

Parish Council News

HAPPY NEW YEAR

All the Members of Witton Gilbert Parish Council and the Clerk would like to wish the residents a very happy, prosperous and harmonious New Year

Flooding Alleviation Scheme

Durham County Council has announced that works on flooding alleviation are close to commencement. The scheme is due to start in late January/early February and run approximately for 6 months. The cost of the scheme is in the region of £600k and is designed to reduce the risk of flooding experienced in this area on 28th June 2012. The intention is to alter the profile of the Dene Burn from the rear of the White Tun up towards 96 Brookside. This will be done by widening the watercourse and constructing a number of terraces and weirs to control the flow of water during times of large storm events. The scheme will continue along the rear of Brookside, where the existing ditch will be altered and extended to intercept and convey overland flows generated from the network of agricultural fields to the east.

Christmas Wreath-Making Day At St Michael's Church

On December 6th St Michael's Church hosted its second wreath-making day when, between 10am and 2pm, villagers were invited to come along and enjoy the ambience of the new flexible space created within the nave. To

get into the spirit of Christmas, families could enjoy some 'time together' away from the hustle and bustle of traffic and shops, being creative in the peace and tranquillity of the church whilst listening to festive music and partaking in delicious hot soup with a bun. With red-berry holly and ivy in abundance from around the churchyard and colourful bows, baubles and ribbons supplied by members of the congregation, participants went home with beautiful hand-made wreaths fit to adorn many a door around the village. It is hoped this event will be repeated during Advent each year.

Many thanks to Marion Ellis and Thelma Jack who provided the soup followed by delicious home-made mince pies, also to Noel Dixon and his team who made sure we didn't run out of foliage.





W. I. Musical Evening



A surprise greeted members and visitors to Witton Gilbert Musical Evening on Monday 1st December. On entering the car park at Witton Gilbert Community Centre a large vehicle was parked with an organ playing Christmas carols and other music. Visitors arriving remarked it was a lovely surprise and the music was wonderful. The organ was provided by Stuart Wright Funeral Services purely as the Musical Evening was a charity event. The organ made in Amsterdam in 1983 was a Dutch Street Organ made by Perlee. It was installed in a custom-made van on a Renault Chassis and powered by an air pump run from an inboard petrol generator. The organ plays music for 56 key 'books' which are folding cardboard with holes for the notes. Stuart has built up a large collection of these music 'books' playing music as diverse as ABBA, Blue Danube Waltz & Jingle Bell Rock through to Auld Lang Syne. His interest in organs started as a boy seeing a street organ at a fair. Before long he was working on a variety of organs including Dutch Street Organs, Fairground Organs, Merenghi and Gavioli, as well as church organs. Stuart's organ is available for hire and for charities as community based pleasure.

.....THE EVENING opened to a full audience of around 150 of friends and supporters of the village with a hearty session of carols lead by Roger Hazelhurst on the piano. This was followed by a programme of

songs from the shows by Youth Connection Theatre Group featuring Food Glorious Food, a very moving Hallelujah and ever popular Do you Hear the People Sing. Members of The Drama Tree joined with Starry Night for finale of the Christmas Medley. The Drama Tree is the junior team of the Youth Connection starting at 8 years old.

Refreshments followed with home-made mince pies and shortbread washed down with bucks fizz and non-alcoholic ginger wine. All members of Witton Gilbert W.I. had generously donated many raffle prizes including two large food hampers and whisky. The second part of the evening programme featured the every popular Durham Miners Association Brass Band led by Musical Director Stuart Gray. A selection from Oklahoma soon had the audience singing along, followed by Beatles music from 1968, and in the Christmas mood tunes from the Snowman. The band finished with a rousing performance of The Cossack Wedding Dance with which they had won their last competition in October this year.

The Musical Evening is an annual event for Witton Gilbert hosted and organised by the W.I. This year we are providing equipment needed by Witton Gilbert School from some of the proceeds. The night is always well attended by the villagers and friends from further afield.

A big thank you to all our supporters from the village.

What a Cracker!!

