

Wisborough Green Parish Council

Parish Council News

Issue: 37

November 2020

Chairman's Message

It feels like 2020 is like the poorest amateur dramatics production ever; will it ever come to an end, what is the point of it all? As a natural optimist, I find it difficult writing about the never-ending gloom however, as we go to press, that is what we have.

It is with a heavy heart that I report that Sheena Overington has resigned from the Parish Council; she has been thinking of this for some time as she has too many things tugging on her time. I am not over-egging it if I said that Sheena was one of the best sorts/types of Councillor any Parish could hope to have. She has been immensely hard-working, punctilious and instrumental in maintaining WG as the most glorious village in West Sussex, not least with her exemplary work on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP). Be under no illusion, WG, and its PC, are diminished by her departure. Sheena will now devote more time to the Village Hall project and is prepared to continue to lead the NP team; despite her continued commitment we have big boots to fill.

And in a classic double-whammy, we lose Michael Newell at the end of November. Michael and his young family are headed to, sunny, pastures new. His reasoned and thoughtful contribution has been a joy and he departs with our thanks and good wishes.

WG is lucky in that, since I joined the PC six years ago, we have always managed to fill vacancies. Covid prevents an election being held so the two positions will be filled by co-option at the January meeting. If you are interested in joining WGPC contact the Clerk for more information and an application form.

It seems like the work of Parish Councils continues to grow as new, and different, things arise and, be assured, WGPC will continue to rise to the challenge. Whether it is responding to motorcycle/supercar noise; keeping the playground open and disinfected; or moving forwards with hot water in the public loos; tree replacement & a host of other things many of which are detailed in this newsletter, we're keeping busy.

In the absence of the Annual Parish Meeting I was denied the opportunity to pay tribute to Louise, our Parish Council Clerk. I cannot praise Louise highly enough: she is the village's Adjutant and Quartermaster, plate-spinner in chief, oracle and the axle pin that keeps the village's wheels on (love mixing those metaphors) and we, as a village, are tremendously lucky to have her.

Keep smiling, keep going and continue to appreciate how lucky we are to live where we do, we will get through this and settle into the 'new normal' (do you, like me, loathe that phrase?).

Pete Drummond, Chairman

Gatwick Airport

There are some signs that the government's Aviation Recovery Strategy, expected this Autumn, may contain further information on aircraft noise policies, following up the Aviation 2050 Green Paper proposals which were made a long time ago.

Gatwick is still planning to push ahead with adapting its emergency runway into a second runway though one wonders when the number of aircraft movements will return to the level where they think it might be needed.

We are keeping a close eye and will continue to provide updates when available.

Government Planning White Paper

You may have seen, in the news, that the Government has issued a White Paper consultation on reform of planning. Whilst it is certainly true that the existing, sclerotic, planning system is a contributory factor in the shortage of homes and their high price, the reforms being put forward create jeopardy for villages like WG.

If CDC is unable to demonstrate that it can meet the Government's, regularly increasing, targets for new homes, there is a danger of a developer free-for-all, with devastating consequences for green fields all over the District. It is also a worry that Neighbourhood Plans might carry less weight than they currently do. What is mooted for WG is bad but the consequences for the other Northern Parishes are much worse. The Parish Council will be responding to this consultation.

The Neighbourhood Plan Review Group, ably led by Sheena Overington, continues to update the WG Neighbourhood Plan, but is in limbo because the Chichester District Local Plan is delayed and the housing allocation for WG has yet to be confirmed. A progress update is included in the Ad Vincula so we won't repeat the information here.

eWG

At a recent Parish Council meeting, a new working group was established to look at how the Parish Council communicates with the village. The aim is evolution not revolution, and we are aware, for instance, that some villagers just don't 'do' computers. For the foreseeable future, we will continue with this newsletter, but having additional e-communication will shorten lead times on messaging, offer the ability to communicate rapidly in emergencies, and make, for instance, sending out a link for an online consultation considerably easier.

If you have views on this, what you would like to receive electronically from the PC and how often, please can you email Louise with eWG as the subject so that your thoughts can be collated and used to guide the initiative.

The PC now has a, Data Protection compliant Mailchimp account and will place a sign-up box on the website. We would urge everyone to sign-up (one per household or one per person) and also put clerk@wisboroughgreenpc.org in your address book as one way of preventing PC emails ending up in junk/spam folders.

