the float depicting Winston Churchill with his characteristic cigar that travelled around the village. Well done to all those who made that day so enjoyable and special.



Litter in the village

We have noticed an increase in the amount of litter on our streets and footpath in recent months. Perhaps it is a consequence of people taking exercise in and around the village, but it does make our charming village look very untidy and uncared for.

Please take your litter home with you or place it in one of the litter bins placed around the village and do your bit to keep our village as tidy as possible. There are litter bins near the Post Office, Village Hall and Recreation Ground so please use them.

Over-hanging shrubs and trees

Please be aware that both hedges and trees grow at a remarkable rate and need to be checked at least once a year to ensure that they do not infringe on or over footpaths.

Hedges that grow out over paths reduce the width of the footpath and trees that overhang footpaths present a risk of injury to pedestrians when their branches are below head height.

Please ensure that none of your plants or shrubs overhang the footpath outside your house and if you have any trees planted near the footpath, please make sure that they are trimmed back so that no branch overhangs the footpath below a height below 2.1 metres.

Chequers Soup Run

During most of the lockdown period Philip and Victoria at The Chequers have provide free soup to those residents who are housebound or shielded and who have requested the soup service through 'Westoning Cares'. The weekly parcel consists of a delicious serving of freshly made vegetable soup, a large hunk of freshly baked bread, a piece of fruit and a slice of cake.

Joyce Nethersole, together with Philip and Victoria, have collected & delivered the soup each week from the Chequers and taken it to those who have requested it. The service will continue each Thursday lunch-time until the end of July when I'm sure Joyce will miss the delicious aroma of that freshly made soup in her car as she drives around the village. The village is indebted to Philip and Victoria for their thoughtful generosity.

As village life slowly transitions to 'the new normal' lets hope that the village will remember that kindness and will seek to repay it by patronising our local businesses, including the Chequers, the Post Office and store, B W Deacon, the Recreation Club and the Bell whenever possible.

Adopt a Planter Ring

A village resident has suggested that the village could be brightened up by placing a few flower planters around the village. This was discussed at a recent WPC meeting and it has been agreed to explore this proposal in more detail. Most planters will need to be located on grass verges so it will be necessary to obtain the consent of Central Bedfordshire Council as the Highways Authority. Once we have decided on locations we can budget for two or three rings each year until we have all the suggested sites covered. Each planter would be approximately 1 metre in diameter and be about 50 centimeters high and made of concrete. And this is where you, our residents come in..... Where would you like to see planters located?

Also might you be prepared to 'adopt a planter' near you by taking care of it, weeding it, putting plants in and taking them out and most importantly, watering it in dry weather. The Parish Council will purchase a supply of colourful bedding plants each year and deliver them to each custodian of a planter to set out in the planter.

With appropriate safeguards, young people could even be allowed to decorate a planter with street art and we may even give rise to our own local 'Banksy'.

Please email your suggestions for locations in the first instance to the Parish Clerk. Once we know where the planters can be located we can seek custodians to tend them.

Westoning Village Hall

The village hall is open, or at least available, again. If you attend a regular activity at the hall please check with the organiser as not all groups are returning straight away. If you're hoping to hire the hall please contact us to discuss the reduced capacity limits. During the closure the village hall committee has been busy making the building COVID-19 Secure. They've also obtained more grants for the new entrance and toilets so the project is moving on to the 'tendering' stage.

www.westoningvillagehall.co.uk

Email: enquiries.wvh@gmail.co

Tel:07483378440

Westoning Parish Council

The Parish Council is now back to its full complement of 10 members following the adoption of two new members to fill the casual vacancies. The Council membership is now:

Andy Rayment – Chairman	Joyce Nethersole – Vice Chair
Caroline Luff	Brenda Rogerson
Ekta Bhasin	Emma Leftly
Elaine Russell	Alan Marlow
Paul Ellis	Ray Botterell

Clerk to the Council, Karen Barker - email: parish_clerk_westoning@outlook.com

PLEASE NOTE

Parish Council meetings are held at 7.30 pm on the second Wednesday of each month. For the duration of the Coronavirus restrictions, Westoning Parish Council will meet in 'virtual' meetings using ZOOM. The meeting ID and Password will be displayed on the WPC website 24 hours before the meeting commences for those members of the public who wish to view or hear the meeting. Any member of the public wishing to make use of the Public Participation facility should notify the Clerk 24 hours before the meeting.