Witton Gilbert Parish Bonfire was well supported again last year and in spite of the dampness villagers enjoyed hot-dogs, hot soup and hot chocolate as they watched the display. Our school children competed Red/Blue House against Green/Yellow House to create the best Guy, but as both entries were so good both Guys were hoisted to burn on the bonfire.

Children from Red/Blue house commented: 'We made Katy Perry because of the connection through her song 'Firework'. We hope our Guy is picked because it took a long time to make, and if you are wondering about the cat, Katy's cat was called 'Katy Purry'. Children from Green/Yellow House commented: We were inspired to make Simon Cowell because we thought it was a creative choice, and we had lots of fun making it, so hope you like it. We worked hard as a team and we laughed a lot as we tried several times to attach to top to the bottom!

Many thanks goes to all who worked to build and orchestrate the display, to all who made and served food and the to the Parish Council who supplied the fireworks.



Good Luck.... And Farewell To Zoe

WITTON GILBERT NURSERY would like to wish Miss Zoe Burgess good luck in her next venture to Tanzania. Zoe has just finished two half-years with us and we all wish her well

....The NURSERY would like to welcome 11 new children for 2015 and also an additional member to our staff. We hope they have all settled in well and are enjoying their time with us. We have lots of exciting things planned for the New Year, we will continue our Forest School approach as well as visiting Broom House Farm again. We aim to provide amazing opportunities to learn and develop with us and welcome names onto our waiting list in the academic year that your child turns 2 years of age.

Sacriston Surgery

Thank you to all patients who have taken the time to complete the patient experience questionnaire. This gives us valuable information on how we are providing our services. We have a red computer in the waiting area, please feel free to give us your feedback on this. (it is very user friendly) It also has information regarding how to keep yourself healthy.

As well as ordering your repeat medication on line, we have opened up booking appointments on line, please ask the receptionist on how to obtain a password.

The surgery has listened to patients, so we now offer some early morning appointments from 7.30am each week. We are hoping that Saturday morning opening is to be retained as this helps with patients not having to attend A&E departments.

Please remember during Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm to contact the surgery in the first instance, before going along to A&E, as we will probably be able to help.

Witton Gilbert WI

WITTON GILBERT W.I..... meet on the second Monday of the month in the Community Centre (Cooper Hall) commencing at 7pm and are a friendly bunch who welcome new members and visitors. Speakers at the forthcoming meetings will be: Feb 9th Dorothy's Well by Jim Connor, Mar 9th HONG KONG by Prof. Dick Madeley, and April 13th Sea Glass by Joan Laverick.

The Witton Gilbert Walking Group

THE WITTON GILBERT WALKING GROUP meets at Cooper Hall on Tuesday mornings at 10.00am. We have 12 routes around Witton Gilbert that are done on a rotation where possible. We also have some walks which start in Langley Park and at Wallnook.

The group consists of people of all abilities but with one common aim, to keep fit and socialize with like-minded companions. Nobody gets left behind or is made to do anything which is beyond their capabilities, help is always at hand.

The walks last between 1hr 15mins to 1hr 30mins covering distances from 1.8 miles to 3.2 miles. Sturdy boots/shoes are needed for walking over footpaths and grassland. Waterproof clothing is sometimes needed, although since the group started in Feb 2012, we have only got wet 3 times, we have been lucky so far!

At the end of each walk we have tea/coffee and home-made cakes at Cooper Hall's Coffee Morning which is open from 9.30 – 12.00

Dave Minns



Lets Get 'Messy' At Christmas...



On Saturday 20th December at 3pm twenty children along with mums, dads, grans and granddads descended on St Michael's Church to enjoy messing around with paper, scissors, glue and glitter to create their very own nativity. They created golden crowns for kings, glittering paper-chain angels, sheep's masks and a beautiful alter frontal depicting the manger scene of Christ's birthplace.

When all props were completed Rev Caroline Dick lead a family service in the Chancel where the children and adults enjoyed the nativity play put on by the children.