Traffic Management Plan

The Parish Council's Traffic Management Plan Group has been bolstered by Simon Pearson and Sophie Winship from Wisborough Green Campaign Against Noise and Speed (WGCANS) and has held a Zoom meeting with Chief Inspector Jon Carter, District Commander for Arun and Chichester also attending. WGCANS is doing excellent work to get the A272 onto many people's agendas.

Petworth Road: WGCANS has managed to raise awareness of noise, speed and road safety concerns on the A272. The Parish Council has agreed to submit a Community Highways Scheme application for safety improvements, to include a 40mph buffer zone (as there is on all the other entry roads into the village); the application is supported by Sussex Police and Cllr Janet Duncton. Despite a failed attempt a few years ago this is looking more promising.

Speed Indicator Device: The moveable SID is coming however Covid has prevented Parish Councillors from assessing both the devices under consideration, which are operated by Worth Parish Council. The PC has now received some funding from CDC and this will be progressed in the near future. SID should hopefully be smiling (or frowning) around the village soon!

New Layby and Crossing Point: The PC has received comments that the new crossing point on Durbans Road is causing concern to parents crossing with children. This new crossing was created as a number of parents previously complained about the safety of crossing from a layby, between parked cars, restricting visibility. The new scheme was designed by WSCC Highways and meets traffic regulations, with tactile paving that alerts those who are partially sighted to its existence.

This new crossing point, nearer to the junction, was designed to give clear visibility, to both pedestrians and drivers, and encourage crossing at this point, rather than cutting the corner at the junction or crossing between cars; it also links to the pavement creating a safe route to the school entrance. We implore parents/grandparents/child-minders to teach children how to cross the road safely and if children reach the crossing point before parents, to wait away from the kerb edge to discourage drivers from stopping.

20mph Speed Zone: There have been a couple of enquiries about introducing a 20mph zone around the school. The PC's view is that any gains would be marginal and far outweighed by the introduction of new street signs in the Conservation Area in the middle of a rural village; the PC would therefore not support.

Please do remember to cut back hedges over the winter (and before the birds start nesting again, officially from 1st March!).

Landowners have a responsibility to cut roadside hedges; it's important to keep road signs visible and allow cyclists and pedestrians space to move off the road. Likewise, clear pedestrian access, especially for those with wheelchairs, pushchairs and mobility scooters, is important, so please cut back vegetation bordering pavements. Thank you

Our volunteer pool is quite overfished, could you help to restock it ?

Thank you to all those who reacted quickly to our call for help for the Covid response. We're obviously not out of the woods just yet, so having volunteers on hand is reassuring for us all. Do remember, that if you are in need of help at any time, we have a large support network ready, willing and able.

Covid-19 has demonstrated to us all how important community spirit is in a village and we all recognise that this is very much a quality of Wisborough Green. Even without Covid, so many people get involved with our village organisations, and is one of the reasons why Wisborough Green is considered so special; we are envied by many other communities.

Having received such a tremendous Covid response, the Parish Council would like to build on this community spirit and establish a database of people who would be willing to contribute. Hopefully not for another pandemic, but perhaps when another need arises or when one of our village organisations puts a call out for help.

For example, we have a Major Emergency Plan should the village find itself in a self-help situation, such as after the great storm of 1986. Do you have skills, machinery, a 4-wheel drive. Would you be prepared to help?

We are aware that the village minibus service is in need of drivers to help when the service resumes. The minibus provides a vital shopping service and day trips for those who might otherwise find it more difficult to leave the village. Do you have a few hours a month to help?

As you will see in this newsletter, the Community Speedwatch could extend to more sites around the village if more people stepped up. Are you concerned about speed in your part of the village. Can you offer an hour or two a month to help?

We will be emailing out to all our 'Covid' volunteers at some point in the future, but if you were not able to volunteer this time, please consider how you could perhaps help our village in the future. The volunteer pool is quite overfished, could you help restock it.

We are not asking for a huge time commitment, just being there when a need arises. If you would like to be added to our Volunteer Register, please email Louise – clerk@wisboroughgreenpc.org

Website Accessibility – can you help check the website?

We mentioned in the last newsletter that the Parish Council's website needed to be accessible for those who may use screen readers or other assistive technology. The website has been checked and we have included a statement to show where known accessibility issues exist within the WordPress platform.

If there is someone in the village who uses assistive technology, we would be really grateful if you could check out the village website – www.wisboroughgreen.org – and let us know what further changes we can make. Please report any issues to the Clerk, thank you.

Ultra-Fast Gigabit Broadband Connection ?

Over the last few months, as many of us have been working from home, the importance of fast broadband has been self-evident. Comments on the village Facebook page suggest that broadband speed is patchy and some of us do still experience slow times, the Parish Clerk included, the Parish Council Chairman not so.

Wisborough Green, as a rural parish, has an opportunity to improve connection with Gigabit Broadband to every household and small business in the village and wider parish area. You currently may not think that you need faster broadband. As platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, iPlayer etc move to higher definition, and with more devices in households, internet connection can easily overload, leading to the dreaded “buffering” or slow connection.

Our MP wrote to the Parish Council to highlight a Government and WSCC scheme that would allow the village to access Ultrafast Broadband (also known as Fibre To The Premises – FTTP). Homes and businesses with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can use vouchers to support the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections within a group scheme. A single joint application would be made on behalf of everyone interested. Under this scheme we anticipate no installation cost and likely no increase in the monthly cost of your current internet. You are under no obligation to upgrade to Ultrafast Broadband, this is about having the option to do so at some point, if you choose to.

Every household added to the joint application attracts funding of £1,500 from central government plus a top-up of £2,500 from WSCC towards the installation/infrastructure costs. Your commitment is a 12-month contract with virtually any provider for normal High-Speed Broadband. This may well mean nothing more than an extension to your current contract. You do not need to commit to Ultrafast Broadband.

Are you interested? At this stage you just need to confirm your agreement and provide your name and address to the Clerk on clerk@wisboroughgreenpc.org putting ‘fibre’ in the subject line or call 01403 701102.

Further information can also be found here: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

Calling all dog walkers

The South Downs National Park is promoting a campaign (‘Take the Lead’) to encourage responsible dog walking on heathlands and other habitats. The Authority has launched a survey on dog walking behaviour aimed at those who walk dogs in the Park, including dog owners, as well as those who walk dogs for others, such as professional dog walkers. This survey is a follow up to one undertaken in 2018 and will allow the Authority to assess the success of the campaign.

The survey is voluntary, and your opinions and experiences will be very valuable. The results will be used to inform project activities aimed at conserving and improving heathlands sites. The questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes and does not ask for personally identifiable data.

Please use this link to take the survey before 13th November:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KYPV7YM> .

The village grit is in, now it's your turn to get prepared

We say it every year, but now really is the time to get prepared, just in case of a cold winter, perhaps with power loss thrown in for good measure, it has been known! Don't get caught out. Power loss in the winter is far more challenging so now is the time to check gas and log supplies, torch batteries, candles and other items that your household may need.

Dealing with Snow and Ice

Arrangements have been put in place to have key areas in the village cleared should it snow this winter. However, we have to be realistic about what can be done and therefore help from the community to clear pavements is needed. If we do get heavy snow this winter, then please do your bit to keep the village moving!

You can clear snow and ice from pavements yourself. It's unlikely that you'll be sued or held responsible if someone is injured on a path or pavement if you've cleared it carefully. When you clear snow and ice:

- * Do it early in the day - it's easier to move fresh, loose snow.
- * Don't use water - it might refreeze and turn to black ice.
- * Use salt if possible - it will melt the ice or snow and stop it from refreezing overnight (but don't use the salt from salting bins as this is used to keep roads clear).
- * You can use ash and sand if you don't have enough salt - it will provide grip underfoot.
- * Pay extra attention when clearing steps and steep pathways - using more salt may help.

Thank you to the Bedham residents who have very kindly donated their gritter to the Parish Council. This will now allow E P Clark to spread grit around the parish more effectively for both the Parish Council as well as the Winter Management Plan work funded by WSCC.

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Please refer to the agendas displayed on the village notice boards and website for information - a meeting will only be called to meet CDC deadlines. Meetings are currently being held virtually on Zoom and are scheduled for the following Tuesdays:

3 November
1 & 15 December
5 January 2021
2 February
2 March

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Currently being held virtually on Zoom at 7.45pm on the following Tuesdays:

17 November
No meeting in December
19 January 2021
16 February
16 March

Members of the public most welcome to attend.