After the service the children enjoyed a tea party full of festive food before leaving with their colourful creations.



Neighbourhood Protection Team - November 2014

Dog Fouling: Wardens have investigated several dog fouling reports, also removed stray dogs.

Littering: In our area 3 reports of littering have been investigated and 12 fixed penalty notices issued.

Fly-Tipping: Many fly-tipping incidents were reported and investigated in order to find any evidence to link those responsible. 4 household waste duty of care letters were issued.

Anti-social behaviour: In the Durham area 12 ASB reports were made to DCC and wardens attended 40 incidents which were passed via Police Airwaves system. Wardens also carried out seizure of alcohol from under-age children.

Moving a Thing?

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Neighbourhood Plan Public Consultation Events

The volunteers on the Neighbourhood Plan Group have been working hard assembling information about our community, getting to grips with the technical details of the Neighbourhood Plan process and looking at the planning issues which affect Witton Gilbert. We have condensed these issues into the following subject headings:-

Housing

Village Centre Development

Village Identity

Transport

Heritage

Sustainability

Green Space

We will be holding a number of events over the next few months to give everyone an opportunity to give their views and contribute

ideas which will help formulate a "Vision of the future of Witton Gilbert". So please come along as everyone's opinion matters and it's a genuine opportunity for the community to influence the planning decisions which will directly affect you and your neighbours.

The first event will focus on ;-

New housing and site selection.

Village Centre Development.

This event will be held on Sat 21st February at Cooper Hall between 10.00am and 1pm. Dates of the following events will be advertised two weeks before each event, so look out for these in future editions of the Village Newsletter and on community notice boards.

30 Years Of Memories

On 28th November I was invited to attend Sacriston Community College where the Anderson School of Dancing was holding its annual Presentation Evening. Along with co-presenter, Mr Arnie Simpson, we handed out over 200 medals and trophies to delighted children from 3 years to young adults. The event was a nostalgic reflection for the Dancing School so the theme for dance routines and music was 'The Best of Thirty Years'. The audience tapped their feet to New York New York, Thriller, Phantom of the Opera and Singing in the Rain.

With a front row seat I knew I was in for an enjoyable evening when the curtain went up to show nine delightful 3year olds seated on a bench at the back of the stage, their eyes wide with alarm when they saw 150 pairs of eyes looking back at THEM.

In sets of three, they took their turn with Teachers Karen, Michelle and Kristy, to step carefully through their first public dance and they were as entertaining to watch as were the antics of the remaining six on the bench who waited to be given their chance to 'hit the lights'. Across the whole evening the standard of dancing by all age groups reflected the dedication given to these pupils over the years and all awards were very well deserved.

When asked by host Karen, as the curtain went down, if I had enjoyed my evening I replied, "Well, STRICTLY speaking.....it was FAB...U...LOUS, Darling!!!



Brenda Gilmore

For information about the Anderson School of Dancing please ring 0191 3710455

The Parish Council are aware that a resident of the village concerned at the speed at which some motorists drive through our village and for the safety of children and pensioners crossing the road at the new Post Office is requesting Durham County Council, through an "E-petition", to consider upgrading the current "central refuge" crossing point in front of McColl's shop into a proper full scale Pelican Crossing.

The link to the petition is:- <http://democracy.durham.gov.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?id=8>

Parish Notice Board

At their January meeting Witton Gilbert Parish Council have again chosen not to increase spending for the 2015/16 financial year. There will be the usual support for the Village Hall Association, The Christmas tree, fireworks and the Play-group, etc., plus they have pledged new funding towards future maintenance of the bowling green, the Neighbourhood Plan and the Village Centre.

Your Parish Councillors

Arnie Simpson (Chair)	3712161
Paul Guy (Vice Chair)	3710455
Lynne Michelle Cowan	3719461
Fraser Reynolds	3711198
Anthony V. Harries	3710988
Amanda Hillary	3718239
Neil Liddle	3710339
Maria Waller	3718365
Alexander Woodmass	3710732
Geo.Thompson (Clerk)	3711808



Tell us what you think.....

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