Making our village a safer place ...

You may have seen, since the beginning of September, Community Speedwatch sessions taking place in the village. The purpose of Community Speedwatch, run in partnership with local traffic police, is to make our roads safer, for drivers as well as residents, through education rather than prosecution – a tried and tested method achieving positive change.

We have, to date, held more than 25 Speedwatch sessions – resulting in 325 drivers receiving advisory letters from the police. The highest speed recorded in the 30 limit near Meadowbank (A272 Petworth Road) was 61 mph. Whilst we have recorded 6 repeat offenders, in fact, incidents of repeat offenders has reduced from 25% (2015) to just 6% (2019) across Sussex – proof that Community Speedwatch works!

Interestingly, it is reported by police, that the presence of an active Community Speedwatch initiative reduces crime in that area in general, not just breaking the speed limit.

We are increasing our sites to other roads around the parish including 40 mph limits – but we only have a small number of people trained – and we need your help! If you can spare perhaps one or two hours each month – you can make a positive impact. We need to work together to make our beautiful village safer for everyone. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you would like to get involved.

Sophie Winship, WG CSW Coordinator/Village Resident

Smartphone users - have you heard of this?

what3words is now used by 80% of the emergency services in the UK and has helped to locate nearly 4,000 incidents since it first started being used.

what3words has divided the whole world up into 3 metre squares and assigned a unique 3 word identifier to each square (in 46 languages). The system makes the location of any emergency or incident very easy to share. For example tortoises.swarm.announce led Mountain Rescue to a precise location on Ben Nevis, in February 2020, to save a group of hikers. It also links to Google Maps and Waze and you can share locations via SMS or WhatsApp.

Download the app for free and be prepared. Should you be the first on the scene of a car accident, what3words would give your precise location to the emergency services. Give it a try, not only is it a powerful tool for emergencies it's also good fun.

**The Public Access Defibrillator, at the Village Hall, is located at:
buzzards.walled.fetching**

WSCC Waste & Recycling Sites - Winter Opening Hours

The Billingshurst site is now open from 9am to 4pm until 31 March 2021, and continues to be open on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.

Your Parish Council

Peter Drummond (Chair) T: 01798 865546

Communications, Finance Committee, Gatwick Airport, Local Council Associations, Planning Committee, Traffic Management

Andrew Jackson (Vice-Chair) T: 700574

Finance Committee, Neighbourhood Plan Review, Planning Committee (Chairman), New Pavilion Project, Pavilion Trustee Liaison

Lucy Bartley T: 700457

Neighbourhood Plan Review, Planning Committee, Traffic Management Plan, Winter Management Plan

Andy Burbridge T: 701902

Green Coordination Group, Planning Committee, Youth Activities

Michael Newell T: 701171

Communications, Finance Committee (Chairman), New Pavilion Project, Pavilion Trustee Liaison, Planning Committee

Steve Rollinson T: 700167

Major Emergency Plan, Neighbourhood Plan Review, Traffic Management Plan

Howard True T: 700150

Finance Committee, Major Emergency Plan, Planning Committee, Traffic Management Plan, Winter Management Plan

Martin Watson T: 07836 700923

Communications, Finance Committee, Green Coordination Group, Planning Committee, New Pavilion Project

What's on in the village ?

Check out the village website

www.wisboroughgreen.org

How to contact your Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs Louise Davies
Wisborough Green Parish Council
PO Box 255, Wisborough Green
Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 0WT
T: 01403 701102
E: clerk@wisboroughgreenpc.org

Alternatively, letters can be posted in the Parish Council letterbox at the Village Hall. Members can be contacted directly by telephone or by email through the Clerk.

The Parish Council has two vacancies

The Parish Council is the first elected tier of local Government. The role of a Parish Councillor is to bring local issues to the attention of the Council and to help make decisions on behalf of the village.

You will need to be able to attend the Parish Council meeting held one evening each month and spend extra time on areas of specialism or interest. Enthusiasm and commitment are more important than experience.

You must be aged 18 or over, an elector, and have been a resident or worked within 3 miles of the Parish for the past year. The position is unpaid.

For further information, please email or call the Parish Council Clerk.

NO ELECTION WILL BE HELD DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.